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Comments: I'm writing in support of the withdrawal project at the Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek watershed. Not only would mining compromise the water quality in the whole water shed, the drinking supply for Rapid City and the Ellsworth Air Force Base could be affected. And it's not just humans. Pollution from mining would affect all the ecosystems in the whole watershed, not to mention any underlying aquifers. It is not morally defensible to harm people and natural systems just to make a profit.

In addition, this area is traditionally a sacred area for the Lakota. A young friend from Pine Ridge has gone there on a vision quest. Can we justify the desecration of holy land for gold? We need to return to the Native sense of us belonging to the land, not the land belonging to us.

I urge you to ask the Forest Service to request an expedited approval from the Secretary of the Interior so that the Rapid Creek watershed can be allowed to heal.