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Comments: Hello,

I am writing today to urge you to not go forward with Bear Lodge Rare Earth Project #291093. The Black Hills National Forest, which is connected with at least 16 tribal nations in the area, has historically been in use by these groups (and more) and continues to be in use today. The cultural site that this project would potentially mine on is in active use by tribes local to this area as a sacred site upon which ceremonial rituals continue to happen today. Therefore, it is unethical to go forward with this project without the explicit consent of these local tribes and descendant communities.

Although the National Historic Preservation Act was cited in the draft for this project [Bear Lodge Plan of Operations V.4, 5.7, p.28], the verification produced by this law in which to give approval for this project to move forward remains insufficient in its ability to properly and fully assess the heritage of this site. We must consider the living memory that exists within the people historically and currently connected to this place as a valid method of assessing heritage within a site. It is essential that these lands be protected under this act, and that the Forest Service, and all connected governmental entities, remain accountable to this and to the people they serve.

Thank you,

JA