Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2024 2:45:39 AM
First name: Carolyn
Last name: Mathews
Organization: Native American Support Group
Title: Co-founder
Comments: Dear People at the USDA,

I support the withdrawal of any mining interests from the Sacred Black Hills, in particular the Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek Watershed. The Black HIlls has been a land held Sacred for 100s of years by a number of tribes, and they have already suffered many decades of feeling that their religious beliefs and practices have not been heard or respected. Our nation believes in the Freedom of Religion and laws passed have also affirmed that is true for Native Americans. However, regarding Sacred Lands, the their protection from racial injustice, religious discrimination, and environmental devastation has not been protected, most frequently, and only occasionally has been protected in a minimal manner. Native tribal peoples hold a very close relationship to the land the call Mother Earth, and the Sacred Black Hills is an area that has been especially sacred for a very long time. Please show a greater amount of respect, and honor to their spiritual traditions and to the special qualities of the areas they wish to protect from mining or any other encroachment that endangers clean water, clean air, and risks contaminating the land, and contaminating water sources that are essential for people, land, and animals. It is way past time for the U.S. to show more deference and respect for Native Peoples, and the great reserves of knowledge and understanding they have gleaned from so many decades taking great care as guardians of the land and water, as well as guardians of their sacred traditions. Please expedite this withdrawal as soon as possible! Thank you!