



Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Scott Jacobson, Public Affairs Officer

(605) 440-1409

scott.j.jacobson@usda.gov

www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills/



Public Comments Sought on Withdrawal

RAPID CITY, South Dakota., April 12, 2023 – Officials from the USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are seeking public comments and hosting a public meeting on a requested withdrawal for the Black Hills National Forest. If approved, the requested action would withdraw 20,574 acres of National Forest System lands in the Pactola Reservoir – Rapid Creek Watershed in Pennington County, South Dakota from settlement, sale, location or entry under the public land laws, location and entry under the United States mining laws, and leasing under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws for up to 20 years, subject to valid existing rights.

The purpose of the requested withdrawal is to protect cultural and natural resources in the Pactola Reservoir – Rapid Creek Watershed, including drinking water for Rapid City and Ellsworth Air Force Base, from the potential impacts of mineral exploration and development. The Pactola Reservoir is the largest and deepest reservoir in the Black Hills National Forest and provides high-quality recreation opportunities for communities and visitors.

Public Meeting

Black Hills National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management will host a public meeting to discuss the requested withdrawal on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at 4:00-8:00 p.m. at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel, 2111 North Lacrosse Street, Rapid City, SD. All who are interested in the stewardship of these lands and waters are invited to participate. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management staff will present information about the requested withdrawal and be on-hand to answer questions for the duration of the meeting. Maps and other information will be available for viewing.

Commenting

The public is encouraged to comment on the requested withdrawal. Comments will be accepted for 90 days following the publication of the Notice of Withdrawal Application in the Federal Register. The notice was published on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, and the comment period closes on June 20, 2023. Comment stations will be available at the public meeting for those who would like to submit an electronic comment for the official record. Electronic comments may also be submitted to <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?project=NP-3479>. Written comments may be submitted to Bryan Karchut, Black Hills National Forest, 1019 N. 5th Street, Custer, SD 57730. Comments sent by email will not be accepted. This comment period will serve as the scoping period for the environmental analysis process.

For further information on the requested withdrawal, please contact Elysia Retzlaff, project manager, at elysia.retzlaff@usda.gov or visit the project website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=63876>. Information regarding the requested withdrawal will also be available at the Black Hills National Forest, Forest Supervisor's Office, 1019 N. 5th Street, Custer, South Dakota 57730 and at the BLM Montana/Dakotas State Office, 5001 Southgate Drive, Billings, Montana 59101.

For more information on the Black Hills National Forest, visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills>, follow the Forest on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/blackhillsnf> or Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BlackHillsNF>.

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