

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



"Vicky Raske"
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To Ross Micham/R5/USEPA/US@EPA

cc

bcc

03/14/2008 02:57 PM

Please respond to
"Vicky Raske"
<gpmuseum@grandportage.com>

Subject Comments on Eagle Rock Mining Project

History:

 This message has been replied to and forwarded.

Mr. Micham,

Please see the attachment for comments on natural resources and cultural properties of the Kennecott Eagle Rock Project.

Thank you,

Victoria L. Raske



Grand Portage THPO Kennecott Vicky reply.doc

Mr. Ross Micham
USEPA Region 5
WU-16J
77 West Jackson Blvd
Chicago, IL 60604 – 3507
March 14, 2008

Dear Mr. Micham,

I believe that the Federal Government and State government of Michigan need to understand that the Ojibwa Tribes from Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota have a deep spiritual and cultural connection to the Migi zi wa sin (Eagle Rock) and it is government agency's responsibility to protect this very important Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). My concern with the Kennecott Eagle Mine Project is that Eagle Rock is a significant Traditional Cultural Property identified by oral tradition and historic cultural values of the Anishinaabe Ojibwe culture of the United States, particularly The Ojibwe of Lake Superior region, including Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota.

The environmental impact of the mining project would destroy a **belief system** that is not usually recognized by Euro Americans, but be that as it may, according to the NHPA 's definition of traditional cultural significance: "*Traditional*" in this context refers to those **beliefs, customs, and practices of a living community of people that have been passed down through generations, usually orally or through practice.** The traditional cultural significance of a historic property, then, is **significance derived from the role the property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.**

Therefore a Traditional Cultural Property is defined as:

- a location associated with the **traditional beliefs of a Native American group about its origins, its cultural history, or the nature of the world;**
- ... or **patterns of land use reflect the cultural traditions valued by its long term residents;**

- a location where Native American religious practitioners have historically gone, and are known or thought to go today, to perform ceremonial activities in accordance with traditional cultural rules of practice and,
- a location where a community has traditionally carried out economic, artistic, or other cultural practices important on maintaining its historic identity

A traditional cultural property, then can be defined generally as one that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register **because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.**

Therefore the protection of Eagle Rock is very important to maintain the Culture and spiritual values of the Ojibwa people of Lake Superior. Many outcrops of mountain areas are spiritual and cultural to Ojibwe people, I know that many of the Euro American people have myths but, the Ojibwa mythology is **animate** and many of our “fabled” characters are truly living beings and that they do exist for the reason of life learning lessons, they are part of Ojibwe Culture, if the areas where these beings live are destroyed or disturbed then those who are in charge of the destruction are responsible for destroying a way of life as defined by NHPA Traditional Cultural Significance. There are many “mythological creatures” in Ojibwa Culture that are good and evil whom live in, under, near, or above the water. There are also the “mythological” beings that make their homes in the Rock faces of these high rock outcrops along the waterways and along Lake Superior. These creatures and beings live along all waterways in one form or another. And are a very important part of the Ojibwa culture and belief system.

Also the Ojibwa Cultural belief system of practicing and feasting and making offers is a private agenda for those who “need to know” or are invited, not a big ritual like going to a non-native church service every Sunday, not that either are less than the other but each should be respected as the right to practice one’s religion as one sees fit, which then brings into play the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) 1978, which **requires**, National Park Service and **ALL Federal Agencies**, to evaluate its policies and procedures with the **aim of protecting the religious freedoms of Native Americans (Pub. L. 95341.2).**

The Kennecott mining would destroy traditional medicinal herbs and food gathering areas on Eagle Rock, should the destruction of this area be destroyed, I will once again emphasize that a way of life and culture will also be destroyed. The religious areas that will be impacted by the destruction of Eagle Rock is another means of eliminating a culture and belief system. Therefore the destruction or alienation of this property will play a role of destroying the Ojibwa peoples history of beliefs, customs and practices, upon which the culture of the Ojibwa people is a continuation from prehistoric times to the present day of 2008.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Victoria L. Raske

Grand Portage Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

P.O. Box 428

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