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Comments: Subject: Proposed rare earth mineral mine in the Bear Lodge
There is no doubt that the US needs these minerals for many industries including defense.It is also obvious that there is political pressure to develop these resources ASAP.Maybe I am dreaming but I believe the USFS should have responsibility and authority to make decisions that go beyond that.Wildlife, outdoor recreation including scenic beauty and grazing are also resources of which we have limited amounts. This project will adversly impact these resources for many years (probably forever) regardless of what the proponents are saying. I believe the noise, the dust, the traffic, the danger to the public whatever they may be doing on the south end of the Bear Lodge will turn this area into an industrial site that will be ruined for most outdoor activities, not to mention the impact to nearby residences and landowners.Water may become the most important resource in the western US (if it isn't already). We have increasing population and development in the Black Hills area with decreasing water supplies especially in these years of drought. Any risk of reducing or contaminating water supplies in an area like the Bear Lodge and surrounding countryside should be taken very seriously. As a landowner with springs and wells close to the Bear Lodge I find this very concerning. I don't claim to know a lot about groundwater, I'm not sure who does, but there are streams and probably aquifers that communicate with the Bear Lodge. The RER people haven't studied this enough or don't care which I felt was obvious at arecent meeting at Sundance.I believe these factors and probably many others need carefull consideration before this project moves forward, if it moves at all. There are examples of projects like this that have been rushed forward, done a lot of damage and later found to be unnessesary, economicaly unfeasible, or unsafe.Probably not in the domain of the Forest Service but what impact could this mine have on the buried nuclear matierial nearby on Warren Peak. I am told by local ranchers that at one time there was a sign or signs that prohibited blasting within some distance, I think 1 mile, of that site.Thank you for taking the time and interest to read my comments.