

May 2, 2025

Mystic District Ranger Office
Attn Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project
8221 South Mt Rushmore Road
Rapid City, South Dakota 57702

Dear Mystic District Ranger,

I would like to comment on the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project by first stating what I feel is central to many of my statements.

“The Black Hills National Forest's mission, like all National Forests, is *to sustain the health*, diversity, and productivity of its forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. This encompasses *protecting natural resources*, providing recreational opportunities, and supporting the local community. The Forest Plan, which guides all resource management, sets goals, objectives, and guidelines for resource management.”

The Black Hills are sacred land to the Lakota people which requires our respect and honor. Contamination of any part of the Hills by drilling would be disrespectful to their beliefs and rich heritage. By doing this drilling, the possibility of endangering precious creek water and underground water sources is too great. The air quality, plants and animals would, also, be placed in great jeopardy.

The proposal calls for 18 pads with 10 drill holes in each which results in 180 drill holes. And that would be just the beginning. This is absolutely unacceptable. The Black Hills cannot support such a violation to its fragile ecology. At first glance, the Black Hills may look rugged but in reality, this land is a delicate group of interconnected systems. The result to the land itself should not be neglected. And how would the wildlife and their habitat be disturbed with the drilling now and in their future? From my understanding, a complete Environmental Impact Statement has not even been done. It is my hope you will decide to deny the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Proposal NOW. Your decision will have lasting consequences for generations.

My grave concern is for the safeguarding of the natural state of the Black Hills and in keeping them as unspoiled as humanly possible. I ask you to firmly refrain from allowing any further drilling in the Black Hills.

My grandfather built a small cabin in 1950 near Rochford. I have witnessed several changes in the last seven decades. I am the 3rd generation to take on the responsibility of caretaker for not only the cabin but for the entire Black Hills. I consider it an honor. Please help me keep the flora, fauna, air, water and land healthy and safe so my daughters and future generations will benefit from such a unique and beautiful place. You can help by rejecting the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project now.

Thank you for your time in this incredibly important issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ms Susan McCausland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ms Susan McCausland
Black Hills summer resident