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First name: Sharon
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I emphatically support the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek Watershed Withdrawal Project. The Black Hills, sacred ground to many people, are also among the most beautiful areas in the United States, with a deep, complex, troubled, beautiful, and important history for all Americans to learn and know. Visiting this region as a small child marked me in significant ways that linger over 50 years later; though I haven't lived in the West for many decades it is still where my heart dwells. I deeply enjoyed other areas that we visited -- but the Black Hills inspired my child's heart with a love of the land like no other, long before I was old enough to begin to understand its history or its profound and sacred core in others' lives. This sort of deep education and lifelong connection to something far older than the nation is part of what the park system was intended to do, and we should preserve that mission, beyond recreation or economic advantage for a few at a high cost for us all. I can only dimly imagine its sacred meaning for others and fully support the withdrawal that will affect them so deeply.

And as someone who grew up in the West, I have known intimately how significant clean and sufficient water is for both people and wildlife -- and how tenuous its presence can be. Keeping watersheds and reservoirs clean and healthy is vital to both survival and to thriving life. I have been deeply disturbed by recent talk of opening more public lands to mining, despite the devastating cost we've already seen to people's health who were already living in areas that then became polluted by toxins from mining processes. It is crucial that we withdraw from these areas and clean up what has already been tainted or damaged. Therefore, it is for many reasons, I not only support the withdrawal but also request that the forest service expedite the Withdrawal proposal to the Secretary of the Department of Interior.