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Comments: This is an urgent request to protect sacred territory frequently used by many Lakota People for ceremonial practice. This territory was returned to Indigenous care in 2012, but it is now again being threatened by mining interests. Have we not already gone back on enough treaties?!

The Forest Service must not let the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project (#67838) tear up this sacred ground in its quest for graphite. Please, we cannot afford to wreck more of our precious natural world and destroy sacred ground for the sake of greed. That ship has sailed, and it's sunk.

Critically, the drilling also presents a serious threat to the upper Rapid Creek watershed, with some proposed drill pads very close to streams. There is also the potential for contamination or cross-contamination of underground water sources.

In light of the damage it stands to cause, at a minimum, it is time to require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project. It would also be appropriate to set a 60-day extension of the "scoping" public comment period, so that everyone has an opportunity to comment.

Please help to protect Pe' Sla from the damage that the proposed drilling project would cause to both the environment and the people for whom this site is sacred. It's the right thing to do.

Thank you for your attention.