



CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Proposal Name: Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project

Proposal Date: December 14, 2024

Proponent Name: Solitario Resources

Line Officer: Patrick Champa

District: Northern Hills

County: Lawrence

Anticipated Implementation: Spring 2026

Signing Authority: District Ranger

PALS Tracking #: 64551

General Location: Long Draw and Limestone Plateau areas of the northern Black Hills.

Applicable Management Areas: 5.1 Resource Production Emphasis

Legal Description: Black Hills Meridian T4N, R2E, Sections 28, 32, and 33; T3N, R2E, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 16; and T4N, R1E, Sections 21, 22, and 28

Elevation Range: 6,200-6,600 ft

Watersheds: HUC 12 Upper Spearfish Creek

Is cost recovery anticipated? No



APPLICABLE CATEGORY

This proposal is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) because it fits the following category, pending extraordinary circumstance determinations:

Applicable Category: Department of the Interior Departmental Manual Part 516, Category 9.5(G)

The US Forest Service (USFS) adopted six US Geological Survey (USGS) categorical exclusions (CEs) through a Federal Register notice ([FR Doc. 2024-22154](#) Filed 9/27/24). Specifically, the proposed action falls under USGS category 9.5G “*Test or exploration drilling and downhole testing, including contracts therefor*”. This category is applicable for this project because it includes exploration drilling and does not include construction of new access roads.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this Federal action is to analyze Solitario Resources’ plan of operations (PO) for the Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project, as necessary to meet the requirements of USFS and USGS regulations and within the context of the operator’s statutory rights under the Federal mining laws to determine if extraordinary circumstances exist that would preclude the use of a categorical exclusion.

The need for the action is to comply with regulations governing the use of surface resources for operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands under mining regulations defined in 36 CFR 228, Subpart A. These regulations require that the USFS respond to parties who submit a proposed plan of operations for approval to conduct operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands for part or all of their planned actions including mining, mineral processing, and uses reasonably incident thereto. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the submittal of Solitario’s proposed PO requires the USFS to consider whether to approve the proposed mineral exploration PO or to require changes or additions necessary for the plan to meet the purpose of the regulations for locatable mineral operations.

PROPOSED ACTION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project includes 49 core drill platforms, a staging area, access road maintenance (as needed), and reclamation activities. Drill locations are primarily located along existing roads and trails in past timber sale areas that were previously disturbed. Most drill sites are located at flat and wide areas previously used for log landings, truck turnarounds, and laydown areas. Each drill site would have a footprint of approximately 25 feet (ft) by 75 ft (1,875 square ft or 0.043 acre each), which would provide space for the drill rig, rods, support vehicles, water truck, and sump. One staging area (approximately 1 acre) would be used to store equipment and tools along National Forest System Road (NFSR) 209. Drill sites and the staging area would result in approximately 3.1 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Drill site locations were selected based on geology, mineralization targets, and surface conditions (i.e., existing disturbance, flat topography, and minimization of visibility from paved roads and permanent structures) that allow Solitario to explore for indications of mineralization while minimizing surface disturbance. No new access roads would be constructed to access drill sites or the staging area.

Any water used for drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or privately owned water supply in the Lead/Deadwood area. The proposed project duration is a total of 27 months of active drilling, excluding inactive periods, over a total of 4 calendar years. This proposal is guided by the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) Land and Resource Management Plan as amended by the Phase II Amendment (USDA-Forest Service,



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2006a) and evaluated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). No mining, milling, or processing is proposed as part of the Project. No activities would occur in Spearfish Canyon (management area (MA) 4.2A). All proposed activities would occur in MA 5.1 (Resource Production Emphasis), which is open to mineral exploration.

Access

Main access to the 43 proposed drill sites in the Long Draw area of the Project would be from National Forest System Road (NFSR) 209 (Long Draw Road) via Lawrence County Road 196 (Hanna Road), North Rochford Road, and US Highway 14A. US Highway 85 (Spearfish Canyon Highway) is located to the west of the Long Draw area but would not be used for access. Tinton Road (NFSR 134) would provide primary access to the six platforms in the Limestone Plateau area. Additional NFSRs and National Forest System Trails (NFSTs) that are anticipated to be used for access may include 8150, 8151, 8152, 8153, 8154, 209.2D, 209.2J, 209.2M, 733, and 734.1. Additional access to drill sites would be provided by non-system (i.e., unnumbered) roads or trails that exist on the ground and were previously used for logging activities.

The project would also include usage of approximately 25.5 linear miles of existing USFS roads and trails to access the individual drill sites (excluding Long Draw Road and Tinton Road, which are the main access routes to the general project area). Assuming a 10-ft road width, these 25.5 miles of existing access roads and trails cover approximately 30.9 acres. Maintenance would only occur on these roads as necessary and is expected to be minimal given that most roads and trails in the areas proposed for exploration are in good condition.

The majority of NFSRs are designated as open only to highway legal vehicles and are only open seasonally to public travel (generally from May 15 through December 15 each year). NFSTs used for the project are predominantly historic logging roads or seasonal off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails, most blocked with gates, rock berms, or soil berms. Solitario would temporarily move or modify rock and soil berms to allow access. Any roads or trails restricted to public travel, either seasonally or permanently, would remain restricted throughout the duration of the project. Likewise, any roads or trails open to the public would remain open, with signage in place during active drilling operations.

NFSTs 8150, 8151, 8152, 8153, and 8154 are Special Designation Trails with a vehicle width restriction of 62 inches. As part of the PO approval, Solitario would receive a temporary waiver of the vehicle width restriction to allow access for drilling equipment and support vehicles. Any modification to gates would be conducted in accordance with USFS instructions. Though NFSTs 8150, 8151, 8152, 8153, and 8154 are under width restrictions, the roadbeds are adequate for project vehicles and no modifications to the roadbed are proposed. No routine road maintenance is proposed, however, if Solitario's use of the road/trail results in degradation of road conditions as determined by the USFS, Solitario would perform maintenance in consultation with the USFS to return the road/trail to preoperational condition.

DRILLHOLE PLUGGING AND ABANDONMENT PLAN

Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per ARSD 74:11:08 and SDCL 45-6C-28 through 45-6C-30. If an aquifer is penetrated, the completed exploration drillholes would be plugged from bottom to top using bentonite grout, which complies with the requirements of ARSD 74:11:08:05 and ARSD 74:11:08:05:01 (i.e., requirements for plugging exploration drillholes that penetrate single unconfined aquifers and confined or multiple aquifers). If a confined aquifer is penetrated, the weight of the bentonite grout column would need to be sufficient to overcome formation pressure, or the hole would be plugged using cement grout.

RECLAMATION PLAN

Drill sites and the staging area would be reclaimed upon completion of drilling by re-grading the pads to pre-



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Project contours and reseeded as noted in the PO. Reclamation of a drill site would occur after drilling is completed at a particular site; reclamation of the staging area would be completed after the entire drilling program is completed. Drillholes would be plugged immediately upon completion; however, the drill pad reclamation itself would not be completed until after the assay results on the core are back. The PO contains a provision for interim (temporary) reclamation.

If significant topsoil occurs at the drill site, then the topsoil may be stockpiled; stockpiled soils would be spread over the drill pad area during reclamation. Overly compacted areas at the drill sites, turnarounds, and staging area that are not located on an active roadbed would be roughed either manually or mechanically to enhance seeding viability and minimize erosion. Areas to be enhanced by reseeded would initially be mulched with locally derived, stockpiled organic-rich amendments or with commercially available certified weed-free mulch. Seeding would be applied in accordance with USFS guidance using a mix listed in the PO. Solitario would treat noxious weeds for 1 year after final reclamation of each site.

EQUIPMENT TO BE USED

Each drill site may require a maximum of the following equipment during the operation activities:

Motorized

- One core drilling rig (track mounted)
- Up to three pickup trucks
- One water truck (4,000-6,000 gallons)
- One backhoe or skid steer for repositioning of drill rig (if needed), excavation of sump(s), moving of drill steel and other supplies.
- One or two Utility Task Vehicles (UTV).
- One telehandler
- One D-6 bulldozer (in case a skid-mounted drill rig is utilized)
- Portable light plant

Stationary

- Portable toilet
- Drill steel
- Drill rod rack storage
- Parts trailer
- Water tanks or bladders for water storage
- Two to three water recirculation tanks or sumps
- Waterline and pumps
- Mud pump and tank for mixing drill mud, grout, and cement for drill hole reclamation
- Waste receptacles labeled for trash and recyclables

FIRE PROTECTION

In case of fire, the following will be available:

- Fire extinguisher
- Fire tools (e.g. shovels, buckets)



PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

The following design features were proposed by the proponent or identified by the USFS interdisciplinary team reviewing the project. They provide consistency with the Forest Plan and other laws, regulations, policy, or guidance, and they minimize potential impacts to the applicable resources.

Applicant-Proposed Design Features

Access and Transportation

- Drilling would occur from approximately May 15 through October 15 for most drill sites to protect roads and prevent rutting. Operations can continue on a site-specific basis until access road conditions are such that a 1-inch rut in the road is formed and only where trail grooming for winter recreation activities has not begun. Operations must end no later than December 15 because of winter road closures. Road conditions must be inspected regularly by Solitario and the USFS staff will ensure compliance. Solitario shall inform the USFS in advance of when they plan to start and stop drilling each season.
- Solitario included a sign plan in the PO. Signage would be placed on any roads or trails adjacent to drill locations when drilling operations are under way. Safety signage regarding heavy equipment use of the road will be posted throughout the work area to ensure the public is aware of the temporary site work. Signage will be required where rock and soil berms are temporarily removed to inform the public that the road is closed to motorized use and is accessible by permit only.
- Any road gates that are normally locked should remain locked unless vehicles or equipment are actively passing through them. If a gate is locked upon entry, Solitario would be required to lock the gate behind them during operations to reduce public access and ensure public safety.
- Solitario would be required to double lock access gates with their own locks alongside the USFS locks. All locks would be removed at the completion of the Project. Solitario must coordinate installation of double-locks with the USFS.
- Rock and soil berms would be replaced with a similar closure method during short breaks in work, such as winter shutdown or whenever operations cease for more than 30 days. This would prevent the public from accessing roads that are usually closed to motorized vehicles. Any non-gate road closures (e.g., berms, boulders) that are removed as part of Project implementation would be replaced as soon as possible after project operations behind those closures are complete.
- Any unexpected road or trail damage would be repaired as soon as possible. The USFS would be consulted with to approve the proposed maintenance and inspect the repair. Contractor equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities.
- Materials used for the project would be stored either at the staging area or individual drill sites; materials would not be stored along trails or roads or at other locations. All materials would be removed upon completion of drilling at a particular drill site.
- All existing USFS-authorized improvements, including but not limited to fences, roads, trails, water tanks, gates, and utility lines are considered protected improvements and should be protected during project implementation. Should any improvement be damaged, the Northern Hills Ranger District must be contacted, and it must be returned to its original condition as soon as possible.
- All access routes for equipment and/or water haulage that are not defined in the PO shall be provided to the USFS for review and approval.

Air Quality

- Solitario proposed a speed limit of 25 mph on NFSRs to minimize dust. Dust suppression techniques such as water spraying would be implemented should conditions warrant.



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Soils and Geology

- Upon a drill site closure, the drill solids will be buried in the sump, lined with a biodegradable liner or a plastic liner that will be removed, then mulched, and seeded.

Groundwater

- Solitario's proposed capture and recycling system for drill fluids allows for reduced amounts of water consumption. Drill fluids would be contained in the recirculation tanks or a sump system, which would contain water and drill solids, allow the solids to settle, and recirculate (i.e., reuse) all the water that is not lost in the hole.
- Plugging reports be submitted within 7 days post-closure. Drillholes would be sealed within 24 to 48 hours of drilling completion before moving the drill rig.

Surface Water

- To prevent silt and debris from entering streams, springs, wetlands, and other waterbodies, the Proponent would maintain a 100-ft buffer in the Watershed Influence Zone (WIZ). No wheeled or tracked equipment is allowed in the WIZ unless on existing access roads or approved by the District Ranger (Forest Plan Standards 1301-1305).
- Secondary containment shall accommodate 110 percent capacity to ensure any potential leak is contained and that there is adequate freeboard to accommodate a small precipitation event.
- During active drilling operations, Solitario shall continuously monitor and manage sump fluid levels and available freeboard closely, especially if the boring is beginning to make excessive water, if artesian conditions are encountered, and during precipitation events. Solitario shall report any release of drilling water, fluids, or cuttings outside the authorized drill platform area to the Forest Mineral Administrator. The USFS may specify additional assessment or monitoring requirements to assess and remediate any adverse effects resulting from any unplanned discharge.
- In the emergency event that excess drilling water or precipitation fills the lined sumps, an unlined sump immediately downhill from the lined sump(s) would be constructed as approved by the Northern Hills District Ranger. This would allow for infiltration or evaporation in the unlined sump versus land application or overland flow.
- As necessary, erosion control logs and water diversion structures may be used to divert surface water away from the work site.
- Solitario also proposed that, during seasonal or temporary closures, the surface water hydrology of the drill site be reverted to preoperational conditions where no surface water is present near the work areas. However, temporary mitigation measures such as erosion control logs or diversion structures may be left in place during short-term closures as needed for areas with side slopes.
- Secondary road areas occupied by the drill sites or staging area would be modified by installing water bars or diversion structures, as necessary, and depending on the slope of the existing topography, so that post-use erosion is not promoted. Sites would be monitored by Solitario throughout the drill program and any ruts or irregularities in the surface may be modified to minimize erosion.
- Solitario has a spill prevention control plan describing protocols for avoiding and controlling any spills that could occur on-site under this plan. Training of on-site personnel in the response protocols would be mandatory.

Wildlife

- Lights used during night operations would be shielded and downward facing to minimize ambient light pollution to the surrounding area.



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- Any threatened/endangered species, R2 sensitive species, or Species of Local Concern located within the project effects area during Project implementation will be appropriately managed through coordination with the USFS and SD GFP (South Dakota Game Fish and Parks).
- If any newly discovered hibernacula are identified within 0.25 mile of a drill site, or if a maternity roost is discovered within 150 feet of a drill platform, before or during the Project, drilling activities at that platform will only occur between May 31 and October 1 or at the direction of the USFS. This restriction will protect any hibernacula or roost that might be located in the future.
- To protect any newly discovered bat roost, any locations/trees where bats are found (alive or dead) near proposed drill platforms will be avoided. Flag off the area and report the location immediately to the USFS to determine if a roost or hibernacula is nearby that may be impacted by the drill site. Work will cease in the 0.25 mile area around the bat until cleared by the USFS.
- Tree removal will not occur as part of the Project. Drill platforms are located as such that tree removal is not necessary. In addition, boulder removal during the northern long eared bat pup season will be avoided (June 1 through August 31).
- Any newly discovered cave or underground mine locations will be provided to the USFS for further evaluation as potential bat habitat.
- Particular attention will be given to drill sumps to prevent animals and birds as well as personnel from falling into one. Open sumps at drill locations would have a barrier around them (e.g., hurricane fencing or something similar) sufficient to prevent cattle and big game from walking into the sump. Open sumps should be covered to the maximum extent possible with material to discourage birds or bats from entering the sumps. This material should be something other than nylon or mesh netting to prevent birds and bats from becoming entangled in the covering.

Cultural Resources

- No known historic or archaeological values exist in the project area. Solitario will avoid all archaeological sites that have previously been recorded during surveys of the Project vicinity.
- If Solitario encounters cultural resources (e.g., bones, artifacts, foundations, or other indications of past human occupation of the area) during operations, work in the vicinity of the discovery must cease immediately. The Northern Hills Ranger District must be contacted within 24 hours so the agency can take steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate possible adverse effects.

Recreation

- Drilling operations would be scheduled to avoid peak tourism periods such as Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, and the Sturgis Rally. The scheduled work pauses would be coordinated with the Forest Service.

Vegetation

- Stockpiled soils would be spread over the drill platform area. Overly compacted areas at the drill sites, turnarounds, and staging areas not located on an active roadbed would be roughed manually or mechanically to enhance seeding viability and minimize erosion. Areas to be enhanced by reseeding would initially be mulched with locally derived, stockpiled organic-rich amendments or with commercially available certified weed-free mulch. Seeding would be applied in accordance with USFS guidance.
- Equipment will be cleaned prior to arrival and departure from the site, removing all soil, plant parts, seeds, vegetative matter, or other debris that could contain seeds in order to prevent the spread of noxious weeds into or out of the Project area.
- Solitario would spray for weeds for 1 year after the final reclamation of each site.



Public Health and Safety

- Solitario has developed a Health and Safety Plan that is included in the PO. The plan includes a site security plan to maintain site safety and limit risk of public interference as well as an emergency response plan.
- Residences within 1 mile of drill sites would be notified by Solitario before Project implementation to increase their awareness and safety around drilling equipment and traffic on local roads and trails.
- All vehicles, drill rigs, and other on-site equipment would be inspected as part of daily safety checks and would be equipped with a fire extinguisher, which would also be inspected routinely. Fire tools (e.g., shovels, buckets) shall also be maintained in each vehicle or staged appropriately onsite. To reduce fire risk, vehicles shall not sit idle more than 5 minutes and shall not be over vegetation while doing so.
- Any road gates that are normally locked will remain locked unless vehicles or equipment are actively passing through them.
- Secondary road areas occupied by the drill sites or staging area would be modified by installing water bars or diversion structures, as necessary, and depending on the slope of the existing topography, so that post-use erosion is not promoted. Sites would be monitored by Solitario throughout the drill program and any ruts or irregularities in the surface may be modified to minimize erosion.

USFS Developed Design Criteria

Vegetation

- VEG-01: Before Project implementation, Solitario would be required to submit a financial assurance for reclamation to the USFS, with the amount of the bond determined in accordance with the 36 CFR 228.13 and the USFS 2004 Bond Guide. This bond would not be released until satisfactory reclamation and revegetation of the drill locations has occurred; including pads recontoured back to a natural landform and established ground cover that matches surrounding terrain.
- VEG-02: Retain all snags that are not considered a hazard to property or life.
- VEG-03: Initiate revegetation as soon as possible (i.e., not to exceed 6 months) after termination of ground-disturbing activities. Revegetate all disturbed soils with native species in seed/plant mixtures that are noxious weed free. On areas needing immediate establishment of vegetation, non-native, non-aggressive annuals (e.g., wheat, oats, rye), or sterile species may be used while native perennials are becoming established, or when native species are not available (e.g., during drought years). Aggressive, non-native perennials (e.g., smooth brome, timothy) would not be used.
- VEG-04: The Proponent will monitor and assess the progress of reclamation activities, including revegetation and erosion control, for a minimum of 3 years. Depending on the success of the reclamation efforts, additional seeding, weed treatment, or installation of erosion control structures may be required by the Proponent.
- VEG-05: Use targeted herbicide application methods such as spot-spraying or foliar spraying on individual plants in suitable bat roost habitat to treat non-native species. Herbicide may be applied with hand-held equipment (hose and handguns) using ground vehicles, backpack sprayers, all-terrain vehicles and other equipment developed for spot treatment. Use of spray booms mounted on ground vehicles are only used on a site-specific basis where appropriate.

Wildlife and Fisheries

- WIL-01: Any threatened/endangered species, R2 sensitive species, or Species of Local Concern located within the project effects area during project implementation would be appropriately managed through coordination with the USFS.
- WIL-02: The drilling operations will occur 24 hours a day. Project design criteria for this project requires the use of downward-facing, full cut-off lens lights. If this is not possible in some situations the Backlight,



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Uplight, Glare (BUG) system with all three ratings must be as close to zero as is possible, with a priority of "uplight" of 0.

- WIL-03: Drilling at a site that results in 60 dBs or greater in potential maternity roost habitat (defined as Habitat Structural Stage (HSS) 4B, 4C, and 5 in the Forest Plan) must avoid the northern long-eared bat pupping season (Jun 15 – August 31). Any drilling started prior to June 15 would be allowed to continue until drilling is completed. All drilling sites within 100 feet of an established road is exempt from this conservation measure.
- WIL-04: Drilling at a site that results in 60 dBs or greater in potential maternity roost habitat (defined as HSS 4B, 4C, and 5) is permitted if drilling stops between dusk and dawn to minimize impacts to foraging bats during the northern long-eared bat pupping season (Jun 15 – August 31). Any drilling started prior to June 15 would be allowed to continue until drilling is completed.
- WIL-05: If occupancy surveys find no northern long-eared bats, drilling may occur at any time during the northern long-eared bat active season. Surveys must follow USFWS Northern Long-eared Bat survey guidelines are good for three years (the year of the survey and the following two years).

PROJECT SCREENING

LEGAL AND REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Given the nature of the proposal, the Responsible Official is requesting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the following regulatory considerations in addition to NEPA:

- NFMA/Land Management Plan
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Sensitive Species (FSM 2670)
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Tribal Consultation
- Clean Air Act (CAA)
- Clean Water Act (CWA)
- Pertinent Executive Orders

AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS, and PERSONS TO BE CONTACTED

Given the nature of the proposal, the Responsible Official requested the following agencies, organizations and/or persons be contacted to provide input to, or to be made aware of, the proposal. A full list of tribes, individuals, agencies, and groups contacted is in the project record. A brief overview of feedback or comments received is included in the Scoping Summary, which is also available in the project record.

- Tribes (see section *Consultation with Federally Recognized Tribes*)
- Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- Lawrence County Commissioners
- Lawrence County Natural Resource Committee
- Office of the Governor of South Dakota
- South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- South Dakota Department of Transportation
- South Dakota Division of Forestry
- South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks



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- South Dakota Archaeological Research Center
- South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
- South Dakota Wildland Suppression Division
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Landowners within 1 mile of the project area
- Potentially interested parties on the Northern Hills Ranger District’s standard scoping list.

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 1. Applicable project file documentation to support analysis

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Tribal Chairperson Contact List	2024-10-08 Tribal Chairperson Contacts
Tribal THPO and SHPO Contact List	2025-11-03 THPO SHPO Contacts
Ponderosa Scoping Mailing List	2025-05-22 NHRD Standard Scoping List
Private Landowners Mailing List	2025-06-20 Landowner Mailing List
Scoping Summary	2026-01-06 Scoping Summary
Scoping Notice	2025-06-20 Scoping Notice
Scoping Map – Long Draw Sites	2025-06-20 Long Draw Map
Scoping Map – Limestone Plateau Sites	2025-06-20 Limestone Plateau Map
Tribal Pre-scoping Letter	2025-06-10 Tribal Pre-Scoping Letter
Tribal Scoping Letter	2025-06-20 Tribal Scoping Letter
Public Scoping Letter	2025-06-20 Public Scoping Package
Landowner Scoping Letter	2025-06-20 Landowner Scoping Letter

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW

The Responsible Official has requested the following resource areas to review the proposal to determine compliance with the regulatory considerations.

Resource	Review Complete
Botany	7/31/25, Zach Mergen
Heritage	9/24/25, David Porter
Hydrology	11/9/25, Melissa Dempsey
Minerals	11/9/25, Karl Emanuel

Resource	Review Complete
Recreation	2/15/24, Austin Aluise
Soils	11/9/25, Melissa Dempsey
Wildlife	10/22/25, Ruben Mares

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT (NFMA) – LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY

The pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposed action including design features and provided supporting analysis and rationale for determinations in the project record. The following are specialist determinations regarding project consistency with applicable land management plan direction, standards, and guidelines:



Botany: Consistent
Cultural/Heritage: Consistent
Engineering: N/A
Fisheries: N/A
Fuels: N/A
Hydrology: Consistent
Lands/Special Uses: N/A
Minerals: Consistent

Range: N/A
Recreation: Consistent
Scenic Resources: N/A
Soils: Consistent
Silviculture: N/A
Special Management Areas: N/A
Wildlife: Consistent

Other Law, Regulation and Policy Consistency

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES OR CRITICAL HABITAT

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for threatened, endangered and proposed species. Please see the biological assessment (BA) in the project record.

The project will not have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species nor will it have a significant impact on designated Critical Habitat for these species.

Table 2: Effect Determinations for ESA

Species/Habitat	Status	Proposed or Designated Critical Habitat Present?	Determination*	Brief Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Red Knot	Threatened	No	NE	Species not present in the project area.
Northern Long-Eared Bat	Endangered	No	NLAA	See biological assessment.
Tricolored Bat	Proposed Endangered	No	NLAA	See biological assessment.
Monarch Butterfly	Proposed Threatened	No	No Jeopardy	See biological assessment.
Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee	Proposed Endangered	No	No Jeopardy	See biological assessment.

NE – no effect; NLAA – may affect, not likely to adversely affect; LAA – may affect, likely to adversely affect; **No Jeopardy** - not likely to jeopardize the continued existence or adversely modify critical habitat

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 3: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support Analysis

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BABE)	2025-10-22 Ponderosa BABE
Vegetation Survey Report	2025-03-21 Botany Survey Report
Vegetation Survey Report Addendum	2025-07-07 Supplemental Botany Survey Report
Raptor Survey Report	2023-11-08 Raptor Survey Report



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USFWS Species List	2025-06-04 FWS Species List
USFWS Consultation Cover Letter	2025-08-12 Consultation Cover Letter
USFWS Updated Consultation Cover Letter	2025-10-28 Consultation Updated Cover Letter
USFWS Concurrence Letter	2025-11-19 FWS Concurrence Letter

SENSITIVE SPECIES (FSM 2670)

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposed action and made the following determinations for sensitive species. Please see the BABE in the project record.

Table 4: U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species Impact Determinations

Species	Determination	Rationale (or refer to project documentation)
Northern Leopard Frog	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.
American Bittern	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Black-Backed Woodpecker	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Brewer’s Sparrow	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Burrowing Owl	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Ferruginous Hawk	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Flammulated Owl	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Grasshopper Sparrow	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Lewis’s Woodpecker	NI	unlikely to occur in project area
Loggerhead Shrike	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Long-Billed Curlew	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Mountain Plover	NI	lack of suitable habitat
American Goshawk	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.
Northern Harrier	NI	unlikely to occur in project area
Olive-Sided Flycatcher	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Purple Martin	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Short-Eared Owl	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Arogos Skipper	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Ottoo Skipper	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Regal Fritillary	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Western Bumble Bee	NI	unlikely to be impacted by project
American Marten	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.
Black-Tailed Prairie Dog	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Fringed Myotis	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.
Hoary Bat	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.
River Otter	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Bighorn Sheep	NI	unlikely to occur in project area



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Townsend’s Big-Eared Bat	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.
Black Hills Redbelly Snake	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Cooper’s Rocky Mountain Snail	NI	lack of suitable habitat
Prairie Moonwort	MIIH	See biological assessment/biological evaluation.

NI – no impact; MIIH- may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species; WIFV - will impact individuals or habitat with a consequence that the action may contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 5: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support Agency Sensitive Species Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BABE)	2025-10-22 Ponderosa BABE
Vegetation Survey Report	2025-03-21 Botany Survey Report
Vegetation Survey Report Addendum	2025-07-07 Supplemental Botany Survey Report
Raptor Survey Report	2023-11-08 Raptor Survey Report

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA) – SECTION 106 REVIEW

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination regarding Section 106 compliance:

No historic properties affected - 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Section 106 Review has been completed for the project area, and no National Register eligible cultural sites were found.

The project will not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.

COMMENTS

The District Archeologist has reviewed the proposal for this project as described in the plan of operations and made a determination of No Historic Properties Affected. No eligible cultural resources were located within the area of potential effect during surveys completed in December 2023, May-June 2024, and July 2025.

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 6: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support NHPA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Ponderosa Project Level III Cultural Resources Report	2025-09-25 Lvl III Cultural Resources Report
SHPO Concurrence Letter	2025-10-23 SHPO Concurrence
Northern Cheyenne THPO Concurrence Letter	2025-10-21 NCheyenne THPO Concurrence



CONSULTATION with FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES

Consultation with American Indian Tribes was initiated and conducted through a series of letters, virtual meetings, and in-person meetings, documented below.

A description of the proposal and a request for consultation were sent to the following Tribes on June 10, 2025:

- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Eastern Shoshone Tribe
- Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe
- Lower Brule Sioux Tribe
- Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation
- Northern Arapaho Tribe
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe
- Oglala Lakota Nation
- Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- Santee Sioux Nation
- Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe
- Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
- Yankton Sioux Tribe

COMMENTS

Efforts to engage in consultation, in-person meetings to discuss this project, and correspondence with Tribal leaders occurred on several occasions throughout 2025. On June 10, 2025, letters were sent to 16 federally recognized Tribes informing them that the scoping period for the Ponderosa project would begin soon and inviting them to engage in government-to-government consultation. Another letter was sent on June 20, 2025, informing tribal leaders and tribal historic preservation officers (THPOs) that the public scoping period had begun, inviting comments on the proposed action, and again expressing interest in engaging in government-to-government consultation. Also on that date, documents describing the Ponderosa project were posted on the Black Hills National Forest website.

Concerns were expressed by tribal leaders and THPOs during the scoping period. Specifically, the Oglala Sioux Tribe expressed concerns over treaty rights, fishing rights, clean water, and ownership of cultural items. The Crow Creek Sioux, Rosebud Sioux, and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes expressed concerns regarding treaty rights and their opposition to any drilling or mining within the Black Hills. Scoping comments from tribal members noted the presence of a Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe property approximately one mile south of the project area that is used for spiritual and ceremonial purposes. The proposed project does not limit access to, or ceremonial use of, sacred sites located on Federal lands, nor does it significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007).

Throughout 2025, the Black Hills National Forest engaged in government-to-government consultation on the Ponderosa project and other proposed exploratory drilling projects on the Forest, meeting with tribal representatives on ten separate occasions, both virtually and in person. In addition, in November and December 2025, Black Hills National Forest staff visited tribal representatives at reservation offices in person to discuss and answer questions on the proposed projects.

Two tribal resolution letters regarding the Ponderosa project were received from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, dated December 30, 2025, and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, dated December 31, 2025.



Table 7: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support Tribal Consultation Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name(s)
Tribal Pre-Scoping Letter	2025-06-10 Tribal Pre-Scoping Letter
Tribal Scoping Letter	2025-06-20 Tribal Scoping Letter
Oglala Sioux Tribe Scoping Comments	2025-07-21 Oglala Sioux Tribe Email
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe Scoping Comments	2025-06-23 Crow Creek Sioux Tribe Comments
Rosebud Sioux Tribe Scoping Comments	2025-06-23 Rosebud Sioux Tribe Comments
Tribal Consultation Timeline	2026-01-06 Ponderosa Consultation Timeline
Rosebud Sioux Tribe Consultation Response	2025-12-31 Rosebud Sioux Tribe Consultation Response
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Consultation Response	2025-12-31 Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Consultation Response
Forest Supervisor Response to Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	2026-02-17 Response Letter to Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
Forest Supervisor Response to Rosebud Sioux Tribe	2026-02-17 Response Letter to Rosebud Sioux Tribe

CLEAN AIR ACT (CAA)

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination regarding the CAA:

Particulates generated by project activities would be consistent with nearby ambient emissions and would result in no measurable impacts to air quality as a limited amount of project-related emissions would be created by heavy machinery over the life of the project (see Equipment to be Used under the Proposed Action section of the plan of operations). Further, the project is temporary in nature and would result in no permanent increase in air emissions. This project is consistent with the CAA.

CLEAN WATER ACT (CWA)

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination:

The project will not affect any waters, including wetlands, and no further permits or modifications are needed to ensure compliance.

The project Hydrologist completed a specialist report (see below), documenting project water quality impacts and consistency with the Clean Water Act. See documentation for rationale.

Table 8: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support CWA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name(s)
Hydrology Specialist Report	2026-01-19 Hydrology Geology Report



PERTINENT EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The line officer has determined the proposal is in compliance with the following Executive Orders (EO), which were deemed pertinent based on the nature of the proposal.

- EO 11988, Floodplain Management
- EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites
- EO 13112, Invasive Species
- EO 13175, Consultation & Coordination w/ Indian Tribal Governments
- EO 14154, Unleashing American Energy
- EO 14156, Declaring a National Energy Emergency
- EO 14241, Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral Production

COMMENTS

Compliance with EOs 11988, 11990, and 13112 is accomplished through implementation of project design features identified above.

Compliance with EOs 13007 and 13175 is documented in the Tribal Consultation section above. No Indian Sacred Sites were identified within the project area.

Compliance with EOs 14154, 14156, and 14241 is accomplished through utilizing available tools (e.g. borrowing of an appropriate CE from another federal agency) to analyze projects related to mineral exploration on Federal lands.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations with regards to degree of potential effects for the resource conditions considered. The project meets the requirements of both the USFS and USGS lists of extraordinary circumstances, as documented below:



Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project

Table 9: Resource Conditions Considered for US Forest Service Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain.
<p>Federally listed threatened or endangered species,</p> <p>Designated critical habitat,</p> <p>Forest Service sensitive species</p>	<p>BOTANY: NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Proposed drill sites were surveyed for botanical resources, and no species of concern were located. See BA/BE referenced above.</p> <p>FISHERIES: NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: There are no fisheries within the project area and design features for sediment capture will prevent sediment delivery to downstream fish habitat. No anticipated effects were identified that would raise uncertainty over their significance. See BA/BE referenced above.</p> <p>WILDLIFE: NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Activities proposed would not result in adverse impacts to reproducing individuals or modify habitat suitability such that reproductive success would be adversely impacted for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Activities proposed would result in “no effect” on the rufa red knot as there is no known occurrences, critical habitat, or suitable habitat in the project area. The project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the northern long-eared bat and tricolored bat. The project is “not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of” the monarch butterfly or Suckley’s cuckoo bumble bee. Impacts to sensitive species would be temporary in nature and would not result in a trend toward federal listing. See BA/BE referenced above.</p>
<p>Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: No designated floodplains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds occur within the project area. If design features are maintained and checked for quality control yearly, there should be no potential for significant detrimental effects on project surface water quality.</p>
<p>Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas</p>	<p>N/A, not present</p>
<p>Inventoried roadless areas</p>	<p>N/A, not present</p>
<p>Research natural areas</p>	<p>N/A, not present</p>
<p>American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Surveys for cultural resources were conducted at proposed drill sites and all associated travel routes. No cultural resources were located during surveys. See Tribal Consultation Section Above.</p>
<p>Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Surveys for historic properties were conducted at proposed drill sites and all associated travel routes. No historic properties were located. See NHPA Section 106 discussion above</p>



Table 10: Resource Conditions Considered for US Geological Survey Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain.
Public health or safety	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty.</p> <p>Rationale for Yes/No: Safety and signage plans are included in the plan of operations and design features are in place to minimize potential impacts to the public.</p>
<p>Historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas</p>	<p>Historic or Cultural Resources NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Surveys for cultural resources were conducted at proposed drill sites and all associated travel routes. No cultural resources were located during surveys. See NHPA Section 106 discussion above.</p> <p>Park, Recreation, or Refuge Lands, Wilderness Areas, Wild or Scenic Rivers, National Natural, Landmarks, Prime Farmlands, National Monuments N/A, not present</p> <p>Sole or Principal Drinking Water Aquifers NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: The plan of operations includes procedures for sealing a drill hole should an aquifer be penetrated. See hydrology specialist report.</p> <p>Wetlands, floodplains NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: If design features are maintained and checked for quality control yearly, there should be no potential for significant detrimental effects on project surface water quality. No designated wetlands or floodplains exist within the project area. See hydrology specialist report.</p> <p>Migratory Birds or Ecologically Critical Areas NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: There are no protected migratory birds or ecologically critical areas in the project area. See BA/BE referenced above.</p>
<p>Highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty.</p> <p>Rationale for Yes/No: Exploratory drilling has occurred previously in other areas of the Black Hills National Forest and elsewhere, and the effects of those activities have been observed. Significant environmental effects have not been observed as a result of those past activities. Design features are in place to minimize environmental effects.</p>
<p>Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty.</p> <p>Rationale for Yes/No: This decision does not establish a precedent for future actions or decisions. Future actions would be considered under NEPA as required.</p>
<p>Direct relationship to other actions that implicate potentially significant environmental effects</p>	<p>NO, there is no uncertainty.</p> <p>Rationale for Yes/No: Cumulative impacts consider the effects of actions that overlap in both place and time. Each individual drill site has a confined area of effect that lasts for one to two weeks,</p>



Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain.
	reducing the potential for cumulative effects between the Ponderosa and Golden Crest projects. Both projects are geographically isolated from other exploratory or mining activities on the Northern Hills Ranger District.
National Register of Historic Places	NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: No sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places exist within the project area. See NHPA Section 106 discussion above
Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat,	<p>BOTANY: NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Surveys were conducted, and no botanical species of concern were located. See BA/BE referenced above.</p> <p>FISHERIES: NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: There are no fisheries within the Project area and design features for sediment capture will prevent sediment delivery to downstream fish habitat. No anticipated direct, indirect, or cumulative effects that would raise uncertainty over their significance. See BA/BE referenced above.</p> <p>WILDLIFE: NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Activities proposed would not result in adverse impacts to reproducing individuals or modify habitat suitability such that reproductive success would be adversely impacted for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Activities proposed would result in “no effect” on the rufa red knot as there is no known occurrences, critical habitat, or suitable habitat in the project area. The project “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” the northern long-eared bat and tricolored bat. The project is “not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of” the monarch butterfly or Suckley’s cuckoo bumble bee. Impacts to sensitive species would be temporary in nature and would not result in a trend toward federal listing. See BA/BE referenced above.</p>
Indian sacred sites	NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: Surveys for cultural resources were conducted, and no resources were located. See Consultation with Federally Recognized Tribes and NHPA Section 106 sections above.
Noxious weeds or non-native invasive species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act)	NO, there is no uncertainty. Rationale for Yes/No: If design features are maintained and checked for quality control, there should be no potential for significant detrimental effects of noxious weeds. See Applicant and USFS Design Features above.

Figure 1. Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Overview Map

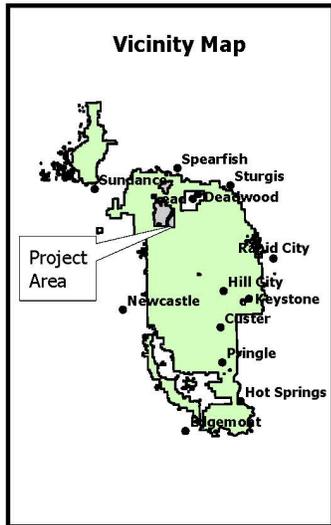
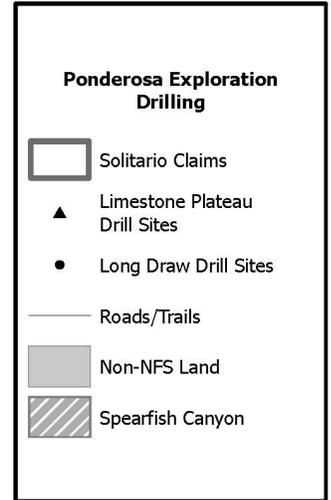
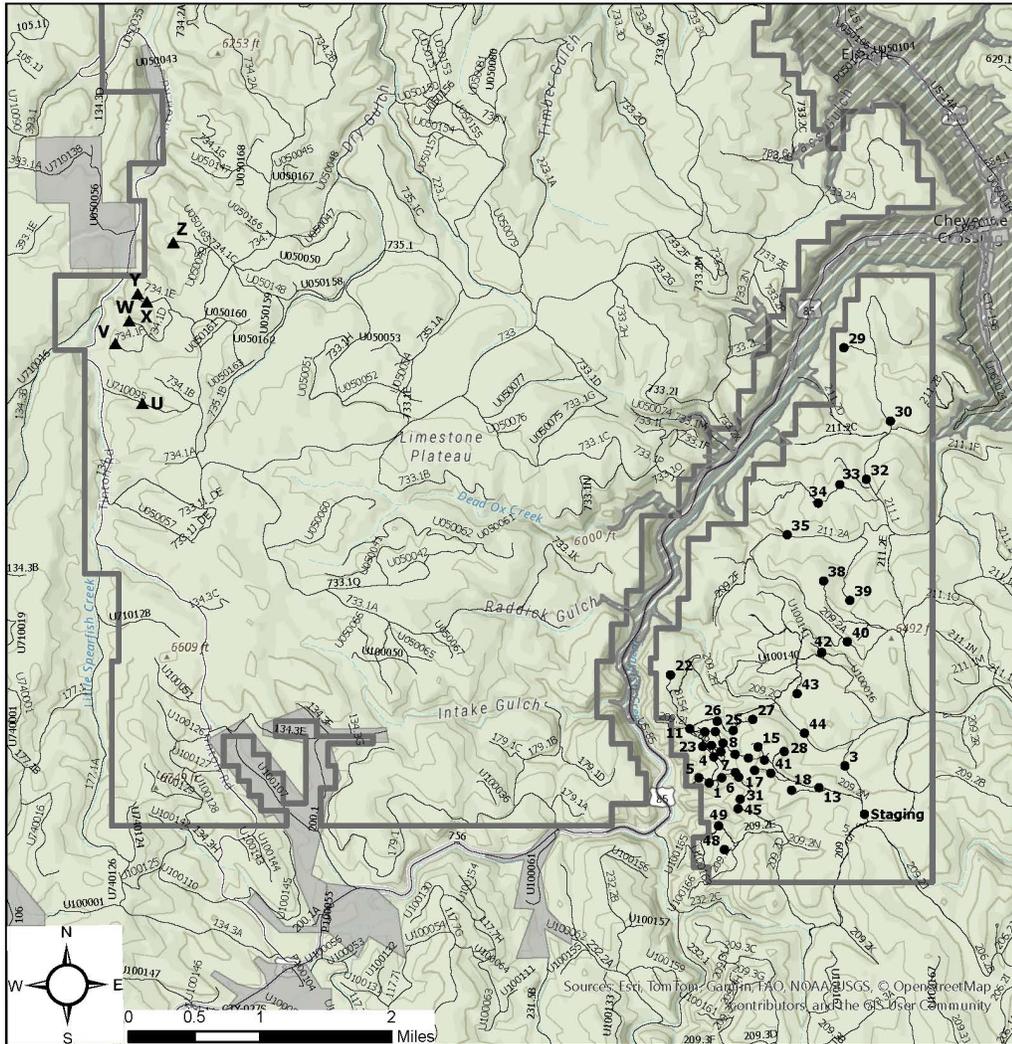


Figure 2. Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Long Draw Drill Sites

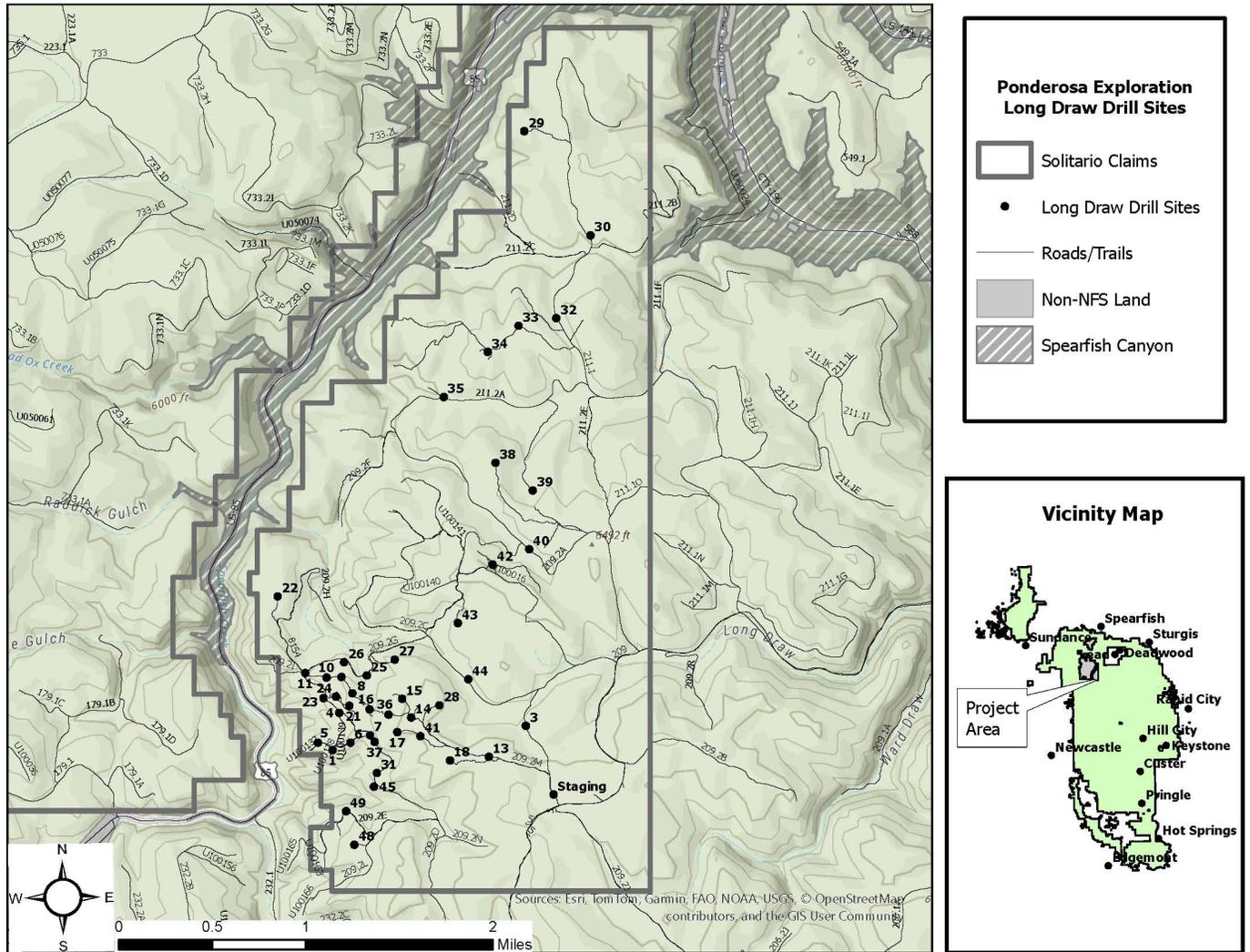
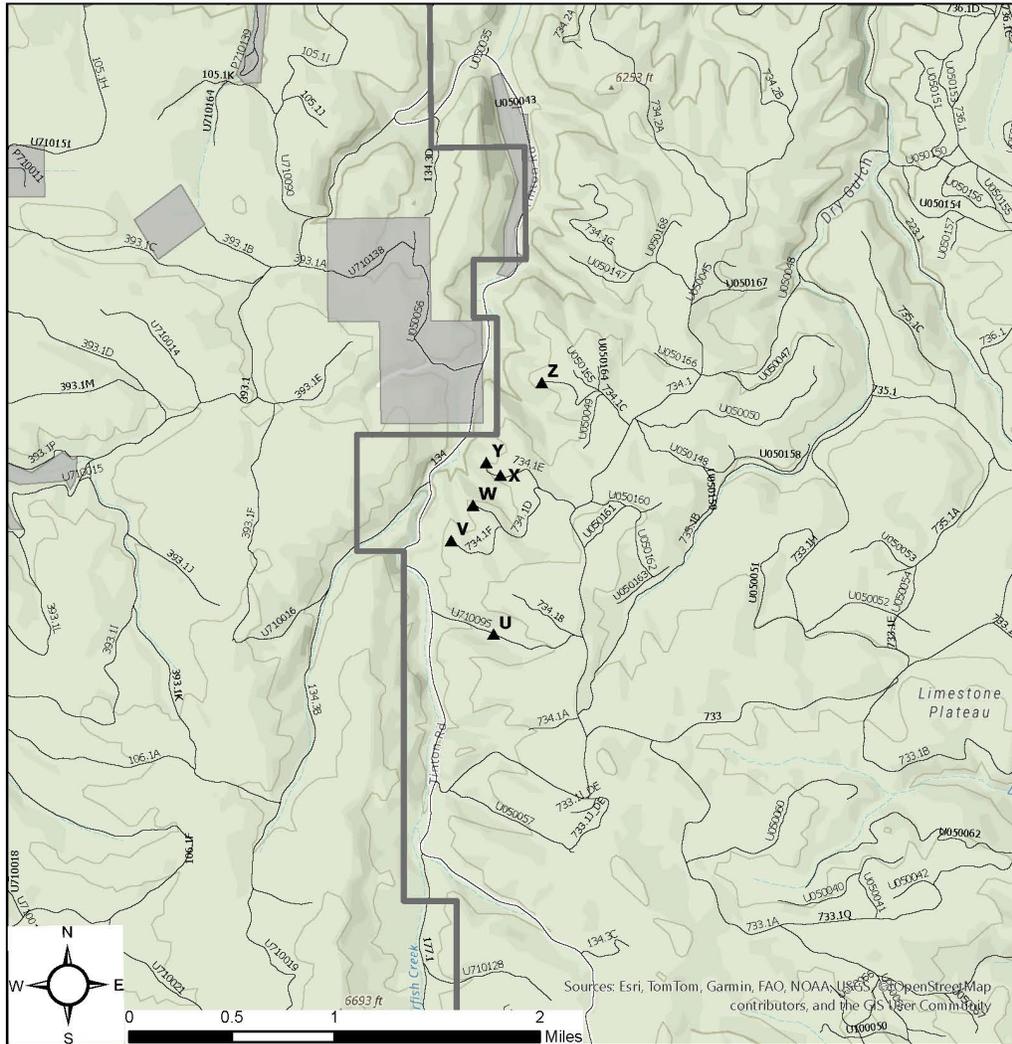
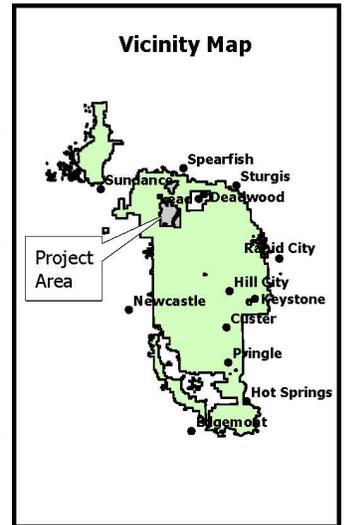


Figure 3. Ponderosa Exploration Limestone Plateau Drill Sites



Ponderosa Exploration Limestone Plateau Drill Sites

- Solitario Claims
- Limestone Plateau Drill Sites
- Roads/Trails
- Non-NFS Land





DECISION MEMO

Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project U.S. Forest Service

Northern Hills Ranger District, Black Hills National Forest
Lawrence County, South Dakota

This decision incorporates all information documented above and included in the project record.

DECISION & RATIONALE

The General Mining Act (GMA) of 1872, as amended, gives all American citizens (and companies) the statutory right to prospect, explore, and develop mineral projects on public domain land open to mineral entry. The Forest Service's role is to evaluate and approve reasonable, logical, and sequential operations adhering to the General Mining Act of 1872, as amended, the Organic Act of 1897 (16 USC §§ 478, 482, and 551) and Forest Service's locatable mineral regulation 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228 Subpart A. Under this law, and its principal amendment of July 23, 1955, qualified prospectors may search for mineral deposits on these "public domain" lands.

Under the GMA of 1872 and 36 CFR 228 Subpart A, the agency as the federal land manager regulates surface operations through the locatable mineral regulations. The Forest Service also follows policy in the Minerals and Geology Manual (Forest Service Manual 2800) to encourage orderly mineral exploration while protecting surface resources. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the submittal of a plan of operations requires the Forest Service to consider whether to approve the proposed plan or to require changes or additions necessary for the plan to meet the purpose of the regulations for locatable mineral operations. The Forest Service has the discretion to approve the plan of operations as is, or to approve the plan with additional mitigation measures to minimize impacts on natural resources. Furthermore, the Forest Service must assess whether the proposed operations will be conducted so as, where feasible, to minimize adverse environmental impacts on National Forest surface resources in accordance with 36 CFR § 228.8.

I have determined that the proposed activities are appropriate for the identified categorical exclusion based on the information provided above and additional information located in the project record and that no extraordinary circumstances exist that would necessitate further analysis under an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS). The effects of the proposed exploratory drilling activities are shown to be predictable and routine with limited short-term effects based on the analysis conducted for this project and the observed impacts of past projects of a similar nature on the Black Hills National Forest. The Applicant-Proposed Design Features and USFS Proposed Design Criteria listed above would minimize impacts to natural resources.

APPLICABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION & FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

The Proposal Information section above provides rationale for categorically excluding this action from documentation in an (EA) or (EIS) and for using the identified category. The Environmental Analysis Review section documents rationale to support my finding that no extraordinary circumstances exist, along with findings required by other applicable laws and regulations to demonstrate compliance with the regulatory framework for the activities authorized by this decision.

The NEPA process for this project was initiated through the distribution of a scoping notice and the solicitation of scoping comments on June 20, 2025. At that time, Forest Service NEPA regulations at 36



Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project

CFR 220 were in effect and had not yet been superseded by the revised USDA NEPA regulations at 7 CFR 1(b), which were introduced on July 3, 2025. Therefore, this decision memo was completed in accordance with 36 CFR 220.6(f). This decision memo documents the completion of the NEPA process for this project.

AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & PERSONS CONTACTED

A list of agencies, organizations and persons contacted regarding this proposal is available in the project record. All comments received during the scoping period are available on the project webpage (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/r02/blackhills/projects/64551>). A summarization of the issues or concerns raised in the comments and a response to those issues/concerns is also located on the project webpage and in the project record.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Implementation of the project cannot begin until Solitario Resources submits a final plan of operations implementing all design features identified in this document, and I have approved that final plan of operations. Prior to implementation, Solitario must also complete payment of the required reclamation bond and complete any permitting processes required by the State of South Dakota.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement are not subject to an administrative review process (Agriculture Act of 2014 [Pub. L. No. 113-79], Subtitle A, Sec. 8006). This decision is final.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Patrick Champa, District Ranger, 2014 North Main Street, Spearfish, South Dakota 57783, (605) 642-4622.

Patrick Champa
District Ranger



Ponderosa Exploration Drilling Project

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