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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I object to the FONSI decision and would like the U.S. Forest Service Northern Hills Ranger District (USFS NHRD) to require an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) be conducted prior to the proposed exploratory drilling. In addition, I would encourage the USFS NHRD to propose a mineral claims withdrawal from the Spearfish Creek Watershed to protect the surface and groundwater supplies. Drilling to the proposed depths of up to 1,600 feet will directly impact the Spearfish Creek Watershed, including the Minnelusa and Madison aquifers, which are the primary sources of public drinking water for many in the region.

In addition to the significant, potentially catastrophic effects on the watershed, the proposed drilling sites are located on areas of public land that are currently designated for public access to outdoor recreation including miles of trails that allow hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, off-road vehicular travel, and big game hunting. Allowing exploratory drilling on these proposed sites will prohibit public access to these public lands and will have negative impacts on overall community health, the local tourism industry, and the local wildlife population.

As a concerned resident, I ask the USFS NHRD to require an EIS for this project and propose a mineral claims withdrawal from the Spearfish Creek Watershed to protect our natural resources for access to clean water and continued public access for outdoor recreation.