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Comments: I have serious concerns about the F3 Gold Jenney Gulch Exploration Drilling Project. In my opinion, the draft environmental assessment did not address the issues that were raised by concerned individuals in open houses and written comments. I support a No Action decision or at a minimum a full Environmental Impact Statement. Three areas that I would like to see addressed are:

1. I have questions about the quantity and quality of water and air that may be caused by drilling holes that could reach depths of 6,000 feet. The private wells in our community draw from pockets of water at different depths which get replenished by water movement from long and unpredictable distances. The unique geology makes it so that adjoining neighbors may tap different water sources. By drilling a deep column, the water movement will likely be affected leaving previous voids filled with water while diminishing the output of other wells. This may compromise the quantity of water that households can rely on. Similarly, heavy metals and other unwanted contaminants may travel through this water column and affect the quality of the water.

2. Silver City and its surroundings have one of the highest concentrations of radon in the state and the country. Radon gets released from underground sources. As a gas, it can travel freely through the drill holes. Similarly to water, the gas can find fissures in the rock and travel to water or soil where it can enter homes. Even though the issue has been brought up before, the USFS has completely ignored this potential problem in any of the reports for this project.

3. The exploration drilling area is located in the large watershed that drains into Rapid Creek and the Pactola Reservoir. Exploratory drilling could impact the surface and ground water quality of local private water wells, and also potentially contaminate Pactola Reservoir. The benefits of allowing exploratory holes near Pactola Lake seem to be far outweighed by the potential problems.

Because of these problems, the best course of action would be a No Action ruling. Damage to the resources is irreversible and it falls upon the USFS to deny this project.