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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Attn: Steve Kozel; USDA Forest Service, Northern Hills Ranger District

I am writing today in opposition of the Golden Crest Exploration Drilling.

At a "Public Comment Happy Hour" event that myself and the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance recently hosted at Crow Peak Brewing, members of Solitario Zinc showed up to give their two cents. They exclaimed that "they rarely find anything when exploring, anyway", and bragged that they would be selling these claims to other mining companies - if anything was found. Think of Coeur-Wharf, Dakota Gold, or Agnico getting their hands on even MORE mineral claims, with the resources and ability to immediately begin extracting on nearly 40,000 acres of the Black Hills (this number includes Solitario Zinc's 'Ponderosa Project').

In Solitario Zinc's initial proposal, they stated that drilling will not occur near sources of water, but multiple drilling sites are proposed within half a mile - someone within 1/10th a mile - from Spearfish Creek or other streams/sources of water. Not only would this be a wildly out of control environmental disaster should something happen (it is more than likely to), it would also create the perfect opportunity to move huge numbers of wildlife out of the drilling area and to impose upon their drinking water. The proposal and Draft EA both do not provide adequate water quality monitoring or provide plans to mitigate a disaster should it happen. This needs to be addressed properly.

All of the drill sites are located on sacred indigenous land that has been used by tribespeople for centuries - if not thousands of years. The tribal consultation on use of federal lands is a legal requirement, and it was inadequate (at best) for this project. It is imperative that all tribes who consider He Sapa a sacred space, and who have regular sundances, wacipis, and other ceremonial and spiritual rituals in that area, be called to the table for their input on Golden Crest.

As an avid fly-fisher, disc golfer, bicyclist, runner, and full-time musician, the Black Hills are invaluable as a recreational space AND as a spiritual and inspirational location. Visitors to this area know this place holds intrinsic beauty, and the locals understand that beauty - although sometimes it is human to take your backyards for granted. As the Black Hills continues to grow, our need for land grows. Allowing ANY more exploration or mineral extraction from the Black Hills takes recreational land away from the people and puts cash directly into the pockets of the mining industry.

I am asking for an Environmental Impact Statement of Solitario Zinc's Golden Crest Exploration Drilling.

Thank you for your time,

Alexander Massa

Musician/Artist/Educator/Angler