

Gillian Malone

For years I have used the walk-in areas adjacent to the permit area for hiking, boating, birding and skiing. The Brook Mine is almost certain to close public access to these areas should the permit be issued because of the liability of recreationists being present on the ground during blasting, which according to the permit application could be conducted 24-7. The mine could take over two thousand acres of recreational land away from Sheridan County. I object to the granting of this permit.

Ramaco has not conducted a material damage assessment on the alluvial valley floor, and the Tongue River and connected drainages make up a complex system that must be analyzed before any kind of development takes place there besides agriculture, which is why the valley is so valuable for agriculture and why it was zoned Ag! Without a material damage assessment there is no way of knowing how surrounding Ag operations will be impacted.

Although Ramaco has stated they will use surface water to provide the water supply for the Brook Mine, they have no water rights and no obvious way to acquire them. The impact on existing surface water rights holders is a huge concern that has not been addressed.

The area in which the Brook Mine is proposed is pock-marked by land cave-ins left over from historical underground mining operations and subsidence is an ongoing problem for ranchers in the area. Yet Ramaco has not developed an adequate subsidence control plan.

Finally, DEQ must conduct a public hearing to address these issues and to ensure that the public has an opportunity to comment in an open forum. Because of the current pandemic, the hearing must be postponed until the public can congregate in a safe manner. Thank you for receiving my comments.