



MAPPING PROJECT IDENTIFIES URANIUM COMPANY CLAIMS AROUND BLACK HILLS

Contact:

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Clean Water Alliance has identified and mapped the active claims by radioactive mining companies on federal lands in the Black Hills region. The effort found 2100 claims, with 700 of them in South Dakota and the remainder in Wyoming. (Updated map available soon) Most of the results of this research highlighted the extent of known and proposed mining projects, but the project highlighted the broad extent of uranium company claims in the region.

The known activity included:

- the site of the proposed rare earths mine north of Sundance, WY, which would involve radioactive materials. This project is on hold;
- the proposed Dewey-Burdock uranium mine in Custer and Fall River Counties, as well as adjacent areas on Black Hills National Forest lands and in Wyoming; and
- claims in the area of the new Ross in situ leach uranium mine near Devil's Tower National Monument, a sacred site the Lakota call Mato Tipila.

New public information resulting from this project included the extent of claims in the area of the Dewey-Burdock project. Claims cross the South Dakota – Wyoming line, extending well into both states and onto the Black Hills National Forest. Claims in Crook County, Wyoming, are also extensive, stretching from just north of Moorcroft in a ragged line almost to the Montana line.

Each claim a mining company has on federal land (surface or sub-surface) 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. Attempts to update the law to require federal royalties or to give surface owners a say in the mining process have failed so far.

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