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First name: Perry
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Organization: Ridge Riders Racing
Title: President
Comments: I am opposed to the Golden Crest Exploratory drilling on the western rim of Spearfish Canyon for several reasons stated below!

I have held a special use permit for this area for over 23 years with the USFS and have held the Dakota Five-O mountain bike race on labor day weekend every year for 23 years. This exploratory drilling will take place right over the top of our trails and special use permit. The roads into this area will be reopened and around the clock drilling be a huge disturbance to the event and trails.

We have 800 riders attending annually for the event and it is a big economic impact for the community of Spearfish and the northern black hills. Up to 50 people use this trail daily during the dry months from April thru October and it is a big draw for tourism.
The exploratory drilling and heavy machinery will negatively impact the trail and make it less desirable to visit this location without a doubt. I am heavily invested in volunteer trail work for 23 years with a volunteer agreement with the USFS. I have coordinated trail work volunteers and we averaged over 350 volunteer trail work hours annually for more than two decades on this trail. I feel that all that work has gone unnoticed and this company will come in and create more work for us, we will have to reroute around drilling sites and the roads that are used for access. This will negatively impact the quality of the trail and the users experience and ultimately make more work for the volunteers that keep the USFS system trail sustainable and open.

I also feel that the Tinton Road Forest Road 134, Little Spearfish Canyon Road Forest Road 222, and the other access roads are very busy with ATV/UTV's, tourist, hunters, and forest users. Adding more heavy equipment and drilling support vehicles to these roads will add more cost to maintenance. It will decrease interest in locals accessing these areas and tourism because it will be too busy and unappealing to see this heavy equipment. Plus it will be an added danger for public that use them. The Golden Crest project will require access to areas that are off limit to motorized use. This will disrupt wildlife areas. Our volunteer trail work has had to be postponed because of wildlife issues. This drilling equipment and around the clock access and constant work for the period of drilling will certainly be disruptive to the wildlife we have been required to avoid certain times of the year for simple trail maintenance.
I believe that something disruptive as deep exploratory drilling, opening non motorized areas to drilling and around the clock access for this company should require a full Environmental Impact Statement. The simple Environmental Analysis is not enough of a study for this type of activity!

The big picture needs to be looked at, the exploratory drilling could lead to open pit mining and that is not a good thing for anyone but the mining companies. The risk of environmental impact is huge and has a history in the black hills on several mining sites.

A majority of the drilling sites are on or near watersheds, springs or areas that will impact water quality. The deep drilling will go thru aquifers that support the local communities with potential for contamination. The run off from the disturbance at the drilling sites could potentially impact the intermittent streams and springs in the area. This all needs a full Environmental Impact Statement completed at the very least. I do not feel that exploratory drilling has a place anywhere in the black hills and propose a full mineral withdrawal for all public lands for many reason such as water quality, wildlife impact, recreation, tourism and added expense to road maintenance.