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Comments: I am writing in support of the proposed Pactola Area-Rapid Creek mineral withdrawal. This is one of the best things I've seen in a long time in the Black Hills area, and something we should be doing more of to protect this beautiful land and water.

I am a life-long Black Hills resident, and someone who loves and appreciates the natural beauty and recreation the area has to offer. I spend a great deal of time outdoors hiking with my dogs and taking them to swim in the summer. There are areas where the creeks are crystal clear and then there are areas where the water is discolored and old mining remnants have been left behind. Clearly the effects of past mining operations. This is a cycle we should be looking to end in the Black Hills, not repeat, and the mineral withdrawal is a good start to that.

I care about protecting this land and water to keep it healthy and thriving for many reasons. My personal love of the recreation it offers is top of the list for me, and I think I would move away if I started to see things like mining start to ruin the places I love so much. I also believe protecting the water and land is key to the health and well being of all people, and animals that live here... especially when it comes to things that threaten drinking water.

Another consideration I feel is extremely important is listening to the concerns of Native American tribal members to whom this land rightly belongs. We should be listening to and respecting the tribes wishes for the land management and protection.

Lastly, I would say a huge consideration would be the fact that tourism is the major economy in the area, and unfortunately without this there isn't much here for many people. Any type of harm done to the water and land from mining exploration would adversely affect the tourism economy in many ways that I don't think we could come back from. Who is going to come visit the area if its beauty is tainted by mining? There are already too many areas where the effects of mining are an ugly sore on the land, and adding any more would be a travesty.

The bottom line is... water is life, not gold, or any other resource that people come here to take from the land without caring about the consequences to the people, and animals who live here. I would ask that the Forest Service expedite the withdrawal, and present it to the Secretary of the Interior as a matter of an urgent nature.