



Written by [David Kelly](#) on June 20, 2023

Native Americans: Domestic Lithium Mining Is “Green Colonialism”

In a remote region of Humboldt County, Nevada, the People of Red Mountain — Paiute, Shoshone, and Bannock people from Fort McDermitt Tribe — are fighting against President Biden’s climate-change agenda by seeking to stop the extraction of lithium from the Thacker Pass Mine.

This week, while Biden is campaigning in California [touting](#) his “climate credentials” with “the most aggressive climate action ever,” the People of Red Mountain are preparing for [next week’s](#) 9th Circuit Court of Appeals hearing on the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine as they attempt to stop the destruction of what they deem to be sacred land.



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Lithium mine

The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection [issued](#) air, water, and mining permits in February of 2022 for the proposed Thacker Pass Lithium Mine Project. As part of the decision, no mining will be allowed below the water table. The permits were issued after months of an extensive application review and revision process. However, the People of Red Mountain were not satisfied with the results and filed a [lawsuit](#) to protect the spiritually significant land of Peehee Mu’huh, or Thacker Pass.

According to a [report](#) by Mighty Earth, the mine site has a “history of massacres resulting in many ancestors’ bodies buried in the land.” The report claims that the government failed to adequately consult with regional tribes in consideration of any cultural impacts the mining would have on the sacred site and to any of the indigenous peoples spiritual practices.

As [reported](#) by the *Washington Times*, Daranda Hinkey 25, “is a member of the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe and a leader of a group known as People of Red Mountain — named after the scarlet peak that overlooks her house. The group says that in addition to environmental impacts, the Thacker Pass mine would desecrate a site where the U.S. Cavalry massacred their ancestors after the Civil War.”

“Lithium mines and this whole push for renewable energy — the agenda of the Green New Deal — is what I like to call green colonialism,” Hinkey said. “It’s going to directly affect my people, my culture, my religion, my tradition.”

“The reckless permitting of the Thacker Pass lithium mine sets a bad precedent for the Energy Transition,” said John Hadder, director of Great Basin Resource Watch, in a [press release](#). “We now have a situation where the BLM rushed ahead of the state of Nevada permitting process resulting in a federal permit that allows groundwater contamination from the mine pit rejected by the state of Nevada.”

In March, Lithium Americas Corporation [reportedly](#) announced “the commencement of construction at



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its 100%-owned Thacker Pass lithium project.”

“Starting construction is a momentous milestone for Thacker Pass and one we have been working towards for over a decade,” said Jonathan Evans, president and CEO. “We are excited about the prospect of generating economic growth in Northern Nevada and playing a major role in the domestic lithium supply chain for electric vehicles.”

According to the Mighty Earth [report](#), General Motors (GM) announced in January that it will invest more than \$650 million in Lithium Americas Corporation and will help develop the Thacker Pass lithium mining project, with the aim of locking up a supply of lithium for its electric vehicles.

Lithium mining on U.S. soil is not only causing concern at Thacker Pass, as lithium mining exploration in nearby McDermitt Creek in southeast Oregon has exposed. Jindalee mining company, according to a Counter Punch [article](#), shared its 2023 “exploration plan to punch in 267 new drill hole and sump sites and construct 30 miles of new roads.” The mining company’s plan for “an immense lithium mining project” would “tear apart the heart of irreplaceable Sage-grouse habitat at McDermitt Creek.”

The exploration plan “would fragment an area with a very high density of nesting sagebrush songbirds of all kinds. Birds like Sagebrush Sparrow require continuous blocks of dense mature or old growth big sagebrush.” However, as the article explained, “Jindalee boasts its consultant environmental and cultural studies have found ‘no show-stoppers’ and ‘no red flags’. Industry gets the results it wants when it pays for mine consultant work. Federal and state agencies, after a bit of pro forma sniping, acquiesce to what the mine comes up with.”

Reporting on the Peehee Mu’huh appeals case, Basin and Range Watch [shared](#),

“This Thacker Pass mine has stirred up a hornet’s nest of opposition and become notorious for the environmental damage it will cause. It symbolizes BLM’s wrecking ball approach to “green” energy on public lands. We can, and must, do better and act to protect the beauty, biodiversity and sacred places of the West’s sagebrush sea. Instead, this huge mine would destroy irreplaceable habitats for sage-grouse, and the nesting sites of long-billed curlew, burrowing owl and many other declining species. It would also rip apart an area of great cultural importance” said Katie Fite, WildLands Defense Public Lands Director.

The awareness and opposition to the Thacker Pass and McDermitt Creek lithium mines are just the beginning to the environmental and cultural destruction that Biden’s green energy agenda will cause. The mining operations and their long-term effects are being ignored, all in the name of fighting, in the president’s [words](#), the “clear and present danger” of supposed climate change. However, the truth is as Hinkey stated best: The “push for renewable energy — the agenda of the Green New Deal” is “green colonialism.”



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