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Photo Caption: Over 100 people gathered on Sunday, Nov. 17 to rally against the Kane Creek Development, voicing opposition to the project's potential environmental and community impacts. Photos by Andrew Christiansen





Photo caption: Protestors talk about why they're against the Kane Creek Development above the bulldozed development area.

Moab resident Shea Allen, who works in conservation, said it was important for her and her friends to attend the protest to prevent further harm to the land.

"This land is being exploited and has been for decades," Allen said. "We've seen tourism grow in Moab, and it's really unfortunate that people want to come in and build these luxury resorts without giving back to the land as they continue to take from it."

The development proposes transforming a 176-acre parcel into a 586-unit mixed-use subdivision, including up to 72,000 square feet of commercial space. While developers argue the project will help address housing shortages and boost the local economy, critics decry its focus on luxury homes, potential harm to the largely undeveloped Colorado River corridor, and risks of flooding.

The protest, organized by the Kane Creek Development Watch Group, sought to send a clear message to developers and potential investors: "Why they shouldn't touch" the project.

Participants were encouraged to create posters, deliver video statements and listen to brief speeches during the rally.

“Development should be in the hands of the people that live here and the people that recreate here,” said Mathu Crandall.

Others who featured in videos argued the area’s unique ecosystem and recreation opportunities shouldn’t be diluted by large-scale construction projects.

Protesters also demanded that developers restore portions of the land already bulldozed in preparation for the subdivision.

The rally came as the Grand County Commission prepares for a Dec. 3 zoning appeal hearing, in which the Watch group is challenging the “highway commercial” zoning applied to much of the 176-acre parcel.

The group argues the designation improperly permits intensive development on environmentally sensitive areas, including floodplains, while the developers, Kane Creek Preservation and Development (KCPD), maintain the zoning was legally established and is essential to their plans.

KCPD will formally participate in the hearing alongside the Grand County Planning and Zoning Department and Watch group before the commission possibly takes action.

In addition to the zoning dispute, the developers recently secured a conditional use permit to build a wastewater treatment plant and water storage facility, following an Oct. 7 decision by the Grand County Land Use Appeals hearing officer. The permit approval overturned a previous denial by the Grand County Commission.

Editor’s note: This story has been updated to clarify where the protest against the Kane Creek Development took place.