

MAR 7 2023

NEWARK EXPLORATION DRILLING PROJECT

To Whom it May Concern:

It has come to my attention that a mining Corporation has filed claim to drill holes on a grazing unit west of Custer.

We do not feel the Plan of Operations for Mining Activity on National Forest System Lands should be allowed. Those activities, at a minimum, should be subjected to an EIS, therefore not allowed under any circumstances in the future.

We are ranchers that worked and took care of the French Creek grazing unit located on FS property west of Custer.

During the eighteen years our cattle were there, we worked in conjunction with the Forest Service personnel to develop and improve water sources and pipelines. Since we raise cattle we are most acutely aware of how important clean drinking water is to our business. Its become apparent the wildlife benefitted from our efforts as well, there were usually elk and deer also running with our cattle, drinking the same water.

Its obvious the springs and creek will be adversely affected, perhaps even drained if this project is allowed to go through.

Will the same thing happen to the private wells in the area?

Can the Forest Service guarantee the water being brought in is not contaminated?

Rotational grazing is a common practiced on Forest Service units, an approach we appreciated because it protects both the land AND the water. We also do it on our ranch.

Nothing can exist, man or animal, without water, therefore it is of prime concern with this project.

There are other concerns too.

In the last three years we have had a large amount of trouble with ATVs and UTVs chasing and injuring our cows, we are quite concerned the people involved with this project may do the same thing?

If there will be four machines working twenty-four hours per day, what about NOISE, DUST, and DESTRUCTION OF GRASS?

Machinery breaks down, we are currently in a drought, how many FIRES will this operation set? Cows depend on grass to exist.

The safety and welfare of our cattle and residents MUST be protected.

There are cultural issues that need to be addressed too. How may archeological sites will go unprotected?

It is quite obvious this project puts our animals in jeopardy as well as our business.

If animals are unable to exist there, it follows that people will not either.

Please stop this travesty from happening.

Russ and Ellen Ballard

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