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Comments: I have several concerns regarding the F3 Gold's Newark Exploration Project. Some of the concerns are shared by nearly all of the people that have written or otherwise commented, including the one public meeting held back In February. Impacts on water quality and availability, wildlife disturbance, noise pollution, land values, vegetation disturbance and erosion, road degradation, increase of chances for wildland fire due to human and mechanical activity, etc. are all sources of apprehension about this project.

Those concerns may be addressed in all kinds of documents containing operating and mitigation procedures, along with other methods of reassurance such as bonding. However, from my experience in working for and with Forest Service, contractors and partners, none of this does much good without the resources to ensure that the procedures and written instructions are followed in real time.

I live on acreage that is surrounded by Forest. I have seen roads degraded by being disturbed by timber haul, fiber optic cable laying and other projects never to be restored to pre-project condition because there weren't available resources to do the necessary inspection and enforcement of specifications laid out in project documentation. I have seen noxious weeds completely take over areas due to disturbances of vegetation and then spread to private land with no mitigation being done. I have seen large fires started from increased human activity.

Are there available resources to provide oversight for the project to prevent the issues that will come up? How will the prevention and mitigation be managed?

I agree with the need for environmental study being done. I agree that this area is not qualified for categorical exclusion for all the reasons being mentioned by others in their comments. I know that many of the possible issues are addressed through documentation by the mining company and federal government; however, without the resources to ensure that the specifications in the documentation are being followed before the problems arise, it is a whole different ball game.

Does the Black Hills have the personnel to do the necessary inspections and documentation on a daily basis to compel compliance? Will there be an increase in budget to ensure that with all of the mining proposals going on right now there will be the proper oversight without adversely impacting the day to day business of caring for the land and serving people? Allowing the project to go forward with the oversight in place and active without impacting other Forest management is not acceptable.