

JOHNNY BEHIND THE ROCKS MINERAL WITHDRAWAL

You can help determine the future of one of our most beloved local landscapes by asking the Fremont County Commissioners to support BLM's recommendation to restrict hard rock mining at Johnny Behind the Rocks!

WHAT IS THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT PROPOSING TO DO? The BLM Lander Field Office is proposing to implement a decision made in its 2014 land-use plan: to prioritize recreation at Johnny Behind the Rocks and to restrict surface mining there. The agency is seeking public comment as it proceeds with this "locatable mineral withdrawal." This withdrawal won't be permanent, but will prohibit hard rock mining at JBR for the next 20 years.

WHAT MINERALS WILL BE WITHDRAWN? This withdrawal affects uranium, gypsum, gold, bentonite, and other non-leasable minerals that are subject to the General Mining Act of 1872. It does not affect minerals that are leased like oil and gas, trona, coal, and phosphate.

ARE THERE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE MINERALS AT JOHNNY? No. The BLM's mineral report is clear. There are no known deposits of uranium, and the only minerals that may exist are bentonite and gypsum, which the agency has determined have low potential for development. Frankly, if these minerals were economically viable to extract and sell, there would be existing claims and mines there now. There has never been a claim for gypsum at this site, and a claim for bentonite expired over a decade ago.

COULD THESE MINERALS BE MINED IN A WAY THAT DOESN'T DISTURB RECREATION? No. The geologic layers that may contain gypsum and bentonite would require surface mining. That means pits, developed roads, and traffic. Few hikers, bikers, or horseback riders would want to see Blue Ridge, where there may be bentonite, dug up and roaded, and few would want to skirt gypsum pits along the central trail system.

JOHNNY BEHIND THE ROCKS IS TOO VALUABLE TO MINE. The BLM hails JBR among its top 20 mountain biking destinations. Volunteers from Lander and Riverton have invested hours of effort building its trails. They have also generously funded infrastructure. Johnny is one of the important locations around Lander. It helps make our town the special place it is today: a western town with rural charm and world-class recreation areas. These areas encourage existing residents—our young people—to stay in town. They draw in new residents: young professionals who buy homes, put down roots, start families, and start businesses. These professionals could live anywhere in the West but bring their energy and their tax dollars to Lander. These areas also draw in tourists. Wyoming's second-most important economy is tourism and it's a vital one for Lander. Tourists who come to hike, climb, and bike pay lodging taxes and buy gas, groceries, and restaurant meals, helping keep businesses on our Main Street afloat. Whether you head to Johnny for an adventure-filled ride or a Saturday morning dog walk, you know its views, geology, wildlife, and natural setting are incompatible with mining.

HOW CAN I HELP? The Fremont County Commission is deciding whether to oppose or support this withdrawal on August 23rd. The commission made a preliminary decision on August 2 to stand



opposed to this withdrawal. Share your experiences at Johnny, the values you find there, and the economic benefit you believe it brings to Fremont County by emailing the Commissioners:

Chairman Doug Thompson: doug.thompsonone2@gmail.com

Commissioner Travis Becker: travis.becker@fremontcountywy.gov

Commissioner Larry Allen: allen@wbaccess.net

Commissioner Ray Price: ray.price@fremontcountywy.gov

Commissioner Andi Clifford: andrea.clifford@fremontcountywy.gov

AND TELL THE BLM WHAT YOU THINK TOO! Send comments to the BLM by September 8. They can be emailed to Kristin Yannone at kyannone@blm.gov. Include "JBR Mineral Withdrawal" in the subject line. Or, mail your comments to: BLM-Lander Field Office, ATTN: Kristin Yannone, 1335 Main Street, Lander, WY, 82520

DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION?

JULIA STUBLE, PUBLIC LANDS ADVOCATE, WYOMING OUTDOOR COUNCIL, AT 307-332-7031 X 11 OR JULIA@WYOMINGOUTDOORCOUNCIL.ORG



Photo: Bob Wick, BLM

