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First name: Tracy

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Wendy,

I have lived in the Black Hills area for most of my 68 years. My favorite pastime is hiking among the pines and along the pristine streams, and I will continue to do so for as long as my health allows. As an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Oyate, this area means more to me than it does to some people. He Sapa, the Black Hills, our beautiful ancestral land, the center of our universe.

The City of Custer relies on clean water from French Creek, and this proposed exploration site is directly below French Creek, and only five miles outside Custer, a historic tourist town. Activities associated with mining impact the quality of available groundwater, especially for those in the area who rely on well water. The Black Hills have been subjected to mining exploration for 150 years and high levels of arsenic in the water are the result. These high-risk arsenic levels are not from the mineral rock formations alone; they have been contributed by mining and gold exploration. The EPA recommended limit for arsenic levels in drinking water is 0.01. Private and public wells in the "mining districts" of Deadwood, Lead, Rochford, Silver City, Hill City, and Keystone have arsenic levels as high as 0.441. Would you want your loved ones to drink this water? Do you want the Black Hills area to suffer even more water contamination? Because F3 Gold has its eye on the entire Hills region.

Gold Mining = Greed. Plain and simple. It always has and will be supported by those who want to fill their pockets with cash. Those who truly love this area want the Black Hills for its beauty and tranquility. F3 Gold is not giving up on their exploration. They will not be satisfied until they have drilled thousands of holes in our sacred ground. Every project they propose will never be a small project, they will continue to drill and mutilate the Black Hills. It will not be completed in a year[mdash]there will be more requests for exploration year after year. F3 Gold already has their foot in the door and they will continue to want more and more and more. Tearing up the Black Hills that we cherish means nothing to them, they care only about gold and money. The USDA Forest Service acts as the steward of our land. Why would you even consider allowing mining companies to come and destroy it again? Why do you not love the Black Hills as we love it?

Please do the right thing. Do NOT allow F3 Gold to move forward with the Newark Exploratory Drilling Project. A complete Environmental Assessment must be done. We must keep our sights on the big picture, which means keeping F3 Gold and ALL mining exploration out of the majestic Black Hills. We, and future generations, deserve clean water.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Hauff

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