

Geologists: 'We May Be Slowly Running Out Of Rocks'

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RALEIGH, NC—A coalition of geologists are challenging the way we look at global stone reserves, claiming that, unless smarter methods of preservation are developed, mankind will eventually run out of rocks.



Geologists theorize that areas like this may have once been filled with rocks.

"If we do not stop using them up at our current rate, rocks as we know them will be a thing of the past," renowned geologist Henry Kaiser said at a press conference Tuesday. "Igneous, metamorphic, even sedimentary: all of them could be gone in as little as 500,000 years."

"Think about it," Kaiser added. "When was the last time you even saw a boulder?"

The scientists warned that, although people have long considered the world's rock supply to be inexhaustible, it has not created a significant number of new rocks since the planet cooled some 3.5 billion years ago. Moreover, the earth's rocks have been very slowly depleting in the last century due to growing demand for fireplace mantels, rock gardens, gravel, and paperweights.

Kaiser claims that humanity has "wreaked havoc" on the earth's stones by picking them up, carrying them around, and displacing them from their natural habitat.

"A rock can take millions of years to form, but it only takes a second for someone to skip a smooth pebble into a lake, and then it is gone." Dr. Kaiser said. "Perhaps these thoughtless rock-skippers don't care if they leave our planet completely devoid of rocks, but what about our children? Don't they deserve the chance to hold a rock and toss it up and down a few times?"

Continued Kaiser, "We are on a collision course to a world without rocks."

Geologist Victoria Merrill, who has been at the forefront of the rock conservation battle since 2004, said there are simple steps people can take to reduce their rock consumption.

"Only take as many rocks as you absolutely need," said Dr. Merrill, author of the book *No Stone Unturned: Methods For Modern Rock Conservation*. "And once you are finished with your rocks, do not simply huck them into the woods. Place the rock down gently where you found it so that others may look at the rock and enjoy it for years to come."

Merrill went on to point out that, even if there were some "magic hole" in the earth's crust that could miraculously spew out rocks every 10 years or so, modern society's obsession with rocks means that we would still run out of them far more quickly than they could be replenished.

"Just look at the pet rock craze: In 10 years, millions upon millions of rocks were painted, played with, and discarded like trash," Merrill said. "Looking back, mankind's arrogance and hubris is startling."

But critics of the movement have already begun to surface, claiming that Kaiser and his colleagues are simply preying on people's fears of losing rocks.

While acknowledging that we should reduce our dependence on foreign rocks, many have argued that the current rock supply could easily last for the next 2 million years, by which time technology will have advanced enough to allow for the production of endless quantities of cheap, durable basalt.

Others who oppose the rock-loss theory claim that rocks were put on the earth to be used by humans in marble statues or kitchen countertops as they see fit.

"Take the Rocky Mountains, for example: There's plenty of rocks right there," Colorado resident Kyle Peters said. "It's our right as Americans to use as many rocks as we need for whatever purposes we decide, and no scientist is going to scare me into thinking otherwise."

"This country was built on rocks," he added. "Remember that." 🌱

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