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First name: Patricia

Last name: Jenkins

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Steve Kozel, District Ranger of the Northern Hills Ranger District, Black Hills National Forest, I am writing to express opposition to the draft decision and FONSI for the proposed project, Golden Crest Exploration Drilling Project.

My partner and I make our living as mixed vegetable farmers on a small property in Spearfish Valley that is irrigated primarily by surface water from Spearfish Creek. Along with many farmer neighbors, we are members of the Evans-Tonn Irrigation Ditch Co., the oldest water right in western South Dakota and one of the reasons for the settlement of the City of Spearfish. Our reliance on clean water from Spearfish Creek is just one of the reasons that I am concerned about the Golden Crest gold exploration project on the western rim of Spearfish Canyon.

I oppose this project because of the potential for water quality issues caused by inevitable soil disturbance, water consumption, machine exhaust, and associated chemical contamination. The project would take place in an area that feeds directly into Spearfish Creek. The final Environmental Assessment indicates that a number of plans should be prepared, such as a fire safety plan, a hazardous materials plan, and an erosion control plan. These plans should be part of the EA. Stating in the final EA that Solitario Resources "will prepare" these plans is not sufficient or legitimate.

The company estimates that they will use 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water per drill hole, per day, all of which will be sourced from municipal water supplies. This project will deplete an already sensitive water supply, contaminate groundwater, and force municipalities to treat contaminated water left over from drilling operations. I would propose that the National Forest choose the course of no action and deny this project.

Thank you for your time and consideration.