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Comments: My father was born and raised in the Black Hills and currently lives outside Custer, not far from the area of the proposed project. I grew up making regular visits to see grandparents in Hot Springs and, as an adult, I've regularly gone to the Custer area to visit my parents. I also have a cousin who lives close to the proposed project. I am aware of the precious beauty of the Hills.

Having read articles about the community meeting that was well-attended by locals and abandoned by F3 Gold representatives, I feel compelled to add my comments to the National Forest Service (NFS) site. Do the interests of a Minnesota-based mineral exploration company outweigh the interests of the people who live in the French Creek and Custer area? Although the NFS says that the 1872 General Mining Act doesn't allow them to deny F3 Gold's right to explore for gold, the NFS should listen to Custer residents and require an environmental assessment and impact statement. Having driven on the roads in the area, I can imagine that the proposed exploration would have a negative impact on the condition of the roads and the dust that is stirred up with traffic. If the operation goes on 24 hours/day, will noise disturb the residents and animals?

The residents of the area have a right to an open process and thorough consideration of all possible threats to the French Creek and Custer water, air, etc. That won't be the case without an environmental investigation of the specific area of this F3 Gold proposal.

I also believe it is appropriate for the NFS and F3 Gold to provide more information about the long-term plans of F3 Gold and possible outcomes if significant gold is found to be present in the French Creek area. Why would F3 Gold explore if they weren't hoping that the results will lead to a mining operation? Gold mining in the French Creek area would have a huge negative impact on the environment, the quality of life of residents, the value of their homes, tourism, the safety of water sources in the area (and downstream) for residents, wildlife, and livestock.