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(S.D.)- Gold Exploration In Black Hills Takes Step Forward



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 12/10/2012 02:16 PM

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) - South Dakota regulators have approved a permit for a mining company to explore for gold at a site overlooking Spearfish Canyon in the Black Hills.

The exploration permit does not allow Valentine Mining Co. to extract gold, but it will enable the company to get a better idea of what lies beneath the claim by drilling test holes and acquiring samples.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources is not likely to decide on a large-scale mining permit for at least a year.

The Deadwood Standard Project would be the first large-scale gold mine in South Dakota in 24 years. But the proposal has been controversial because of the site's proximity to the canyon. Opponents worry about possible contamination to Spearfish Creek.