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Dear Forest Service and BLM staff,

I support the proposed mineral withdrawal for the Pactola - Rapid Creek Watershed mineral withdrawal. I am very grateful to the Forest Service for this proposal.

I believe this proposed withdrawal is something that can be done now and hope you move ASAP to get it processed by the system. I am afraid Trump might be elected and his administration might kill the withdrawal.

I believe hard rock mining has too awful a record of failure at meeting ground and surface water quality objectives. The mitigations proposed by companies and regulatory agencies usually fail to perform as projected/expected. Mining pollution mitigation is too uncertain. The risk to the drinking water of Rapid City, Box Elder and Ellsworth Air Force Base is too high to allow mining around the Reservoir and Rapid Creek drainage.

I am also concerned with impacts to wildlife, biodiversity, Native American important cultural areas, outdoor recreation and scenic quality from the mining operation. The proposed withdrawal includes Canyon City Research Natural Area (RNA). While the Forest Service during the Phase 2 Amendments evaluation, rejected any potential RNAs that had a recognized mining conflict, all designated RNAs should be withdrawn from mineral entry.

I am concerned about the theft of the Black Hills from Native Americans due to treaty violations by the USA government. The tribes have refused the Supreme Courts solution of a monetary award as mitigation for the theft. Any future alienation of land away from the federal government and the offering of minerals, that are not a renewable resource, perpetuates the theft. Any mineral withdrawal in the Black Hills, prevents this theft of non-renewable resources from the tribes claims.

In the future, via future NEPA documents, I would like much more mineral withdrawals on the Black Hills. All RNAs, Special Botanical Areas (SBA) and Inventoried Roadless Areas should be withdrawn from mineral entry.

All stands of trees designated as old growth or Late Successional Landscapes should be withdrawn from mineral entry. You should designate replacement old growth (as you currently only have .6% old growth left) and designate at least 4.6 percent of the forest as replacement old growth (SS-5) & that should also be withdrawn. As mineral withdrawals are only good for 20 years, if the stands burn down or the beetles or disease kill them, just don't renew them after the 20 years are over and substitute new areas to replace the lost SS-5 or SS- 4C stands.

You should evaluate any other water sheds for other Black Hill's cities and withdraw their watersheds.

You should be withdrawing high intensity recreational areas from mineral entry, if you have not yet done so. You should identify any special scenic areas that have not been withdrawn and withdraw those.

Ideally you should withdraw the entire Black Hills from mineral entry due to tribes treaty claims, but if that is unlikely to happen, you should attempt to identify the most significant areas of tribal cultural or historical value - such as the area around Craven Canyon or around Pe Sla and withdraw all of those from mineral entry.

Thanks,

Nancy Hilding