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Comments: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed mining exploration in the Northern Black Hills region south of Spearfish, including Spearfish Canyon, from the Big Hill recreation area to the Limestone Plateau. As a long time resident of the Northern Hills, our family has enjoyed the natural beauty of these areas as have most people from this region and thousands of tourists who flood in each year. To imagine the blight of mining exploration and eventual mining in these specific areas and how it could destroy what we hold so dear is unthinkable.

My concerns include the potential impact to clean water supply for Spearfish, to the natural habitats for wildlife and fish, to the loss of recreational areas for hiking, biking, skiing, snow shoeing, fishing and to the overall well-being of this pristine landscape.

I believe the Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement on this project, not just a short EA. All cumulative impacts of this project must be considered, economic and environmental.

Please help protect Spearfish Canyon and the surrounding recreational and scenic areas from mining activities by putting a stop to this proposed project.