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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project Objection

Dear Mr. Gubbels,

Thank you for the detailed Final Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact notices, and for the effort and considerations made in this decision regarding F3's interest in exploratory drilling around the Silver City area. While in some ways it is heartening that both F3 and the USFS seems to be going to lengths to mitigate the various impacts this drilling would create, I find issue with some of the statements and determinations listed in these documents.

I stated in my previous letter my concerns about the potential risks I believe this drilling poses, so will not re-write that word for word, but still maintain those concerns after reading these releases, in addition to the following:

While it is commendable that in choosing Alternative C, considerations would be taken for lambing, water influence zones and cultural resources/sites, I am concerned that five more drill sites and nearly two more acres of new disturbance would also be allowed. To me, that seems counterintuitive to the [ldquo]impact minimization measures[rldquo] approach mentioned in the text.

I also take issue with the statement that [ldquo]no mining, milling or processing is part of this project.[rdquo] While yes, this is technically true, it's obvious that if any gold in any amount might be found by these drillings, it would be F3's intention to move forward with those very actions, which would be even more disruptive and carry larger risks.

It is something worth mentioning, I feel, about the idea of tribal sacred lands being limited to particular designated sites, and that certain actions might [ldquo]avoid cultural resource conflicts[rldquo] when it is my understanding that the many Indigenous people of the Black Hills view the entire area as sacred, and the act of extractive mining could well be defined as a conflict with cultural resources. Perhaps this is not important to some, but I view it as a matter of respect and one worth taking into consideration. I see that you did meet with numerous tribes to discuss this issue earlier in the year.

This project is deemed it will [ldquo]not have a significant impact on the [lsquo]human environment.[rsquo][rdquo] While I don't totally agree with that assurance, I also believe that any actions, large or small, which affect the environment invariably affect humans as well, and cannot be separated or viewed as somehow less important. I acknowledge that the Black Hills, as well as the entire continent, have been irreperably changed by large-scale human occupation and societal behaviors, but I don't believe that we have to continue certain actions and exploitations just because we've done so in the past.

I thank you for your time reading this and the other concerns and objections to this proposed gold prospecting, and ask you to please reconsider your decision.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Christopher Roth