

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FS-comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-hell-canyon](#)  
**Subject:** [External Email]F3 Gold Exploratory Drilling Project  
**Date:** Monday, February 20, 2023 4:43:26 PM

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Dear sir:

Thank you the opportunity to comment on the proposed F3Gold project.

At this time I do not believe that the proper work has been done in preparation for this project. The basis for granting this project is an Environmental Assessment that was performed on another site, the Jenny Gulch project, and based on that EA a Categorical Exemption has been given for the Newark Project. I would like to see a full Environmental Assessment done on this drilling project. While there may be some things in common, the concerns of residential areas and the underground geologic structures are not likely to be among those things.

According the map supplied, Section 32 of T3SR4E will have 1 Laydown site and 13 Drill Sites along the northern tier of the section. There are approximately 25 residential homes in Section 32, primarily in the south half, but not all. Each of these homes has a private well. According to documents provided, the drill sites will truck water in for the projects, but my concern is in the drilling and what effect that will have on the availability of water to these 25 private wells. Will those wells be impacted? Will the drilling cause the water to drain off into different areas and leave the wells empty? Secondly, this proposed area is within relatively close proximity to known caverns - Jewel Cave to the west and Wind cave to the south. The Limestone area to the north is known to have many caves and caverns. Have there been seismic tests to determine whether there are caverns in the area which may drain the water if drilled into? I do not believe these issues have been addressed.

Of these 25 homes, several are within less than 0.5 mile of the drill sites. Will there be noise? Dust? Lights? Who will be responsible for maintaining Upper French Creek Road and the new truck traffic it will have? Will Custer County taxpayers be responsible for maintaining that road, including dust management?

I would also point out that currently Wabash Springs Road is closed from December 15 through May 15 annually for wildlife maintenance. Will this project not impact wildlife in this area? You can drill 24/7 but not drive in occasionally?

I was in attendance at the recent public meeting regarding the F3 Newark 2020 Exploration Project. I came to the meeting with a fairly objective view of the project - I am neither anti-industry nor anti-mining. Mineral extraction has long been a fact of life in the Black Hills, and I support that in general. However, I do have some questions and concerns about which I wanted to learn more and have the opportunity to ask questions. That was not an option at this meeting.

In conclusion, it is clear to me that not all issues associated with the Newark Project have been adequately addressed. F3Gold was not prepared at the meeting - there was no presentation, no handouts, no explanation of the details of how the drilling process works, no discussions or statements from the F3 representatives at all. They did not even give their names or contact information. F3 is not ready for this project and an EA will likely bring forth many unknown factors. I ask that more work be done before the project is approved.

Sincerely,  
Lea Anne McWhorter

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