

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2024 11:28:23 PM

First name: Katherine

Last name: Standefer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Elysia Retzlaff and USDA Forest Service,

I am writing to support the withdrawal of all 20,574 acres of Pactola Reservoir/Rapid Creek Watershed National Forest Service land from the possibility of sale, settlement, or exchange of federal lands, as well as from potential mineral entry and leasing.

In particular, I stand with the tribes who expressed concerns about preserving and maintaining access to their sacred sites and traditional cultural properties. I also take seriously the threats to clean water that further mining in this area pose to the watershed.

I am an author who wrote a book that deals deeply with modern mining, and I know that the withdrawal of these lands from further leasing, sale, and settlement may prevent the expansion of an existing gold mine. There is much research to suggest that we already have enough gold above ground to provide for the needs of industrial society going forward, through smart resource reuse. Gold mining is currently a particularly toxic process, and in my opinion it can no longer be justified except by small-scale artisanal miners in parts of the world where gold provides families emergency funding for their food, schooling, and healthcare. While there are other minerals we collectively need-- that may require difficult compromises in terms of ecosystem and watershed impact--gold is not one of them. Taking these public lands off the table is the right thing to do for the health and flourishing of generations to come.

Sincerely,

Katherine Standefer

Kelly, Wyoming