Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/23/2022 3:54:03 AM
First name: Juli
Last name: Ames-Curtis
Organization:
Title:
Comments: I am writing in objection to the Final EA and Draft Decision Notice for the proposed Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project (Project) and their Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on July 8.
Congress established the Forest Service in 1905 to provide quality water and timber for the nation's benefit. Congress later directed the Forest Service to broaden its management scope for additional multiple uses and benefits and for the sustained yield of renewable resources such as water, forage, wildlife, wood, and recreation.

Nowhere in the Congressional legislation does it mention mining as additional multiple use and benefit!
This exploration project would be in direct opposition to the establishment of the USFS as it would impact Pactola and Rapid Creek which provides water for Rapid City, Ellsworth Air Force Base, and reservation and rural communities along the Cheyenne River. If the exploration led to gold mining, this water and the health of downstream residents, wildlife, and our tourism and outdoor recreation economy would be threatened.
Another concern of mine (and many others) is that I am not convinced that the Forest Service has met its legal requirements for Tribal Consultation. It is mentioned that 16 at one time then 17 tribal governments were notified. Not only did the agency fail to complete mandatory Tribal consultation during the scoping process on this project, they put the burden on Tribal officials to initiate requests on topics of cultural resources, sacred sites, and other issues that are mandated for consultation.

The tribes have not provided any cultural surveys in that impacted area, which should be first and foremost before the FS should be able to hand down a FONSI. How is this in compliance with NHPA and Government-to-Government consultation?

This project seems to be streamlined by the USFS without taking into consideration the full impact of the resources and to the people, wildlife and forest that depend on clean water for life.

I wholeheartedly object to this drilling project proceeding.

Juli Ames-Curtis