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Title:

Comments: Thank you for hosting the open house and for initiating the process for withdrawal of the proposed area of the Rapid Creek Watershed. I support the proposed withdrawal, however I would like to see the area expanded to include the entirety of the Rapid Creek Watershed. The watershed is of incredible importance to the Black Hills and the specifically the communities of Rapid City and Ellsworth Airforce base.

My specific concerns relate to the safety and security of the water supply of Rapid City. Exploration that paves the way for large scale mining should be discontinued. The risk of contamination of our water supply, both surface and subsurface is too great. Should exploration lead to mining, the chemicals used in gold mining are too dangerous to use in a municipal water supply. These chemicals such as cyanide can contaminate both the surface water and ground water. Once used these chemicals remain forever and pose too great a threat to the safety and viability of our communities.

Even the drilling for exploration poses threats due drilling chemicals and holes drilled into our aquifers.

The threat to the security of water supply for Ellsworth AFB is also an issue of National Security. This alone should take the mining and exploration off the table.

Lastly, as an outdoorsman and owner of a fly fishing store in Rapid City I am concerned that the use of cyanide and other toxic chemicals threatens the health of our wild brown trout populations in Rapid Creek. These chemicals are poisonous to trout and threaten their reproductive ability. The value of the fishery and the economic value of tourism to our area far outweighs the economic viability of these gold mining claims. Mining and exploration needs to be excluded from Rapid Creek to protect the largest watershed in the Black Hills. This protects the recreational opportunities provided by Rapid Creek for trout fishing from Black Fox Campground all the way through the city of Rapid City. I want my children to have the same opportunities to fish for wild brown trout in the Rapid Creek watershed that I have. The introduction of toxic mining chemicals is permanent and irreversible. This would end the quality of this fishery forever. That is too great a risk.