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Comments: I would like to express my concerns over the Golden Crest Project. The combination of the number of drilling pads, the large area for exploration proposed, the number of planned drill holes, and the stated plan for 24 hour operation is all concerning and will have a major negative impact on that area of the northern Hills. There will be a major increase in the volume of traffic, noise, and dust along with significant degradation of the immediate drilling areas. The area proposed for exploration is a major center for recreation in the Northern Black Hills and the presence of drilling pads, drilling rigs, and associated vehicle traffic will all have a negative impact on the multiple users of the area. These users include hunters, fisherman, hikers, gravel and mountain bikers, along with a significant number of motorized users including those on ATVs and snowmobiles.

The clear purpose of this exploratory drilling is to seek economically viable ore to be extracted using the most intrusive and toxic methods possible (open pit mining and heap leaching). This form of mineral extraction has been shown for over 40 years to have an overall negative impact on the immediate area and communities nearby. These impacts include not only the environmental consequences (water quality, wildlife, air quality, noise) but economic as well as a relatively few new mining jobs are offset by job losses in businesses supporting the recreational users.

I strongly encourage the NFS and Black Hills National Forest to require a full EIS prior to further consideration of this project. I would also ask the NFS and BBNF to strongly consider an expansion of the Mineral Withdrawal proposal currently discussed for the drainage above Pactola Reservoir to the equally sensitive and economically important area that will be impacted by the Golden Crest proposal.