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Comments: I would like to express my opposition to the pre-emptive withdrawal of public lands administrated by the US Forest Service from mineral exploration and development. At this point, it is unclear if this land has potential for mineral development but closing off blocks to exploration is not a wise practice. As we are seeing, we do not know what minerals are needed for future technologies for clean energy, environmental clean up, or general use. Rare earth magnets were a novelty a few years ago but now the entire electric vehicle and wind power are dependent on these metals. Lithium was used primarily to make glass heat resistant to cracking (Corning Ware) and is now a vital component for portable power tools, electronics, and EV's.

Exploration and mining projects are covered by a myriad of regulations and agencies to insure minimal impact on the environment. The national forests are supposed to be multiple use, including both development through mining, logging, and grazing along with conservation of watersheds and wildlife. The trend of the Forest Service is towards locking up lands to public use or benefit and towards an elitist preservation mode. While preservationists feel good about themselves, the fact is the minerals will be produced somewhere. It is far better for the environment in general for them to come from countries with strong environmental controls than from areas where the environment is not a concern and human rights are largely ignored.

Regards, Alan Morris