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## Proposed Mineral Claims Withdrawal in Pactola/Rapid Creek Watershed

We're pleased that the USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management are working to withdraw mining use from the Pactola Lake – Rapid Creek watershed. We strongly encourage both of the entities to continue the process.

Heavy metals let loose by the mining process and exploratory drilling can get into surface and subsurface water of the area. This is too questionable to allow. Our water resources are too important to wildlife, recreation and the thirst and demands of the burgeoning human population of the Black Hills area.

If anything, we would encourage the complete withdrawal of mining from the entire watershed and not for only the twenty year period, as proposed, but into perpetuity.

We attended the Western South Dakota Hydrology Conference in Rapid City last April. There many of the presentations addressed the water issues of Rapid City and the surrounding communities, especially in light of the present population growth. It was clear from these presenters that any water to be made available to the area by piping it from the Missouri River reservoirs will take another twenty to forty years for development. That leaves Black Hills area communities dependent on the waters of the Rapid Creek watershed. It needs complete protection.

We understand that if a needed resource isn't grown it probably must be mined. Still, the most vital resource is water! It must be protected for our use and the use of plants and animals, as well as recreation.

Doug and Kate Shreves

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