



USDA Forest Service • Rocky Mountain Region



## Gold Mountain Mine – the last mine standing

The Gold Mountain Mine is the only gold mining site left on the Black Hills National Forest (NF) with a standing mill frame. In 2007, the site was determined to be a public safety hazard because of open mine shafts and a weakened timber structure. Due to local interest in preserving the site, a nonprofit organization called the [Black Hills Historic Preservation and Trust \(BHHPT\)](#) was formed. The BHHPT worked with the Forest and others to save the Gold Mountain Mine Mill Frame. *“It’s the last one on public property in the Forest,”* said Skip Tillisch, BHHPT President. *“When history is gone, it’s gone forever and you can’t get it back.”*

Grants, donations and volunteer proposals started pouring in, including a \$40,000 grant from the [Deadwood Historic Preservation Commission](#) and a \$20,000 Secure Rural Schools grant from the Pennington County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC).

In the summer of 2009, Forest Service employees and BHHPT volunteers began preservation of the site, under the supervision of Mystic Archaeologist Michael Salisbury. Work intensified during the summers of 2010 and 2011, with the addition of volunteers from the Forest Service’s [Passport in Time \(PIT\) program](#). For two weeks each summer, BHHPT and PIT volunteers, as well as Forest Service employees came together to preserve the failing mill frame.

During the summers of 2012 and 2013, the Youth Natural Resource Program (YNRP), a partnership between Black Hills National Forest,

Boxelder Job Corps, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Little Wound High School, and Pine Ridge High School built an interpretive trail around the perimeter of the site. *“It’s important for us to keep this part of history alive and with the addition of the interpretive trail we can educate the public about the history of the Black Hills as well as the history of mining,”* said Dawn Laybolt, Mystic District Archeologist. The mine was constructed in the 1920s, operated until 1940 and shutdown in 1941 by a war department order.

*“A rugged icon remains in the Black Hills, representing not only an important part of history, but a reminder of the power of cooperative interaction within a community. Thanks to the vision, passion, and countless hours of many volunteers, and the leadership of the United States Forest Service serving the people; future generations will tangibly understand more about our history.”* – Black Hills Historic Preservation Trust

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The Mine is located 4 miles northwest of Hill City, SD. For more information visit [www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills](http://www.fs.usda.gov/blackhills) or call 605-673-9200.



Working to preserve the mill frame, volunteers with the BHHPT, PIT, and Black Hills National Forest employees, work to preserve the Gold Mountain Mine mill frame by stabilizing support beams, cleaning and replacing the ore shoot and installing a new steel roof. (Photo by: Beth Doten, Public Affairs Specialist, Black Hills NF). Pictured L-R: Skyler Red Cloud and Jacob Anderson, Youth Natural Resource Program crew members, finish graveling a new interpretive trail at the historic Mine, located outside of Hill City, SD on the Black Hills NF. (Photo By: Scott Jacobson, Public Affairs Officer, Black Hills NF)

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