



MEDIA ADVISORY

MINING COMPANIES RUSHING INTO BLACK HILLS

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Black Hills Clean Water Alliance has identified and mapped thousands of active mining claims on federal lands in the Black Hills region. The results of this research highlight the vast extent of potential mining projects, as well as the modern gold rush that threatens Black Hills water, health, wildlife, and our recreation and tourism economy.

The latest maps and the highlights of this research will be shared at a Press Conference on Wednesday, February 2, 2022, at 1:00 pm at the conference room at the Dakota Rural Action office at 2650 Jackson Blvd. Enter the parking lot from Sheridan Lake Road – the building entrance faces Storybook Island. Once you enter the building, turn left to the conference room.

According to the Bureau of Land Management database, about 148,000 acres in the Black Hills are under either active or filed claims, and the active claims cover a total of about 230 square miles.

Each claim a mining company has on federal land gives that company the right to mine without paying federal royalties. This is due to the 1872 General Mining Law. Surface landowners do not have the right to stop mining of sub-surface federal minerals under this law, which was tailored to the needs of a newly industrializing nation. Mining companies operating under this law have uprooted entire towns. Attempts to update the law have failed so far.

Gold mining and processing are destructive and dirty businesses and have led to two Superfund sites in the Black Hills. Cyanide and other chemicals are used, and arsenic is a common byproduct. Accidents do happen. Studies show that contamination from gold mining in the northern Black Hills reaches to the Missouri River – about 175 miles away.

Note that companies have staked additional claims in recent months that do not show up on these maps. This is because the Bureau of Land Management, which administers the mining claims process, is about six months behind in registering claims. So these maps do not show all claim activity at this time.

Email nobhuranium@gmail.com, if you would like to have the maps, but cannot attend the press conference. Thanks to Mato Ohitika Analytics LLC and Frank DiCesare for their mapping expertise. This research was supported by the Windrose Fund and Clean Water Legacy.

Clean Water Alliance is a diverse collection of citizens concerned about the health, environmental, and economic impacts that proposed destructive and radioactive mining projects would have on our communities, people, economy, and natural resources.
www.bhcleanwateralliance.org