



**ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE**  
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June 20, 2023

Randy Moore, Chief  
U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service  
Sidney R. Yates Federal Building, 201 14th St. SW  
Washington, DC, 20227

**RE: Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek Watershed Withdrawal #NP-3479**

Dear Chief Moore,

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe supports the proposed mineral withdrawal around Pactola Reservoir and also requests the 20,574 acres be expanded to include the entire Pactola watershed. The health of our water and community are interconnected. The Pactola Reservoir is the largest and deepest reservoir in the Black Hills National Forest, with 14 miles of shoreline, 150-foot depths and 800 acres of surface area in the central Black Hills. Water released from the reservoir into Rapid Creek flows down out of the mountains through Rapid City and onto the western South Dakota plains.

The Pactola Reservoir area includes valued cultural and natural resources important to tribes and local communities. It is imperative mining be prohibited in the watershed to protect the area's resources and municipal water supply. Toxic mine waste contains as many as three dozen dangerous chemicals including: arsenic, lead, mercury, petroleum byproducts, acids, cyanide. Acid mine drainage contaminates water and byproducts such as mercury and heavy metals, work their way into the food chain ("bioaccumulation") and impact human health for generations.

The 20,574 acres proposed boundary is only 10% of the watershed, exposing the other 90% to mineral exploration and pollution. We urge the U.S. Forest Service to expand the boundary to protect the health of our relatives.

Sincerely,

Scott Herman, President

Rosebud Sioux Tribe