



DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
Outdoor Campus West
4130 Adventure Trail
Rapid City, South Dakota 57702-4804

August 25, 2011

RECEIVED
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MINERALS & MINING PROGRAM

DENR / Minerals and Mining Program
Joe Foss Building
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-3181

Subject: Wharf Mine Expansion Project

Ladies and Gentlemen:

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has determined the Wharf Mine Expansion Project will have negligible long term impact on the area's wildlife or sensitive species. Another inherent interest of GFP is the project's reclamation objectives, and any potential to develop space and habitat attributes of the post mine land use to benefit wildlife. Subsequently we offer the project both our assistance to develop these attributes and comments.

We request additional justification for the non native species component in the reclamation seed mixture. An ever growing body of information support benefits of native vegetation for ecological function while providing the same genetic, phenotypic, and structural diversity as introduced and naturalized species.

The reclamation grass seed mixture should include a warm season grass component. Warm season grasses increase both diversity and utility of rangeland. A more diverse forage base will adapt better to seasonal and annual climate variations. Warm season grasses generally perform well in both drought periods and well drained soils, while greening up during the summer heat when cool season grass is dormant.

Warm season grass species currently on the mine site are found in the Observed Species List in Appendix 9 of the Application. Other warm season grass species historically found in the higher elevations of the Black Hills are available in the Black Hills Montane Grassland ecotype plant lists.

For your information:

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service United States Department of Agriculture Handbook 296 (pages 170-172), describes vegetative components of central black hills rangeland.

ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/NSSC/Ag_Handbook_296/Handbook_296_low.pdf

West River Agricultural Research and Extension Center; Many Faces of South Dakota Rangelands: Description and Classification

<http://images.library.wisc.edu/EcoNatRes/EFacs/NAPC/NAPC09/reference/econatres.napc09.fgartner.pdf>

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks; Black Hills Montane Grasslands Survey and Mapping (Background section)

<http://open.sd.gov/contracts/06/11-0600-023.pdf>

Please contact me if you desire additional citations on Black Hills Montane Grasslands, local vegetative assemblages or status of Black Hills rangeland.

Sincerely,



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