

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/24/2023 12:09:42 AM

First name: Suzanne

Last name: Stratford

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the BLM/USFS:

I am writing to support the BLM/USFS Federal Withdrawal Application to protect the Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek watershed. This is great news and we must all work together to implement what is important to the future of Rapid City, the surrounding areas and Ellsworth Air Force base. Several reasons to support this effort include:

- *Preserving clean water source for Rapid City area - an area that is one of the fastest growing mid-sized cities in the country.

- *Preserving clean water source for Ellsworth Air Force Base - critical for the development of the B21 bomber. A polluted water source to the Base could jeopardize plans for expansion.

- *Honoring the cultural values and cultural resources of the Indigenous peoples of the region.

- *An unprecedented group of diverse local people and organizations have come together to support protection of the Pactola and Rapid Creek watershed including sportsmen (boaters, anglers, hunters), recreational users, environmental groups, Indigenous organizations, businesses, youth, retirees, and the Common Council of Rapid City.

- *Visitor spending brought almost \$2 billion to the Black Hills and Badlands region in 2021.

- *Clean water and recreation drives many business here including, retail, restaurants, hospitality, and tourist attractions. Our local economy depends on tourism.

- *The potential for degraded water will adversely impact the region's economy far and above any economic benefit of mining.

Thank you for your leadership and efforts in this matter.

Sincerely, Suzanne Stratford