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First name: Jessica

Last name: Penticoff

Organization:

Title:

Comments: 5/2/25

**\*\*Bryan Karchut\*\***

Black Hills National Forest

1019 N. 5th Street

Custer, SD 57730

Re: Opposition to Graphite Mining Exploration in the Rapid Creek Watershed

Dear Mr. Karchut,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed graphite mining exploration in the **\*\*Rapid Creek Watershed\*\***. The potential environmental impact of drilling in this sensitive area is deeply concerning, particularly the risk of **\*\*water contamination\*\*** from exploratory drilling and mining activity. Several of the proposed drill pads are alarmingly close to streams, posing a direct threat to both surface and underground water sources.

Additionally, this area is home to **\*\*Pe'Sla\*\***, a sacred site deeply significant to the **\*\*Lakota people\*\***, who have used this land for spiritual and cultural purposes for generations. Allowing mining activities near Pe'Sla would not only disturb the ecological balance of the Black Hills but also undermine Indigenous rights and traditions.

Given these risks, I urge the **\*\*U.S. Forest Service\*\*** to prohibit graphite mining exploration in the Rapid Creek Watershed. Protecting our water sources and honoring sacred Indigenous lands should be our priority over industrial extraction.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this urgent issue. Please ensure that public concerns are taken into account when making a decision regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,

JessicaPenticoff

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