

From: [REDACTED]
To: [FS-comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-hell-canyon](#)
Subject: [External Email]Newark Drilling Project Near Custer
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Rob Hoelscher
Hells Canyon District Ranger

Mr. Hoelscher,

I attended the meeting at the high school, Thursday, Feb. 16th, and left the premises with a roaring headache, but nothing, I'm sure, compared to the one you left with.

The meeting itself was disturbing, due to the lack of preparedness on your part, and the way you opened the meeting by announcing this project WILL HAPPEN. You certainly can understand the shock and anger that was provoked in most of us who were there to get answers from F3, the BLM and you before forming an opinion. Instead, you indicated you had no answers for us and your job only was to get our thoughts and comments, none of which were documented except for the Sioux who were well versed in requesting their statements be put on record.

My biggest concern with the proposed drilling is the possibility of water contamination and/or depletion. And terms from F3 like "not likely" isn't enough. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know without water we are finished, along with our wildlife and vegetation and livelihood. I, for one, am not willing to take the risk.

As disturbing as the meeting was, your comment after the meeting to the RC Journal journalist was even more concerning. Something to the effect that meetings of this type are the hard part, but it's just something we all have to go through. How is one to interpret that other than this meeting was a formality, only done as part of the process to get this project moving forward?

I intend to contact local, state, and federal officials, by handwritten letter, none of whom were at the meeting and should have been but maybe weren't invited. As well as I will write to F3 Gold and Big Rock Exploration, the perpetrators of this whole mess, who didn't even have the courage to be introduced and explain their position.

I admired the indigenous people who showed up to steadfastly fight the same battle they have encountered for 170 years. We have much to learn from them.

Valerie Ziolkowski
[REDACTED]

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