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First name: Tracey

Last name: Zephier

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The scope of the proposed project states that it is to construct 49 exploratory drilling sites "to assess subsurface gold mineralization within the Ponderosa Project area. No mining, milling, waste or tailings disposal, dredging, or other mining-related activities are proposed under this Plan." What if gold is found? What is next? The intent is clearly to create gold mines in the proposed area, and exploratory drilling is only the first step of a much larger and longer term plan to destroy the Black Hills.

I strongly oppose the exploitation of the serene and sacred Black Hills for gold or any other mineral commodity. We should not even be allowing exploratory drilling, because it opens the door for full-fledged mining operations when/if gold is found as a result of the exploratory operations.