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ORGANIZATION SEEKS GOLD EXPLORATION INFORMATION:

APPEAL OF FOREST SERVICE DECISION FILED

CONTACT: Liliias Jarding, Ph.D.
605-787-2872

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance has filed an appeal of the Forest Service's refusal to provide information on proposed gold exploration in the Black Hills, citing the public's right to know about mining-related activities that could negatively impact water, other resources in the area, and our tourism and agriculture economy.

Clean Water Alliance (CWA) filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in December 2018, seeking basic information on requests for permission to explore for gold that had been filed with the U. S. Forest Service in the Black Hills. The request sought plans of operation and other information regarding the individuals or companies that had filed for permission to explore. Currently, the names of the individuals or companies and the locations of potential exploration are unknown.

The Forest Service denied Clean Water Alliance's FOIA request in February, refusing to provide any information. In the CWA appeal, which was filed on May 7, the organization's attorneys argued that the federal Freedom of Information Act was designed to insure that this type of information is public and that the information should be released immediately.

"The Freedom of Information Act was designed to guarantee the public's 'right to know' in just this type of situation – when the federal government is refusing to give us information on government activities that are important to our communities," said Dr. Liliias Jarding of Clean Water Alliance. "The Forest Service needs to stop stonewalling and provide the required information immediately."

P.O. Box 591 – Rapid City, South Dakota 57709 – www.bhcleanwateralliance.org
nobhuranium@gmail.com – Facebook: Black Hills Clean Water Alliance