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Comments: I continue to be opposed to the proposed Golden Crest exploration drilling project because the Draft Decision and the Finding of No Significant Impact issued by the Black Hills National Forest Service office do not fully address the concerns I raised in my initial objections. Without the benefit of a full Environmental Impact Study (EIS), it will not be possible to clearly determine what the potential contamination effects of the drilling will be on the streams and aquifers that feed Spearfish Creek. In the 1990's, the Lawrence County Commission turned down a mining permit application from the Minerva Mining Company that proposed mining close to the rim of Spearfish Canyon above the Latchstring Inn. The main reasons the commissioners decided to oppose the mining permit included concerns about contaminating the water in Spearfish Creek, as well as worries about disturbing the ground above the canyon and the canyon walls so that boulders like the ones that came down into Spearfish Creek in the 90's, which are very evident now in the creek, could destroy private and public property. This concern is also present with the Golden Crest Project with some of the drill holes being proposed being within 1000 feet of the rim of Spearfish Canyon. The potential for property damage, injury to people, and other consequences are concrete concerns that need to be thoroughly considered before allowing this project to proceed.

As I indicated in my earlier comments, I am a longtime property owner in Spearfish Canyon and a member of the Board of Directors of the Spearfish Canyon Owners Association, whose stated mission, as outlined in its original charter established by the Homestake Mining Company, "shall be to maintain the beauty, serenity and attractiveness of the Spearfish Canyon, and monitor and protect the water quality and flow of Spearfish Creek and its tributaries and to preserve in perpetuity the covenants and conditions placed upon said property by Homestake Mining Company of California".

When we property owners purchased land in Spearfish Canyon, we signed documents agreeing to the above stated purpose of preserving the Canyon and its water quality and beauty. As I stated before, my opposition to this project is consistent with honoring the legal pledge that I signed because neither the Forest Service nor Solitario has shown conclusively that the water resources in the Golden Crest project proposed area will not be compromised or contaminated by this exploration process. As stated earlier, many of the proposed drill sites are clearly in the Spearfish Canyon watershed area as well as those close to the Canyon rim. Proceeding with this project without a thorough and complete understanding of possible adverse outcomes related to the water resources of Spearfish Canyon is not consistent with the US Forest Service mission of being responsible stewards of public land. Allowing this project to move forward is also inconsistent with USFS policies of respecting private land and doing what it can to prevent potentially negative outcomes that could arise from this project.

Therefore, before any drilling is allowed to begin, I would again request that a full Environmental Impact Statement be required for this project in order to fully determine the actual risks to water and the surrounding environment.

The State of South Dakota, in statute, designated the Spearfish Canyon Watershed a "special and unique area" where mining should not be allowed. This designation must be adhered to as strongly as possible