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(S.D.)-State's Special Sand Could Be Used In N. Dakota's Oil Fields



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 03/25/2013 06:30 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (ASSOCIATED PRESS) - Officials say western South Dakota could play a key role in energy development in North Dakota and elsewhere because of special sand.

Some companies have obtained exploration permits to look for silica sand in the Black Hills. The sand could be used in hydraulic fracturing operations to extract oil and gas.

Hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, involves pumping water, sand and chemicals underground to break up shale rock and allow the oil to flow.

The South Dakota Geological Survey is testing the sand to see if it would work for fracking.

The idea of mining sand has some detractors because of the potential impacts on the environment and the health risks from exposure to the fine sand.