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Comments: I would like to go on record in support for the Pactola area mineral withdrawal. I also support expanding the area covered by the withdrawal to include all federal lands in the Black Hills. I also think an EA (Environmental Assessment) should be performed by the Forest Service and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) when the EA has been completed.

Clean water sources are becoming increasingly more and more rare, and water quality matters to everyone, period. We seem to want to allow pollution for profit as a matter of course, ignoring the true and irreplaceable nature of these resources. The indigenous peoples of this continent have always lived with a deep respect and sincere appreciation of the natural resources that sustained their existence and livelihood. It is the core of their belief system. We should listen to them more, and learn to appreciate the source of their passion and connection to this land that we all live on. I read that last year a rather large amount of microplastic dust fell on and in our national parks. Studies are showing that this is having an effect on the microorganisms in the soil, altering the balance that nature created to nourish and support what we find inspiring and beautiful about these places. I used to think that our country and its resources belonged to us, its citizens. But that is no longer true, and siding with those who are driven by profit without honoring those who truly recognize the value and importance of what we have just doesn't work for me. Can anyone recreate an ecosystem to sustain a beautiful lake or stream and all that goes with it that is completely "natural" like nature itself? Fresh water from a rock spring? Have you ever tasted real living water from a rock spring in the Sierra Nevada mountains at the 7000 foot level. Because I have, and I like it.

Please work to not allow further damage to the incredibly valuable ecosystems that continue to inspire us to appreciate what we have, and please respect and listen sincerely to the indigenous peoples who value this land in the very special way they do. Why do we take vacations in our national parks? Enjoying the refreshing beauty of nature in our country could be one of the reasons.

Sincerely,

Gary Di Donato