



Bryan Karchut
Black Hills National Forest
1019 N. 5th. St.
Custer, SD 57730

RE: Pactola area mineral withdrawal

Dear Mr. Karchut:

As a long-time resident of Rapid City and as a pediatric/public health nurse for over 40 years, I am writing in support of the proposed Pactola area mineral withdrawal.

In the semi-arid western Great Plains, and also in the Rocky Mountain West, clean drinking water is an essential resource that we cannot take for granted. Climate change may exacerbate droughts and present new threats to our water quality.

As you know, Rapid City, Box Elder, Ellsworth AFB and surroundings depend heavily on Rapid Creek for domestic water. Currently, our communities are experiencing considerable population growth. We know that the demand for high-quality drinking water, and also for water based recreation, will only increase in the years ahead.

My concern about the proposed mineral withdrawal is that it does not go far enough. We definitely should not allow gold mining, or even exploration for gold and other minerals, to occur near Jenny Gulch or any part of Lake Pactola. But it really makes sense to protect the entire Rapid Creek watershed from the threat of future mineral development.

Rapid Creek is the defining asset of our community. In the future, a domestic water pipeline may be built from the Missouri River, at a cost of billions of dollars and over a period of some years. However, our region will always depend primarily on the Rapid Creek watershed for drinking water, for our very survival.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Kelts

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