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First name: Donna

Last name: Fisher

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Black Hills National Forest Supervisor's Office

Attn: Objection Reviewing Officer 1019 North 5th St. Custer, SD 57730

Congressman Dusty Johnson

1714 Longworth HOB

Washington, DC 20515

Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project #57428

My home on the Aspen Acres Road District borders on US National Forest Land one mile from the townsite of Merritt in the Jenny Gulch drainage. My husband and I have lived here year around since June, 2001. Here are my objections to the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project #57428:

1. Water is critical to homeowners, ranchers, wildlife and recreational use of our Jenny Gulch area. In a normal season, two small streams feed into the meadows and provide surface water. The proposed drilling directly endangers surface water. Even more dangerous is the potential for damage to the small water galleries from which our development draws well water. Those galleries are slowly charged over years. Once damaged, they cannot be "fixed." Protecting water is the key issue.

2. The Jenny Gulch area is a prototype multi-use area for persons who use the Forest Service land. Hunters love our area for its abundance of deer and turkeys and, thankfully, some of this area is off-limits to UTVs so wildlife is relatively undisturbed. Several area ranchers lease tracts up here. We personally have good relationships with them and enjoy our seasonal cow-calf visitors. Allowing mining exploration in the Jenny Gulch area with its truck traffic, noise and danger to the calves is not hospitable to historic summer grazing leases [and allowing mining exploration in the Jenny Gulch area with its truck traffic, noise is also not hospitable] (nor) to resident and non-resident families who have hunted our area for many years.

3. Our meadows are particularly sensitive wetlands, home to a wide variety of birds including geese, ducks, hawks and a Great Blue Heron or two. We hear resident frogs in the spring. We see garter and bull snakes as well as the elusive Black Hills redbelly snake. The Black Hills redbelly snake, *Storeria occipitomaculata pahasapae*, is the westernmost subspecies. Black Hills populations are thought to be isolated from their eastern relatives by 510 km (320 miles) of unsuitable prairie habitat (Smith, 1963), and found only within the Black Hills in this portion of the range.

4. We and our neighbors choose to live in the Jenny Gulch area because our development provides diverse habitat for wildlife. All winter, whitetail deer shelter in the meadow and elk can be heard bugling around us during rut. Coyotes den in the mica schist slopes above the meadows. Game cams have caught mountain lions passing through. Invasive drilling here trades a sensitive forest resource for the chance at profit for a few investors.

The Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project #57428 will disrupt not only us landowners but also our seasonal neighbors in this multi-use area. We are not naive. We know that if gold is discovered by F3 Gold, mining will follow.

I strongly object to allowing Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project #57428 to continue. Respectfully submitted

Donna M. Fisher