United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration
Drilling Project

Final Environmental Assessment

Mystic Ranger District, Black Hills National Forest, Pennington County, South Dakota

July 2022
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## Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.1 Summary of Proposed Project................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.2 Purpose and Need.......................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.3 Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Policies .......................................................................................................... 4  
      1.3.1 General Mining Act of 1872 .................................................................................................................................. 4  
      1.3.2 National Environmental Policy Act ..................................................................................................................... 4  
      1.3.3 Forest Plan Direction ................................................................................................................................................ 4  
         1.3.3.1 Forest Plan Management Area Direction ............................................................................................... 5  
      1.3.4 Other Applicable Laws/Regulations ................................................................................................................... 7  
2 Alternatives............................................................................................................................................................................. 8  
   2.1 Alternative A – No Action ............................................................................................................................................ 8  
   2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action ............................................................................................................................... 8  
      2.2.1 Drilling and Staging ................................................................................................................................................10  
      2.2.2 Site Access ..................................................................................................................................................................11  
      2.2.3 Proposed Equipment .............................................................................................................................................11  
      2.2.4 Vegetation and Soil Removal .............................................................................................................................12  
      2.2.5 Reclamation ...............................................................................................................................................................12  
      2.2.6 Monitoring and Implementation .......................................................................................................................12  
      2.2.7 Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures ................................................................................12  
   2.3 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action .........................................................................................................14  
   2.4 Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Study..............................................................................................18  
3 Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action and Alternatives ............................................................................19  
   3.1 Overview of Resource Issues ....................................................................................................................................19  
   3.2 Access and Transportation ...........................................................................................................................................21  
      3.2.1 Affected Environment .............................................................................................................................................21  
      3.2.2 Alternative A – No Action ...................................................................................................................................21  
      3.2.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action .......................................................................................................................21  
      3.2.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action ....................................................................................................22  
   3.3 Botanical Resources .....................................................................................................................................................23  
      3.3.1 Affected Environment .............................................................................................................................................23  
      3.3.2 Alternative A – No Action ...................................................................................................................................23  
      3.3.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action .......................................................................................................................23
3.3.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action.................................................................24

3.4 Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) ........................................................................24
  3.4.1 Affected Environment...............................................................................................24
  3.4.2 Alternative A – No Action ......................................................................................24
  3.4.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action .............................................................................24
  3.4.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action.............................................................25

3.5 Wildlife and Fisheries ......................................................................................................25
  3.5.1 Affected Environment...............................................................................................25
  3.5.2 Alternative A – No Action ......................................................................................26
  3.5.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action .............................................................................26
  3.5.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action.............................................................27

3.6 Soils and Geology .............................................................................................................27
  3.6.1 Affected Environment ...............................................................................................27
    3.6.1.1 Soils.....................................................................................................................27
    3.6.1.2 Geology...............................................................................................................27
  3.6.2 Alternative A – No Action ......................................................................................28
  3.6.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action .............................................................................28
    3.6.3.1 Soils.....................................................................................................................28
    3.6.3.2 Geology...............................................................................................................28
  3.6.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action.............................................................29
    3.6.4.1 Soils.....................................................................................................................29
    3.6.4.2 Geology...............................................................................................................29

3.7 Hydrology .......................................................................................................................29
  3.7.1 Affected Environment...............................................................................................29
    3.7.1.1 Surface Water......................................................................................................29
    3.7.1.2 Groundwater.......................................................................................................30
  3.7.2 Alternative A – No Action ......................................................................................31
  3.7.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action .............................................................................31
    3.7.3.1 Surface Water......................................................................................................31
    3.7.3.2 Groundwater.......................................................................................................32
  3.7.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action.............................................................33
    3.7.4.1 Surface Water......................................................................................................34
    3.7.4.2 Groundwater.......................................................................................................35

3.8 Recreation .......................................................................................................................35
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.8.1</td>
<td>Affected Environment</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.2</td>
<td>Alternative A – No Action</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.3</td>
<td>Alternative B – Proposed Action</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.4</td>
<td>Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Public Health &amp; Safety</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.1</td>
<td>Affected Environment</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.2</td>
<td>Alternative A – No Action</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.3</td>
<td>Alternative B – Proposed Action</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.4</td>
<td>Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Cumulative Effects Analysis</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.1</td>
<td>Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.2</td>
<td>Alternative A – No Action</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.3</td>
<td>Alternative B – Proposed Action</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.4</td>
<td>Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agency and Public Engagement</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Public Involvement Plan</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Project Scoping Letters</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Interagency Scoping Meeting</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Public Information Meeting</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Draft EA Public Review and Comment Period</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>References</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 2-1 Summary of Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures .............................................. 13
Table 2-2 Summary of Alternative C Additional Impact Minimization Measures ...................................... 18
Table 3-1 Summary of Project Issues ........................................................................................................................... 20

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Project Location Map......................................................................................................................................... 3
Figure 1-2 Forest Plan Management Area Overview .................................................................................................. 6
Figure 2-1 Alternative B and C Overview ......................................................................................................................... 9
Figure 2-2 Alternative C Management Area 8.2 Avoidance .......................................................................................... 16
Figure 2-3 Alternative C WIZ Avoidance ....................................................................................................................... 17

List of Appendices

Appendix A Draft Reclamation Plan
Appendix B Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report
Appendix C Botany Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Appendix D Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Appendix E Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report
Appendix F Public Health and Safety Technical Report
Appendix G Public Involvement Plan
Appendix H Scoping Comments and Responses
Appendix I Draft EA Comments and Responses
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BHNF</td>
<td>Black Hills National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>Code of Federal Regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEQ</td>
<td>Council of Environmental Quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>F3 Gold, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Management Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act</td>
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<td>NFSR</td>
<td>National Forest System Road</td>
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<td>NFST</td>
<td>National Forest System Trail</td>
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<td>PO</td>
<td>Plan of Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROD</td>
<td>Record of Decision</td>
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<td>SARC</td>
<td>South Dakota State Archaeological Research Center</td>
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<td>SD DANR</td>
<td>South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD GFP</td>
<td>South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
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<tr>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>United States Forest Service</td>
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<td>WIZ</td>
<td>water influence zone</td>
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1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Proposed Project

The United States Forest Service (USFS) Black Hills National Forest (BHNF), Mystic Ranger District received a Plan of Operations (PO) from F3 Gold, LLC (F3) on December 10, 2018, proposing to explore for gold, which falls under the locatable mineral regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228 Subpart A (reference (1)). The proposed Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling project (Project) is located north of Silver City, Pennington County, South Dakota in Sections 19, 30, 31, T2N R5E and Sections 13, 14, 24, 25, T2N R4E (Figure 1-1).

This Project includes diamond core drilling sites, access road maintenance (as needed), drill pad clearing (as needed), and reclamation activities. Two staging areas would be used to store equipment and tools. Main access from the north would be from National Forest System Road (NFSR) 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via county Highway 237 (Rochford Road). The primary access from the south would be from NFSR 671 (Sunnyside Gulch Road) or NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via Silver City Road. In addition, temporary overland trails may be constructed for drill site access. No mining, milling, or processing is proposed as part of this project. The Project would last approximately one year from initiation through drilling and reclamation, pending unforeseen circumstances (weather, fire, Covid, etc.). This proposal is guided by the 1997 BHN Forest Plan (Forest Plan; reference (2)) and evaluated in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

1.2 Purpose and Need

F3 has submitted a PO proposing exploration drilling on National Forest System Lands open to mineral location (reference (1)). F3 has a statutory right to perform exploration drilling as proposed per the General Mining Act of 1872. The USFS administers exploration and development on National Forest System lands under mining regulations defined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228, Subpart A. Entities wishing to undertake mineral exploration are required to submit a PO for review by the District Ranger.

The purpose of the exploration drilling is to identify the geological resources located in the Project area. The need for this Project relates to F3’s statutory right to access for exploration purposes. F3 is seeking USFS authorization of their proposal to exercise their rights under current mining laws to perform exploration drilling while minimizing environmental effects in accordance with USFS regulations for locatable minerals.

The Forest Service’s purpose is to decide whether to approve F3’s proposed PO and, if approved, what requirements are appropriate to minimize impacts on surface resources in accordance with 36 CFR 228, subpart A. After evaluating the proposed PO, the Forest Service determined that approving the proposed mining plan of operations would be a major Federal action subject to the National Environmental Policy Act as defined in 40 CFR 1508.1. Accordingly, the Forest Service prepared an EA.
The need for the Forest Service’s action is to comply with regulations governing the use of surface resources for operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands under 36 CFR 228, subpart A. These regulations require that the Forest Service respond to parties who submit a proposed plan of operations for approval to conduct operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands for part or all of their planned actions including mining, mineral processing, and uses reasonably incident thereto. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the submittal of F3’s proposed PO requires the Forest Service to consider whether to approve the proposed mining plan of operations or to require changes or additions necessary for the plan to meet the purpose of the regulations for locatable mineral operations.
Jenny Gulch Gold
Exploration Drilling Project
Final EA
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 1-1
1.3 Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Policies

The following laws and regulations apply to the proposed Project.

1.3.1 General Mining Act of 1872

Mining on public lands is authorized under the 1872 Mining Act (as amended) (30 USC § 22), which authorizes and governs prospecting [i.e., exploration] and mining for economic minerals such as gold, platinum, and silver on federal lands. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration on lands open to the public domain.

1.3.2 National Environmental Policy Act

The NEPA was established in 1970. NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental consequences of proposed actions on public lands and informs the public about the agency’s decision-making process. This environmental analysis is conducted according to the Council on Environmental Quality’s (CEQs) 1978 regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR §§1500-1508, as amended). The CEQ issued revised regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, effective September 14, 2020. The revised regulations provide the responsible official the option of conducting an environmental analysis under the 1978 regulations if the process was initiated prior to September 14, 2020 (40 CFR §1506.13, 85 FR 137, p. 43373, July 16, 2020). This EA will follow the 1978 regulations because scoping for this project was originally initiated in 2020.

1.3.3 Forest Plan Direction

The BHNF has developed a programmatic management direction in its 1997 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan; reference (2)). The Forest Plan was amended by the Phase II Forest Plan Amendment Record of Decision (ROD) in October 2005. The Forest Plan provides management direction for all resource management activities on the BHNF. It establishes goals, objectives, standards and guidelines for protecting communities, properties, and forest values by establishing a variety of resource management practices. The Forest Plan identifies minerals as a resource commodity and states that mineral production will continue in the BHNF in accordance with the 1872 Mining Act and in accordance with 36 CFR 228.

The Forest Plan identifies the following goals and objectives applicable to this Project:

- **Goal 3** – Provide for sustained commodity uses, including mineral resources, in an environmentally acceptable manner
  
  - **Objective 308** – Ensure that exploration, development, and production of mineral and energy resources are conducted in an environmentally sound matter so that they may contribute to economic growth and national defense.
1.3.3.1  Forest Plan Management Area Direction

The Forest Plan sets management allocations for specific uses of land (called Management Areas [MA]) within the BHNF to meet multiple objectives, as described in Chapter 3 of the Forest Plan. Three MAs are located in the Project area, as shown on Figure 1-2 and described below:

- **MA 5.1, Resource Production Emphasis** – Approximately 1,392 acres within the Project area are classified as MA 5.1. This MA is managed for wood products, water yield, and forage production, while providing other commercial products, visual quality, diversity of wildlife, and a variety of other goods and services. Numerous open roads provide commercial access and road-based recreation opportunities, while closed roads provide non-motorized recreation opportunities. Mineral development, including exploration, is an identified activity for this MA. MA 5.1 encompasses 563,898 acres of land, or 45.2 percent of the BHNF.

- **MA 5.4, Big Game Winter Range Emphases** – Approximately 209 acres within the Project area are classified as MA 5.4. This MA is managed to provide high-quality winter and transitional habitat for deer and elk, high quality turkey habitat, habitat for other species, and a variety of multiple uses. Mineral development, including exploration, is an identified activity for this MA. MA 5.4 encompasses 396,516 acres of land, or 31.8 percent of the BHNF.

- **MA 8.2, Developed Recreation Complexes** – Approximately 123 acres within the Project area are classified as MA 8.2. This MA is managed for recreational opportunities and visual qualities adjacent to developed recreation sites and bodies of water. This MA does not list new mineral development as an activity/opportunity in areas that have been withdrawn from mineral entry. MA 8.2 encompasses 11,368 acres of land (excluding water), or less than 1 percent of the BHNF.
FOREST PLAN
MANAGEMENT AREA
OVERVIEW
Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Final EA
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 1-2
1.3.4 Other Applicable Laws/Regulations

The key laws, regulations, and policies applicable to the Project are described above. Additional laws and regulations that also require consideration in USFS management decisions and/or NEPA are identified below:

- Clean Air Act (42 USC 1857 et seq.), as amended and recodified (42 USC 7401 et seq.)
- Clean Water Act (33 USC. 1251 et seq.)
- Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 et seq.)
- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites
- Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (and related Presidential Memorandums from 2004, 2009, and 2021)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703 et seq.)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq.)
- Protection of Historic Properties (36 CFR 800)
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and 43 CFR 10
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, as amended
- The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
- USDA Departmental Regulation 1350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Collaboration
- South Dakota Codified Law
- Administrative Rules of South Dakota
2 Alternatives

This chapter provides information on the development and evaluation of Project alternatives. The development of alternatives is directly related to those which achieve the purpose and need for the Project.

2.1 Alternative A - No Action

The NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14) requires a study of the No Action Alternative to use as a basis for comparing the effects of the proposed action and other action alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), the USFS would not approve F3’s PO to conduct exploration drilling activities. There would be no environmental effects associated with Alternative A. However, Alternative A does not meet the Project’s purpose and need to allow F3 to access and explore for minerals on lands open to the public domain in accordance with the General Mining Act of 1872.

2.2 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Alternative B is the proposed action as described in the PO submitted by F3. Alternative B includes diamond core drilling at up to 42 drill sites, access road maintenance (as needed), drill pad clearing (as needed), and reclamation activities (Figure 2-1). Alternative B would require an amendment to the Forest Plan to allow three drill pads in MA 8.2 (Figure 2-2 located in Section 2.3). The Forest Plan designates that no new mineral development (including exploratory drilling to inform future mineral development) is allowed and the majority of the MA around Pactola Lake has been withdrawn from mineral entry. The USFS would be required to prepare a Project specific amendment to the Forest Plan to authorize the drilling activities, despite the F3-proposed drilling locations coinciding with one of the areas that has not been withdrawn from mineral entry.
2.2.1 Drilling and Staging

Each drill site would have a maximum footprint of approximately 2,500 square feet (0.06 acres), where the drilling rig, rod tray, support vehicles, portable cutting tank, and water truck will be placed. Drill holes would range from 500 to 6,000 feet in depth dependent on the results of each hole. Although depths up to 6,000 feet would be authorized, very few holes are planned to extend to this depth; most holes would be drilled to a depth of approximately 1,000 feet. Exploration drilling involves drilling holes vertically and at an angle from the surface. That angle can vary between -90 degrees (vertical) and -45 degrees. Once the angle is set, the drill will remain at that angle until completion of the drill hole. Directional drilling that controls the direction of the boring during drilling (as commonly used in oil and gas development) or horizontal drilling methods will not be used. The number of holes drilled on each drill pad will depend on the findings in the field, with the average drill pad having one to two holes and some having up to four holes. Depending on the results of preceding drill holes, some of the drill sites may not end up being required and would ultimately not be constructed. Drilling operations would take place 24-hours a day divided between two 12-hour shifts. Two staging areas (0.25 acres each) would be used to store equipment and tools. Drill pads and staging areas would result in 3.0 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Drill pad locations were selected based on local geology, subsurface target concepts, and surface conditions that allow F3 to best test its scientific theories while minimizing surface disturbance.

The drilling process proposed by F3 would use water mixed with industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds or other natural and/or biodegradable additives to more efficiently and safely drill and seal boreholes. No other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling. Any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters. Water would be trucked from the municipal or industrial source to storage holding tanks either at a drill site and/or one of the staging areas. Approximately 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water would be used per day per drill rig. During drilling activities, water would be circulated using a water pump with water lines transporting water from the storage tanks to the drill site. At the end of drilling operations, excess water would be disposed of at a municipal wastewater disposal location, in agreement with the municipality.

Drill cuttings and used water would be recovered and collected in tanks at the drill site. Settlement would be used to separate the cuttings, allowing the water to be reused in the drilling process. Upon completion of a drill hole, the cuttings would be either thin-spread and buried beneath the topsoil (which is the industry standard for low-sulfur cuttings management in the western U.S.) or transported off-site to an approved disposal location. Spread drill cutting depth would be dependent on hole depth with most sites resulting in a spread drill cuttings depth of 0.25 inches; however, some sites (holes up to 6,000 feet deep) may result in up to approximately 1.50 inches of drill cuttings spread across the drill pad. Topsoil would be placed on on-site cuttings and reseeded/replanted to match surrounding vegetation. Burying cuttings on-site allows the cuttings to be protected from erosion until vegetation is re-established. Drill pads would be reclaimed upon completion of all drilling activities, as one reclamation effort at the end.
2.2.2 Site Access

Main access from the north would be from NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via county Highway 237 (Rochford Road). The primary access from the south would be from NFSR 671 (Sunnyside Gulch Road) or NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via Silver City Road. Additional NFSRs that are anticipated to be used for access include NFSR 261, 720.2B, 671, 141.2B, and 261.2B. National Forest System Trails (NFST) 6207, 6209, and 6210 are also anticipated to be used for access, all of which allow motorized vehicle use. Approximately 5,280 feet (one mile) of existing local roadways noted above would be used to access Project features. In addition, approximately 4,700 linear feet (0.89 miles) of 8-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access route may be constructed for drill site access, resulting in less than 1 acre of additional temporary surface disturbance. These temporary overland trails would be obliterated and returned to natural conditions after Project completion. Existing access roads and overland trails would be improved only if needed and only to the extent necessary to gain access to the site.

2.2.3 Proposed Equipment

F3 proposes to use the following equipment to complete drilling and associated restoration of the Project:

- One to four diamond drill rigs
- Drill rod racks with drill pipe and casing pipe
- Six to eight four-wheel drive pickup trucks for access to drilling sites
- Four all-terrain vehicles for access to drilling sites
- Two snowmobiles for access to drilling sites (for winter use only)
- One water truck, as needed to fill water storage tanks
- One excavator
- One dozer
- One skid-steer
- One to three water storage tanks, up to 10,000 gallons in size
- Up to four water supply pumps
- Water line/hose, mud pump, and mixing tanks for grouting and/or cementing drill holes.

Drilling equipment (i.e., drill rigs, drill rod racks, drill pipe, casing pipe) would be used at each drilling site as this equipment is needed to perform the drilling. Other equipment, such as the excavator, dozer, and skid-steer would be used on an as-needed basis to facilitate access, maintenance, and reclamation. When not in use, this equipment would be stored at one of the staging areas.
2.2.4 **Vegetation and Soil Removal**

Tree clearing and other vegetation removal would be limited to only that which is needed to facilitate access. Any soils that may need to be removed for pad clearing would be stockpiled for later use in site reclamation.

2.2.5 **Reclamation**

Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per Administrative Rules of South Dakota 74:11:08.

Drill pads and staging areas would be reclaimed upon completion of drilling by re-grading the pads to pre-Project contours and reseeding with Black Hills reclamation seed mix, as noted in the PO (reference (1)). Safety signage would be removed from the area, and stockpiled soils would be either spread over the drill pad area, stacked in soil-free piles, or disposed off-site at an approved facility. Overland trails used for access to drill pads would be re-seeded and returned to pre-existing conditions under the direction of the USFS. The draft reclamation plan for the Project is provided in Appendix A.

2.2.6 **Monitoring and Implementation**

F3 would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USFS as part of the EA decision. In addition, F3 will be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the Project. F3 is required to submit a reclamation plan to the USFS prior to authorization for Project initiation in accordance with USFS Manual 2840. In addition, F3 is responsible for submitting a reclamation bond to the USFS for the Project, with the bond amount determined by the USFS. F3’s PO would be administered by the USFS Minerals Specialist, and other governmental entities with permitting authority will be responsible for enforcing their permit conditions as they deem appropriate. Sites will be monitored for a minimum of three years after reclamation.

2.2.7 **Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures**

As part of their Plan of Operations, F3 intends to implement impact minimization measures into Project design, as summarized in Table 2-1. These measures have been developed in response to comments received during the Project scoping process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures</th>
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| Access and Transportation                 | • Overland trails used for access would be regraded and reseeded as directed by USFS.  
• Any unexpected road damage would be repaired as soon as possible based on contractor availability.  
• Contractor equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities.  
• Traffic to and from the drill sites would be limited to site set-up, driller shift changes, management oversight, sample pickup, and site restoration.  
• Additional safety signage (construction use, warning signs, drill signs, trucks entering signs, etc.) would be posted throughout the work area to communicate construction equipment use of the road. |
| Botanical Resources/Reclamation           | • Tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary. In areas where tree removal is unavoidable, the affected area would be reseeded/replanted as part of reclamation with Black Hills seed mix.  
• Disturbed areas would be reclaimed and reseeded according to USFS standards.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Fisheries and Wildlife                    | • Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnyside Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15 – August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.  
• Drill sites would not be located in limestone areas to avoid potential vertigo snail habitat disturbance. In addition, protection of the WIZ surrounding streams/seeps/springs would also provide protection for vertigo snails.  
• Drilling within 500-feet of a known bat roost location would occur outside the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31). Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger. |
| Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry & Soils | • Holding tanks would be used to store drilling water rather than sumps to minimize potential for sedimentation and infiltration.  
• All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.  
• Materials used for the Project would be stored either at staging areas or at the drill sites; materials would not be stored along access roads or other locations.  
• Any soils that may need to be removed for clearing drill pads or staging areas would be stockpiled on-site for later use in site reclamation.  
• Upon completion of a drill hole, the drill cuttings and fines would be dispersed in the disturbed area.  
• Topsoil would be placed on cuttings and reseeded/replanted as necessary to match surrounding vegetation.  
• Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities.  
• Drilling would primarily require the use of water. In addition to water, F3 may also use industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds, or other natural and/or biodegradable additives, during drilling to more efficiently and safely drill and seal boreholes. No other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling. Rock core, water, and fine-grained rock drill cuttings generated by drilling would be stored in holding tanks. Water would be recycled back into the drilling process, and drill cuttings would be disposed as noted above. |
### Hydrology – Water Quality/Quantity

- The only fluids used for the Project are fuel (for vehicles/machinery), oil (for vehicles/machinery), water, and industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds or other natural and/or biodegradable additives.
- All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.
- Water would not be extracted from local surface waters; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source.
- Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per Administrative Rules of South Dakota 74:11:08. Drill holes would be sealed within 24 to 48 hours of drilling completion prior to moving the drill rig.
- Casing will be used, when necessary, to protect groundwater in unconsolidated, surficial geologic units. The need for casing is expected to be minimal as most drilling is proposed directly on bedrock with little to no soil or surficial geologic units.

### Public Health and Safety

- Residences in close proximity to drilling activities would be notified prior to Project initiation.
- An emergency response plan would be developed for the Project and would be provided to local first responders in advance of Project initiation. This plan would be developed in coordination with local first responders and would address a number of emergency situations (i.e., fire, injury, etc.).
- All drilling sites and staging areas would be equipped with spill kits to immediately address any fuel or oil spill. All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.
- All vehicles, drill rigs, and other on-site equipment would be inspected as part of daily safety checks and will be equipped with more than one fire extinguisher, which would also be inspected routinely.
- A site security plan would be developed to maintain site safety and limit risk of public interference.

### 2.3 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action

Alternative C was developed in response to issues identified during Project scoping. This alternative meets the Project’s purpose and need in a way that implements siting factors (i.e., factors that influence where features are sited or positioned) and additional mitigation measures to further minimize Project effects.

The additional measures or siting differences included in Alternative C are summarized below. Specifically, Alternative C has been developed to minimize effects by avoiding cultural resources, eliminating the need for a Forest Plan Amendment, as discussed below, and to minimize effects to the water influence zone (WIZ). In order to minimize effects, additional drilling pads would be needed to achieve a comparable level of data collection as explained below.

Alternative C proposes drilling 47 exploration drilling pads as shown in Figure 2-1; this number of drill pads in combination with the two staging areas would result in 3.3 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Alternative C relocates 5 drilling pads, one staging area, and associated access roads proposed in Alternative B to avoid effects to cultural resources; however, F3 has determined that additional drilling pads are needed to collect an equivalent level of information compared to Alternative B. Under Alternative C, approximately 5,700 feet (1.1 mile) of existing local roadways would be used to
access Project features. In addition, up to approximately 9,925 linear feet (1.88 miles) of 12-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access route may be developed for drill site access, resulting in up to approximately 2.73 acres of additional temporary surface disturbance as compared to Alternative B. Alternative C would require a 12-foot wide access corridor to accommodate the more rugged terrain traversed compared to Alternative B.

Existing USFS administrative roads not open for public use (i.e., administrative roads), as defined in the USFS 2010 Travel Management Record of Decision, would be used to access sites to the extent practicable; in some cases, this may include travel through the WIZ on existing administrative roads. Locations accessed through the WIZ would be planned for winter construction to the extent practicable; however, should site conditions at the time of construction warrant these administrative roads unusable (i.e., flooding in the WIZ or another reason), three drilling pads (SPC-045, SPC-046, and SPC-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ; this shift has been accounted for in the access road measurements provided above. The use of alternate drill pad and access road locations would require coordination with and authorization by USFS engineers and the District Ranger.

As mentioned above in Section 2.2, Alternative B includes three drilling sites in an area designated by the Forest Plan as MA 8.2, Developed Recreation Complexes. Alternative C relocates these three drilling sites from MA 8.2 to avoid the need for a Project-specific Forest Plan amendment (Figure 2-2).

Alternative B includes three drilling sites immediately adjacent to USFS-identified WIZ. A WIZ is a designated zone adjacent to stream channels and other waterbodies for which focused efforts are made to maintain and improve water quality or other water and riparian dependent values such as habitat, recreation, and visual and aesthetic quality. In the interest of maintaining the integrity of established WIZ areas and minimizing water quality and recreation concerns, Alternative C relocates three drill sites outside of WIZ areas (Figure 2-3). To avoid the need for tree clearing and construction of new temporary site access, as mentioned above, it is possible that the WIZ may be crossed during frozen conditions to access certain drilling sites. If the WIZ is impassable without causing considerable damage to soils, wetlands, and other resources, three drilling pads immediately adjacent to the WIZ (SPC-45, SPC-46, and SPC-47) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ, as shown on Figure 2-3. This would be determined on a case by case basis and in coordination with the Forest Service hydrologist, engineers, PO administrator and District Ranger.
FIGURE 2-2

ALTERNATIVE C
MANAGEMENT AREA 8.2
AVOIDANCE
Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Final EA
Pennington County, SD

Drill Pad (Alternative B)

Drill Pad (Alternative C)

Project Area

Project Exclusion Area

Existing USFS Roads to be Utilized

Mineral Withdrawal Area

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative B)

New Access Route

Overland/Trail Access Route

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative C)

New Access Route

Overland/Trail Access Route

USFS Management Areas:

Management Area 3.7

Management Area 5.1

Management Area 5.4

Management Area 8.2

Imagery: USDA-FSA NAIP (2020)
The impact minimization measures noted in Table 2-1 would be applied to both Alternative B and Alternative C; however, Alternative C would also include impact minimization measures beyond those noted in Table 2-1; these additional impact minimization measures are summarized in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2 Summary of Alternative C Additional Impact Minimization Measures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Additional Impact Minimization Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botanical Resources/ Reclamation</td>
<td>• Each drill pad and temporary overland access route would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use rather than upon completion of all drilling activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/Heritage Resources</td>
<td>• Relocates drilling pads and access roads to avoid potential cultural resources conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>• Drilling pads within 500 feet of a residence would limit drilling to one, 12-hour daytime shift (7:00am – 7:00pm) to mitigate nighttime noise potential. This applies to drill pads SCP-012 and SCP-020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology – Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>• Alternative C includes a provision that the WIZ may be crossed during frozen conditions to access certain sites; however, if seasonal conditions indicate the WIZ is impassable without causing considerable damage to soils, wetlands, and other resources, the three drilling pads immediately adjacent to the WIZ (SPC-045, SPC-046, and SPC-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. The use of alternate drill pad and access road locations would require coordination with and authorization by USFS engineers and the District Ranger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Travel Management</td>
<td>• Alternative C relocates three drill pads from MA 8.2, which is managed for recreational opportunities and visual qualities adjacent to developed recreation sites and bodies of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alternative C relocates three drill pads (SPC-45, SPC-46, and SPC-47) from WIZ areas in the interest of maintaining WIZ integrity and minimizing water quality and recreation concerns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.4 Alternatives Carried Forward for Detailed Study**

As described above, one No Action and two Action alternatives have been developed for the Project. Although Alternative A, No Action, does not meet the purpose and need of the Project, it provides a baseline from which Project effects and potential magnitude of effects can be assessed.

Alternative B and Alternative C are comparable action alternatives. However, Alternative C incorporates additional impact minimization measures and siting shifts compared to Alternative B. These additional impact minimization measures were developed by the USFS and F3 in response to issues identified during Project scoping. Alternative C positions Project features in a way that avoids cultural resources conflicts. In addition, Alternative C relocates six drilling sites to avoid environmentally sensitive areas – MA 8.2 and WIZ areas. Although Alternative B and Alternative C are similar, they do have several differences which warrants detailed effects assessment; as such, both alternatives are also carried forward for detailed study in this EA.

No other alternatives were identified that meet the Project’s purpose and need while incorporating impact minimization measures.
3 Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

3.1 Overview of Resource Issues

This chapter summarizes the potential effects of the proposed action and alternatives for each resource issue identified based on a review of the Project setting and Project scoping comments. The resource issues, issue statements, which were formed from scoping comments, and evaluation criteria for each resource carried forward for impact assessment is in Table 3-1. It should be noted that public health and safety assessment was not originally considered, but was added to the issues summary based on scoping comments.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Issue Statement</th>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The Project would lead to an increase in construction traffic, which may damage roads.</td>
<td>Extent, location, and timing of construction traffic and potential for damage to roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botanical Resources</td>
<td>The Project would require removal of existing vegetation and could negatively affect sensitive plant species.</td>
<td>Identification of listed (state and federal), Region 2 Sensitive Species (R2 SS, and management target species. Location and amount of vegetation removal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>The Project could affect cultural resources and tribal sacred lands by altering the landscape adjacent to these sites. Access to some sites could be limited for the duration of Project activities.</td>
<td>Number of sites affected and nature of effects for specific sites. Project proximity to sites, access restrictions, timing, and length of effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The Project could affect wildlife and associated habitat due to a temporary loss of habitat, pollution, noise, and human activity.</td>
<td>Vegetation removal and effect on wildlife species. Potential for contamination of waters inhabited by fish and utilized by local wildlife. Level of wildlife displacement as a result of noise and human activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>The Project has the potential for soil compaction and erosion and geologic hazards through equipment use and drilling activities. The Project could affect groundwater quality through drilling activities.</td>
<td>Drilling processes, materials used, and well sealing plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology – Water Quality/Water Supply/Aquatic Resources</td>
<td>The Project would require subsurface drilling which could indirectly affect private wells and quality of the water supply. The Project could affect water quality in local surface waters through ground disturbing activities associated with access and drilling.</td>
<td>Proximity to surface waters and proposed surface water crossings, proximity to private wells, drilling processes, materials used, and well sealing plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The Project could alter the quality of recreation and tourism as a result of increased traffic, noise, visual effects, and pollution.</td>
<td>Nature and extent of traffic, noise, and visual effects on tourists and recreational activities. Potential for pollution of local waters where recreational activities occur.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following resources were not identified as issues based on Project scoping and review of the proposed Project in the context of the environmental setting. As such, these resources are not discussed further in this document:

- Climate and air quality (beyond elements tied to public health and safety)
- Rangeland
- Non-native, invasive species (beyond applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines, as described in the Botany Technical Report located in Appendix C)
- Socioeconomics
- Vegetation and timber resources

3.2 Access and Transportation

3.2.1 Affected Environment

Several existing roadways are present throughout the Project area, as shown on Figure 2-1 of Appendix B. Some of these roads would be used to access the Project area. The main access from the north would be from National Forest System Road (NFSR) 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via county Highway 237 (Rochford Road). The primary access from the south would be from NFSR 671 (Sunnyside Gulch Road) or NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via Silver City Road. Additional NFSRs that are anticipated to be used for access include NFSR 720.2B, 141.2B, and 261.2B; as well as motorized NFSTs 6207, 6209, and 6210 (see Figure 2-1 in Appendix B).

As summarized in Appendix B, the USFS classifies maintenance NSFRs in categories ranging from 1 to 5. The Project would use roads classified as maintenance level 1 (NFSR 1412B, 261.2B, and 720.2B), 2 (NFSR 671), 3 (NFSR 261), and 4 (Silver City Road), as well as motorized trails (NFST 6207, 6209, and 6210). There are no maintenance level 5 roadways in the Project area.

Additional information on access and transportation conditions in the Project area is provided in Appendix B. Applicable laws, regulations, policy, and Forest Plan direction related to access and transportation can also be found in Appendix B.

3.2.2 Alternative A - No Action

Under Alternative A, the Project would not occur. As such, Alternative A would not result in changes to existing access and transportation conditions.

3.2.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct effects on access and transportation could occur primarily through Project-generated traffic and through construction of new temporary routes to access drill sites. In addition to the existing USFS roads and motorized trails the Project intends to use, approximately 4,700 linear feet of 8-foot wide temporary overland trails would be improved for drill site access, resulting in approximately 0.86 acres of additional temporary surface disturbance (see Figure 2-2 in Appendix B). These temporary overland trails would be obliterated and returned to natural conditions after Project completion. Existing access routes and overland trails would be improved to provide Project
access only if needed and only to the extent necessary to gain safe access to the site, and the level of
improvement would match what is needed for equipment (work vehicle, drilling rig, water truck, etc.) to
safely access the site.

Appendix B identifies the types and amount of construction vehicles that would be used at various points
during the Project. Although the additional traffic generated by the Project would be staggered
throughout the life of drilling and reclamation and is not expected to be significant in the context of the
setting, it would pose a short-term change to maintenance level 2 and 3 roadway users who may not be
accustomed to maneuvering in the presence of larger vehicles in this area. To minimize potential for
vehicle and traffic conflicts, F3 would limit traffic to and from the drill sites and use signage and/or
temporary fencing. Contractor equipment would not exceed local road width restrictions without prior
approval by applicable authorities. Safety signage (i.e., construction use, warning signs, drilling signs,
trucks entering signs, etc.) would be posted through the work area to communicate construction
equipment use of the roadway. All signage placed on USFS roads and trails would meet guidelines in the
Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Engineering Management series 7100-15 Sign and Poster
Guidelines for the USFS. USFS would review and approve the signage plan prior to implementation.

Additional traffic on maintenance level 1, 2, and 3 roadways has the potential to create or expand existing
potholes, exacerbate washboard conditions on the road surface, cause rutting, increase soil erosion, and
pose other roadway condition concerns. Travel on wet roads can enhance rutting to the road surface,
which may require further additional measures (gravel surfacing, drainage, etc.). To minimize potential for
roadway damages, F3 and/or its contractor’s equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions
without prior approval by applicable authorities. In addition, all road improvements, reconstruction,
maintenance, and/or restoration would need to be designed to USFS standards and approved by USFS
personnel. F3 would be responsible for repairing any unexpected road damage to the appropriate
maintenance level standards as soon as possible based on appropriate contractor availability, and all
trails/roads would be returned to their original widths as part of reclamation. As such, roadway damage
resulting from the Project is anticipated to be short-term and localized to the identified Project access
routes. In addition, adjacent vegetation along existing roads and temporary overland access routes may
need to be removed to provide adequate access for drilling activities. Upon completion of the Project, all
overland trails would be regraded and reseeded as directed by USFS.

To address the potential effects on access and transportation, the Project would include implementation
of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to National BMPs and
Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix B.

**3.2.4 Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action**

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on access and transportation would generally be the same as
those described for Alternative B with the following exceptions. Alternative C relocates some of the
drilling pads and access routes proposed in Alternative B to avoid effects to sensitive resources; however,
doing so would require additional drilling pads to collect an equivalent level of information compared to
Alternative B. Under Alternative C, up to approximately 9,925 linear feet (1.88 miles) of 12-foot wide
temporary overland trails and/or temporary access routes may be developed or improved for drill site
access, resulting in up to approximately 2.73 acres of temporary surface disturbance (see Figure 2-3 in Appendix B). Potential effects from site access and transportation would be similar as those described for Alternative B. Alternative C would result in more direct effects from the construction of temporary, overland access routes; however, it would avoid direct effects to sensitive resources and would require the same level of reclamation as Alternative B.

3.3 Botanical Resources

3.3.1 Affected Environment

The Project area is located within the Black Hills Plateau ecoregion of the Middle Rockies ecoregion. The Black Hills Plateau ecoregion is a relatively flat, elevated expanse covering the mid-elevation slopes and grasslands of the Black Hills. Plant communities within the Project area include forested areas and meadows. Botanical surveys conducted in the Project area in summer and fall of 2008 identified the following plant communities in order of prevalence: ponderosa pine forest, ponderosa pine/quaking aspen, meadow plant, and white spruce/quaking aspen communities. Additional information on plant communities in the Project can be found in Appendix C.

Sensitive flora species occur in the BHNF, including federally listed threatened or endangered species protected under the Endangered Species Act, USFS Region 2 Sensitive Species (R2 SS), and USFS species of local concern (SOLC). Lists of species that may be found in each of these categories is provided in Appendix C, along with the species occurrence within the Project area. Applicable laws, regulations, policy, and Forest Plan direction related to botanical resources can also be found in Appendix C.

3.3.2 Alternative A - No Action

Under Alternative A, no vegetation clearing or earth work would occur; as such Alternative A would not result in effects on botanical resources.

3.3.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Alternative B would result in direct effects to botanical resources due to the necessary clearing activities required to obtain site access and for grading some drill pad locations. Alternative B would result in approximately 3.8 acres of temporary vegetation disturbance from construction of site access, drill pads, and staging areas.

It is unlikely for sensitive flora species, including federally listed, USFS R2 SS, or SOLC to occur within the Project area, given lack of suitable habitat and/or given their lack of documented occurrences within direct proximity of the Project area. There is no suitable habitat present for federally listed species; therefore, there would be no effect to federally listed threatened or endangered species. There are no known occurrences of R2 SS within the areas that would be disturbed by the Project, and in some cases, there is also no suitable habitat. Therefore, Alternative B may adversely affect R2 SS individuals, but they are not likely to result in a loss of viability in the Project area or cause a trend toward federal listing. Similarly, there are no known occurrences of plant SOLC in the Project area. Potential effects of Alternative B on plant species are addressed in Table 6-1 of Appendix C.
To address the potential effects on botanical resources, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix C.

### 3.3.4 Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

As is the case with Alternative B, Alternative C would result in direct effects to botanical resources, including meadows and trees, due to the necessary clearing activities required to obtain site access and for grading some drill pad locations; these activities would result in approximately 6.05 acres of temporary vegetation disturbance.

Potential effects on botany associated with Alternative C are the same as those identified for Alternative B, and potential Alternative C botany effects by species are addressed in Table 6-1 of Appendix C. To address the potential effects on botanical resources, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix C.

### 3.4 Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)

#### 3.4.1 Affected Environment

A Level I cultural resources records search and targeted site visits were conducted to determine what previously recorded cultural resources are located within and nearby the Project area. A records search of the Project area and one mile around it was conducted on June 18, 2020, with the South Dakota State Archaeological Research Center (SARC). A second record search was conducted on March 3, 2021, and showed no changes to the data. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the National Historic Landmark online databases were also reviewed. The records searches revealed that the entire Project area has been covered by previous cultural resource inventories, and that 25 previously recorded cultural resources are located within the proposed Project area. Of these, two cultural resources sites are eligible for the NRHP. A site visit was completed for these two eligible sites to determine potential Project impacts.

Due to the sensitive nature of information presented in the cultural resources report, this document is only able to be shared with appropriate agency and tribal entities and is exempt from public availability requirements.

#### 3.4.2 Alternative A - No Action

Under Alternative A, the Project would not occur. As such, Alternative A would not affect cultural resources.

#### 3.4.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Direct effects on cultural resources could occur if ground-disturbing Project activities occur where cultural resources are present or if the Project permanently hinders the viewshed of historic structures. Under Alternative B, drill pads and proposed access roads would cross the boundaries of five cultural resources
sites, two of which are NRHP-eligible sites. A site visit confirmed that Alternative B would result in adverse effects to cultural resources due to Project access routes and drill pad siting. However, no long-term visual impacts to historic structures were anticipated to result from Alternative B. Under Alternative B, there are no anticipated long-term visual impacts to historic structures from the Project.

In the event that cultural resources are discovered or disturbed during Project implementation, work in the vicinity of the discovery or disturbance must cease immediately. The BHNF Mystic Ranger District must be contacted so the agency can take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate possible adverse effects. The BHNF Mystic Ranger district will also notify the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) that have requested to be on the Forest’s mailing list within 48 hours of the discovery or disturbance, as outlined in 36 CFR 800.13.

### 3.4.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action

Direct effects on cultural resources could occur if ground-disturbing Project activities occur where cultural resources are present or if the Project permanently hinders the viewshed of historic structures. Under Alternative C, Project access routes and drill pads have been shifted to avoid potential effects to cultural resources features. Under Alternative C, there are also no anticipated long-term visual impacts to historic structures from the Project.

An overall determination of no adverse effect to historic properties has been made for Alternative C. THPOs were forwarded a copy of the cultural resources report on July 2, 2021, with a request for comments on the determination of effect. The cultural resources report was provided to SHPO on August 2, 2021, with a request for concurrence.

Concurrence with this determination is currently pending from the SHPO and regional THPOs.

In the event that cultural resources are discovered or disturbed during Project implementation, work in the vicinity of the discovery or disturbance must cease immediately. The BHNF Mystic Ranger District must be contacted so the agency can take steps to avoid, minimize or mitigate possible adverse effects. The BHNF Mystic Ranger district will also notify the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) that have requested to be on the Forest’s mailing list within 48 hours of the discovery or disturbance, as outlined in 36 CFR 800.13.

### 3.5 Wildlife and Fisheries

#### 3.5.1 Affected Environment

Wildlife species inhabiting the Project area are those species that are well-habituated to ponderosa pine forest communities, such as small to medium sized mammals (e.g., squirrels, fox, and deer), large ungulates (e.g., bighorn sheep, elk), migratory birds, raptors, and several insect species. Fisheries species inhabiting the Project area include species that are habituated to small mountain streams, such as various minnow species. Trout (e.g., brown trout and rainbow trout) are stocked annually by South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (SD GFP).
Sensitive wildlife and fish species occur in the BHNF, including federally protected species, USFS R2 SS, USFS SOLC, and USFS Management Indicator Species (MIS). Lists of species that may be found in each of these categories is provided in Appendix D, along with the species occurrence within the Project area. Applicable laws, regulations, policy, and Forest Plan direction related to wildlife and fisheries resources can also be found in Appendix D.

3.5.2 Alternative A - No Action
Under Alternative A, no vegetation clearing or earth work would occur; as such Alternative A would not result in effects on wildlife and fisheries resources.

3.5.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action
Short-term, indirect effects on wildlife could occur during vegetation clearing and drilling activities under Alternative B. These activities would result in increased noise and human activity. Many species, even those accustomed to human proximity, could temporarily abandon habitats within and near the Project area until the work is completed. These temporary effects are not expected to irreparably harm wildlife individuals or populations, and it is expected that once the Project is complete, wildlife would return to previous habitats within the Project area. Potential short-term, indirect effects on fish species could occur during Project activities as a result of sedimentation in aquatic habitat.

Short-term, direct effects on wildlife habitat could result from vegetation/habitat removal associated with drill sites, staging areas, and temporary access trails. Vegetation and tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary to facilitate access to the site and drilling activities. Fish species habitat would not be directly affected by Project activities, as no activities are planned to occur within permanent waterbodies or watercourses.

As summarized in Section 4.1 of Appendix D, four federally protected species are known to occur in Pennington County. The USFS has concluded that Alternative B would have no effect on three of these species (whooping crane, rufa red knot, and bald eagles) and that Alternative B may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the northern long-eared bat. Additional discussion and justification for these determinations is provided in Section 4.5.1 of Appendix D.

As summarized in Section 4.2 and on Table 4-1 of Appendix D, there are 33 R2 SS in the BHNF, 17 of which have the potential to occur in the Project area. For these 17 R2 SS, the USFS has concluded that Alternative B may adversely impact individuals but is not likely to result in a loss of viability in the Project area nor cause a trend toward federal listing. Additional discussion and justification for these determinations is provided in Section 4.5.2 of Appendix D.

As summarized in Section 5.1 and on Table 5-1 of Appendix D, there are 19 wildlife and fish SOLC that occur in the BHNF, 17 of which have the potential to occur within the Project area. While habitat does exist in the Project area for these 17 SOLC, due to the small scale of the Project in relation to habitats available across the BHNF, the USFS has concluded that these 17 SOLC are likely to persist because the Project is consistent with Forest Plan direction for SOLC habitats. Additional discussion and justification for these determinations is provided in Section 5.4.1 of Appendix D.
As summarized in Section 5.2 and on Table 5-2 of Appendix D, there are nine wildlife and fish MIS that occur in the BHNF, eight of which have the potential to occur within the Project area. While habitat does exist in the Project area for these eight MIS, due to the small scale of the Project in relation to habitats available across the BHNF, the USFS has concluded that there would be limited effect on BHNF-wide habitat trends for any of these eight MIS. Additional discussion and justification for these determinations is provided in Section 5.4.2 of Appendix D.

To address the potential effects on wildlife and fisheries resources, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix D.

3.5.4 **Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action**

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on wildlife and fisheries resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

3.6 **Soils and Geology**

3.6.1 **Affected Environment**

3.6.1.1 **Soils**

Soils in the Project area are relatively young and weakly developed, having formed from material weathered from underlying bedrock, alluvial and colluvial deposits, or various combinations of these materials. Soils are thin to absent on rock outcroppings; generally shallow on steep hills slopes; and relatively deep on the gentler hill slopes and in alluvial valleys. The Project area contains four soil map units, as shown on Figure 2-1 and 2-2 of Appendix E. The Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex and the Pactola-Pactola, shallow Rock outcrop complex soil map units represent approximately 97% of the soil resources in the Project area. Additional information on the soil map units in the Project area can be found in Appendix E.

3.6.1.2 **Geology**

The Black Hills area consists of a Precambrian crystalline core surrounded by dipping Phanerozoic sedimentary units, as shown on Figure 2-3 of Appendix E. The core generally consists of steeply dipping metasedimentary and metagneous schist with granitic intrusions. Surrounding the core are limestone, shale, and sandstone units, which originally were deposited over and now dip at lower angles away from the core. Igneous emplacement at depth, during the Laramide orogeny (approximately 50-60 million years ago), led to an uplift event. Following the uplift, the overlying sedimentary layers have eroded, partially exposing the more resistant crystalline core. The Project area is located within the core, and the local bedrock is mainly metagraywacke and metamorphosed black and tuffaceous shale. Quartz veins and iron-rich chert, which may contain gold and mineralization, are localized in the schist, making up a very small percent of the overall rock mass. The majority of the rock does not contain gold or mineralization.
3.6.2 Alternative A – No Action

Under Alternative A, no vegetation clearing, earth work, or other activities would occur; as such Alternative A would not result in effects on soil or geologic resources.

3.6.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term direct and indirect effects on soil and geologic resources could occur from Project activities associated with access, clearing, and drilling. To address the potential effects on soil and geologic resources, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the National BMPs, Region 2 WCPs, and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix E. Applicable laws, regulations, and policy related to soil and geology resources can also be found in Appendix E.

3.6.3.1 Soils

The equipment used for drilling and clearing required for Alternative B have the potential to lead to soil compaction and erosion within drill pad locations, staging areas, and temporary overland trails. The soil map units identified in the Project area are ranked slight to severe for their compaction potential, as summarized on Table 2-1 of Appendix E. As such, with the exception of the Pactola-Pactola shallow rock outcrop complex, which is ranked “slight” for compaction potential, soils throughout the entire Project area have a significant potential for being compacted if Project activities occur when soils are wet.

The Pactola-Pactola, shallow Rock outcrop complex and the Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex, which collectively represent 97% of the Project area, have soil erosion hazard ratings of very severe and moderate, respectively. These soil map units are also located on slopes of 40 to 80% and 10 to 40%, respectively. As such, soils across the majority of the Project area have the potential for erosion.

Any soils that may need to be removed for clearing drill pads or staging areas would be stockpiled for later use in site reclamation. Upon completion of a drill hole, the drill cuttings and fines would be dispersed in the disturbed area. Topsoil would be placed atop cuttings and the disturbed area reseeded/replanted as necessary to match surrounding vegetation. Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities. The reclamation plan for the Project is provided in Appendix A.

3.6.3.2 Geology

Extraction of rock through drilling may result in the removal of mineral resources; however, the amounts are anticipated to be negligible. The presence of sulfide minerals in the bedrock suggests that the rock is potentially acid-generating. To mitigate this risk, drill cuttings that contain mineralized rock will be buried on site or disposed of off-site at an approved location.

The potential geologic hazards associated with Alternative B include seismicity, subsidence, and slope failure. Additional information on geologic hazards in the Project area can be found in Appendix E.
With a minimal risk of seismic disturbance to the Project, disruption of Project activities and the need for containment is unlikely. The Project does not include activities with the potential to cause significant induced seismicity.

Due to the absence of karst in the Project area, there is no potential for subsidence due to karst features (e.g., due to water injected during drilling). The movement and operation of equipment could lead to failure of historic underground mine workings. Known mining-related features have been mapped and considered in Project planning; planned drill holes are not anticipated to intersect any known historical mine shafts, holes, adits, or workings. The historic underground mines have been small, and workings have been within crystalline rock. Therefore, there is a low risk of activity triggering ground subsidence into underground mine workings.

Steep slopes (>40%) and the presence of slate indicate a potential for erosion and/or slope failure, although the area is considered a “low-incidence” zone for landslides. Additional assessment may be completed as part of Project design.

### 3.6.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action

Generalized potential for short-term direct and indirect effects on soil and geological resources associated with Alternative C are the same as those discussed in Section 3.6.3 for Alternative B. To address the potential effects on soil and geologic resources, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the National BMPs, Region 2 WCPs, and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix E. Applicable laws, regulations, and policy related to soil and geology resources can also be found in Appendix E.

#### 3.6.4.1 Soils

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on soil resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B with the following exception. Under Alternative C, each drill pad and temporary overland access would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use, rather than upon completion of all drilling activities. This change would further minimize the potential for erosion by stabilizing the soil immediately versus waiting until all drilling activities are completed.

#### 3.6.4.2 Geology

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on geological resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

### 3.7 Hydrology

#### 3.7.1 Affected Environment

##### 3.7.1.1 Surface Water

The Project area is located within the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek watershed (HUC12 101201100110). According to the National Forest Watershed Condition Framework, the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek watershed falls under Class 2, which means it is “functioning at risk” and exhibits moderate geomorphic,
hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition. The Rapid Creek watershed, which is located in the Project area and supplies water to Rapid City, is listed as a municipal watershed.

Stream networks throughout the Black Hills, including the Project area, are characterized by geology, climate, and constructed reservoirs that influence stream permanence, volume, temperature, etc. Approximately 22 miles of streams are present throughout the Project area, including perennial (3.7 miles), intermittent (3.2 miles), and ephemeral (15.1 miles) streams. All of the perennial streams and approximately 3.2 miles of the intermittent streams in the Project area are protected by water influence zones (WIZ) located adjacent to protected streams. Figures 3-1 and 3-2 in Appendix E show the streams and WIZs across the Project area. Jenny Gulch, a perennial stream in the Project area, has assigned beneficial uses, including: coldwater permanent fish life propagation waters; limited-contact recreation waters; fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock watering waters; and irrigation waters. No impaired streams are present in the Project area, and no lakes are present in the Project area.

According to the FEMA Flood Hazard map, the majority of the Project area (1,493 acres) is mapped as Flood Zone X, an area of minimal flood hazard, which occurs outside of the 500-year floodplain. The northern 244 acres is mapped as Flood Zone D, which indicates that the flood hazard has not been determined.

Additional surface water resources found across the Project area are shown on Figures 3-3 and 3-4 in Appendix E; these include approximately 13.2 acres of wetlands, 28 springs, 3 fens, and 16 impoundments.

Additional information on surface water resources in the Project area is provided in Appendix E.

3.7.1.2  Groundwater

The major bedrock aquifers in the Black Hills and surrounding area are the Deadwood, Madison, Minnelusa, Minnekahta, and Inyan Kara. None of these sedimentary bedrock aquifers occur within the Project area; the edge of the nearest, the Deadwood aquifer, is approximately five miles west of the Project area. The major source of recharge to the sedimentary aquifers of the region is precipitation.

Additional localized aquifers are present in unconsolidated alluvial and colluvial deposits along streams and hillsides. The unconsolidated deposits are considered aquifers when saturated and are much smaller than other regional aquifers. Similar to the regional bedrock aquifers, precipitation is the major source of recharge to these aquifers. Some of these aquifers host springs that feed surface water features. Additional information on groundwater resources in the Project area is provided in Appendix E. Water quality within these smaller, localized unconsolidated aquifers can be influenced by the underlying geology, with concentrations generally increasing away from the crystalline core (i.e., towards sedimentary aquifers). Groundwater from these aquifers has relatively high dissolved solids, particularly calcium, bicarbonate, and sulfate. High iron and manganese have also been observed in alluvial wells in the region. In populated locations, these aquifers can be contaminated by septic systems.

Aquifer vulnerability is the potential or likelihood that any contaminant could reach the ground-water supply, based on the presence of on-site wastewater disposal systems and roads over the crystalline
aquifer. A South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSMT) aquifer vulnerability study indicates that most of the Project area is rated as low to medium risk due to wastewater disposal systems, but an area around the southern exclusion zone is rated as medium to high risk. The study rates the potential effects of trails and roads on aquifer vulnerability; for trails, a 100-foot buffer on either side of the trail is rated low risk, and a 100-foot buffer on either side of dirt roads is rated as low to medium risk.

The Project area is partially included in areas of concern for arsenic, iron, and total (but not fecal) coliform. The arsenic in water samples is most likely from weathering of sulfide minerals (either natural or accelerated by historical mining activities), particularly within faulted and mineralized zones. Iron in drinking water is considered a nuisance due to its effects on taste and potential for staining and scaling, but it is not a health threat. High iron is widespread in groundwater in the Black Hills crystalline core, though there appears to be a relationship between high values and mineralized zones. Total coliform bacteria are naturally present in the environment and are not considered a health threat by themselves, but they indicate that other potentially harmful bacteria might be present. Manganese has also been reported as being elevated in the crystalline core aquifers. The SDSMT study notes that conditions in the regional aquifers are highly variable and can change over relatively short distances; due to this, not every well in an area may have elevated values of these elements.

There are seven domestic water supply wells across the Project area; these are shown on Figures 3-3 and 3-4 of Appendix E. Recorded wells in the Project area generally range in depth from 80-140 feet below the surface, with reported static water levels of around 20-50 feet below the surface. Well test data report yields of approximately 10-60 gallons per minute.

### 3.7.2 Alternative A - No Action

Under Alternative A, no vegetation clearing, earth work, drilling, or other Project activities would occur; as such Alternative A would not result in effects on surface water or groundwater resources.

### 3.7.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term direct and indirect effects on surface and groundwater resources could occur from Project activities associated with access, clearing, and drilling. To address the potential for effects on surface water and groundwater, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the National BMPs, Region 2 WCPs, and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix E. Applicable laws, regulations, and policy related to surface water and groundwater resources can also be found in Appendix E.

#### 3.7.3.1 Surface Water

Under Alternative B, water supply needed for the Project would not be extracted from local surface waters; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source and brought to the site via water trucks. Under Alternative B, three drilling sites (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) are located within designated WIZ areas (see Figure 3-1 in Appendix E); as such, there is a potential for direct effects on surface water resources associated with these WIZ areas. One drill site (SCP-018) is
located in the edge of a Zone A source water protection buffer; as such, there is a potential for direct effects on source water associated with this buffer.

The remaining 38 drill sites and two staging areas are not located within perennial or intermittent streams, springs, wetlands, fens, impoundments, WIZ areas, FEMA mapped 100-year floodplain, or Zone A source water protection buffers (see Figure 3-1 and 3-3 in Appendix E); as such, direct effects to surface water resources are not anticipated from these Project activities.

Potential short-term indirect effects on surface water resources, including run-off and subsequent sedimentation of nearby surface waters, could occur from Project activities associated with access to the sites, site development, and drilling. The new temporary overland access routes would cross a wetland, several WIZ areas, two protected perennial streams (Jenny Gulch and an unnamed stream), one protected intermittent stream (Gorman Gulch), and several ephemeral streams (see Figure 3-1 in Appendix E). In addition, existing roads used for access would cross perennial and ephemeral streams, wetlands, and WIZ areas (see Figure 3-1 in Appendix E); however, new environmental effects associated with these existing access roads are not anticipated. Existing access roads and temporary overland access routes would only be improved if needed to gain access to the site. As discussed in Section 2.3, existing USFS administrative roads would be used to access sites to the extent practicable; in some cases, this may include travel through the WIZ on these existing roads. Locations accessed through the WIZ would be planned for winter construction to the extent practicable.

Project activities are not anticipated to affect watershed condition classes, water yield, or the assigned beneficial uses or impairment statuses of any streams in the Project area. As stated above, any water used for drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced directly from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters.

Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities. The draft reclamation plan for the Project is provided in Appendix A.

### 3.7.3.2 Groundwater

Under Alternative B, direct effects on groundwater resources are anticipated to be minor. Project drilling would be completed under the supervision of a licensed driller. The downhole activity (drilling, drilling fluid, abandonment, etc.) is essentially the same as if a residential well were being constructed or abandoned. The primary difference is that a core would be extracted from the hole for analysis. The exploratory drill holes would be cased through unconsolidated overburden for stability and to minimize mixing with any surface water.

Water would not be extracted from local groundwater; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source and brought to the site via water trucks. To the extent possible, water will be captured in holding tanks and recirculated. The drilling water will initially meet any water quality standards applicable to its original source. However, it may be different in composition from any groundwater encountered within the Project area, which may result in limited dissolution and precipitation reactions. The introduction of oxygenated water into mineralized zones could lead to
mobilization of acidity and/or metals, including arsenic, iron, and manganese, as occurs with drilling and installation of residential water wells. Both of these potential effects would be minor, localized and short-term due to the limited quantity of drilling water. The reaction between the oxygen and sulfide minerals that leads to transport of the reacted materials by groundwater can occur over short time scales. Subsequent reactions may limit the ability of the metals to travel long distances in the groundwater, although additional reactions can remobilize the metals, depending on aquifer conditions. Without further changes in the amount of oxygen present, the aquifer will eventually restabilize. Given the fact that the majority of drilling will be completed in rock with no notable amounts of mineralization, the risk of these reactions causing a measurable impact to groundwater quality is very low.

Similarly, extracted mineralized cuttings could undergo these reactions and release acidity and/or metals to runoff or infiltration water. As noted in Section 3.6.1.2, drill cuttings, a small percent of which may contain mineralized rock, will be buried (i.e., isolated from oxygen) on site or disposed of off-site to mitigate this risk. In addition, the bentonite clays and muds used in drilling (contained in the drill mud) help to isolate potential mineralized rock from the environment and tend to absorb and immobilize metal ions that may be released. This further minimizes the risk of groundwater contamination.

Potential short-term indirect effects on groundwater resources could occur from Project activities, including changes in water levels in any fracture-flow aquifers and wells encountered during drilling. If there are enough exploration holes that happen to intersect enough of the right fracture(s), it could temporarily reduce the yield for other wells including domestic wells, though this risk is low due to the discontinuous nature of the aquifer, multiple fractures supplying wells, and low number of wells in close proximity to planned borehole locations.

During the borehole abandonment process, grout will be injected into the holes to seal them so that surface water cannot enter the aquifer. The injected grout does not expand far beyond the hole within the overburden. As such, the effect of the grout in the overburden is very local; however, the injected grout can spread into the fractures of the aquifer if they intersect the borehole, although grout is unlikely to migrate more than a few feet from the borehole within the narrow width of the fractures.

To address the potential for effects on groundwater, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the National BMPs, Region 2 WCPs, and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix E. The Project will follow the guidelines set forth by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SD DANR) that pertain to monitoring groundwater and wells. The Project will be required to follow South Dakota Rules Chapter 74-11-08, Capping, Sealing, and Plugging Exploration Test Holes. In addition, the USFS will require that plugging reports are submitted as part of the reclamation plan and borehole plugging will be subject to inspection by the State. The draft reclamation plan for the Project is provided in Appendix A.

3.7.4 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action

Under Alternative C, the potential generalized short-term direct and indirect effects on surface and groundwater resources that could occur from Project activities associated with access, clearing, and
drilling are similar to those described for Alternative B, with some exceptions as described below. To address the potential for effects on surface water and groundwater, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to the National BMPs, Region 2 WCPs, and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix E. Applicable laws, regulations, and policy related to surface water and groundwater resources can also be found in Appendix E.

### 3.7.4.1 Surface Water

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on surface water resources would be generally similar to those described for Alternative B with some exceptions. Alternative C would relocate the placement of three drill sites (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) outside of WIZ areas (see Figure 3-2 in Appendix E), thereby removing the potential direct effects and maintaining the purpose and integrity of the WIZ. As discussed in Section 2.3, existing USFS administrative roads would be used to access sites to the extent practicable; in some cases, this may include travel through the WIZ on these existing roads. Locations accessed through the WIZ would be planned for winter construction to the extent practicable; however, should site conditions at the time of construction warrant these administrative roads unusable (i.e., flooding in the WIZ or another reason), three drilling pads (SCP-045, SCP-046, and SCP-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. In addition, drill site SCP-018, which is located in the edge of a Zone A source water protection buffer under Alternative B, would not be used as a drill site location for Alternative C.

None of the drill sites or two staging areas under Alternative C are located within perennial or intermittent streams, springs, wetlands, fens, impoundments, WIZ areas, FEMA mapped 100-year floodplain, or Zone A source water protection buffers (see Figure 3-2 and 3-4 in Appendix E); as such, direct effects to surface water resources are not anticipated from these Project activities.

Potential short-term indirect effects on surface water resources, including run-off and subsequent sedimentation of nearby surface waters, could occur from Project activities associated with access to the sites, site development, and drilling. The new temporary overland access routes would cross several WIZ areas; these crossings primarily occur along the edges of the WIZ (see Figure 3-2 in Appendix E). One exception to this is the overland access crossing of an intermittent and protected section of Jenny Gulch and the WIZ associated with it (see Figure 3-2 in Appendix E). The new temporary overland access routes would also cross several ephemeral streams (see Figure 3-2 in Appendix E). Existing access roads would cross WIZ areas (as described above) and perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams (see Figure 3-2 in Appendix E); however, new environmental effects associated with these existing access roads are not anticipated.

Project activities are not anticipated to affect watershed condition classes, public water supply systems, water yield, or the assigned beneficial uses or impairment statuses of any streams in the Project area. As stated above, any water used for drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced directly from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters.
Under Alternative C, each drill pad and temporary overland access would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use, rather than upon completion of all drilling activities, as is the case under Alternative B. This change would stabilize the soil immediately, and therefore further minimize the potential for runoff and subsequent sedimentation of nearby surface waters. The draft reclamation plan for the Project is provided in Appendix A.

3.7.4.2 **Groundwater**

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on groundwater resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

3.8 **Recreation**

3.8.1 **Affected Environment**

As described in Section 1.3.3.1, the Project area is located within three MAs: MA 5.1 (Resource Production Emphasis), MA 5.4 (Big Game Winter Range Emphases), and MA 8.2 (Developed Recreation Complexes). MA 8.2 is managed for recreational opportunities and aesthetics adjacent to developed recreation sites and bodies of water and does not list new mineral development as an activity/opportunity; however, mineral development is allowed in MA 5.1 and MA 5.4. Approximately 122.6 acres within the Project area are classified as MA 8.2 (see Figure 3-1 in Appendix B).

As summarized in Appendix B, approximately 7.3 miles of motorized trails are located in the Project area (see Figure 3-1 in Appendix B). These trails are available for both motorized and non-motorized use. Bear Gulch Campground is the closest campground to the Project area and is located approximately two miles southeast of the Project area near the Pactola Reservoir. There is one privately owned recreational residence located within the Project area, along Sunnyside Gulch Road in the southeastern corner of the Project area (see Figure 3-1 in Appendix B).

There are no natural lakes present in the Project area. One perennial stream, Jenny Gulch Stream, is located within the Project area and flows southeast to the outlet into Pactola Reservoir, which is approximately 0.5 miles south of the Project area and represents the primary source of aquatic recreation in this region. The reservoir offers recreation opportunities such as fishing, ice fishing, swimming, and boating.

As summarized in Appendix B, the Project area is primarily located in areas with low and moderate Scenic Integrity Objectives, with smaller portions classified as high. This means there are noticeable alterations from development on the landscape presently that affect aesthetics.

Applicable laws, regulations, policy, and Forest Plan direction related to recreational resources can be found in Appendix B.

3.8.2 **Alternative A – No Action**

Under Alternative A, the Project would not occur. As such Alternative A would not result in changes to existing recreational amenities.
3.8.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct effects on recreation could occur primarily through generation of Project-related traffic and potential for noise and visual disturbances in the Project area. Traffic-related effects to recreation are similar to those described in Section 3.2.3. Project equipment would primarily use existing motorized trails and some new access trails during Project drilling and reclamation. Increased traffic, construction-related noise, and the visual effects of large equipment may temporarily disrupt outdoor-based recreation activities in the Project area, causing recreational users to either be inconvenienced or to temporarily find other locations for these activities. Before returning areas of disturbance to original grades and final reclamation, drilling pads and access routes may create unnatural shapes on the landscape. However, the purpose of contouring and re-vegetation during reclamation is to blend Project-related disturbance back into the landscape. Potential effects would be temporary and are anticipated to last until reclaimed vegetation becomes established.

Three drilling sites would be located within MA 8.2, which focuses on recreational opportunities. The Forest Plan designates that no new mineral development is allowed and the majority of the MA around Pactola Lake has been withdrawn from mineral entry. However, the three drill pads (SCP -017, SCP-018, SCP -019) proposed in MA 8.2 for Alternative B are positioned in an area that is not withdrawn from mineral entry. Though exploration drilling is not prohibited in portions of the MA that are not currently withdrawn from mineral entry, the USFS would need to issue a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to authorize this activity.

The existing recreational residence is located 0.08 miles from the nearest drilling pad and may experience short-term, localized effects from increased traffic and noise. Potential Project-generated noise effects are described further in Section 3.9.3.

No long-term effects on fishing or aquatic activities are anticipated as a result of Alternative B; however, Alternative B does include placement of three drill pads (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) within designated WIZ areas, which may result in short-term, localized alteration of visual and aesthetic qualities in adjacent waterways and potential increased short-term sedimentation and turbidity in this reach of the Jenny Gulch Stream.

To address the potential effects on recreational resources, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix B.

3.8.4 Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on recreation resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B, with some exceptions. Under Alternative C, three drill pads (SCP -017, SCP-018, SCP -019) would be relocated outside of MA 8.2 and would avoid the need for a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to authorize drilling and preserve the MA 8.2 recreation focus.
In addition, Alternative C includes relocating three drill pads (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) outside of WIZ areas in the interest of maintaining WIZ integrity and minimizing water quality and recreation (including visual and aesthetic) concerns.

### 3.9 Public Health & Safety

#### 3.9.1 Affected Environment

Public health and safety conditions across the Project area were assessed with regards to air quality, light pollution, noise pollution, and hazardous waste and contamination. The closest air quality monitoring site to the Project area is located in Black Hawk at Black Hawk Elementary. At this monitoring location, air quality is considered satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk to human health or safety.

Existing sources of light pollution in the Project area consist of residential lighting (both homes and outbuildings), as well as headlights from existing vehicular and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) traffic.

Existing noise in the Project area is consistent with that of a rural setting and includes residential noise sources (lawn mowing, barking dogs, vehicular traffic, etc.). The Project area experiences regular noise from recreational ATV use on existing roadways and motorized vehicle trails, and there is also snowmobile noise during winter months. In addition, there are temporary increases in motorcycle-generated noise during the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally.

The Project is located in an area that has historically been used for mining. According to the SD DANR tanks and spills database, no hazardous waste sites, spills, or tank facilities are known to occur within the Project area. The SD DANR database is limited to reportable quantities for petroleum products greater than 25 gallons. Smaller spills/releases are often not reported and may have occurred within the Project area.

The Project area has limited direct access to emergency services. The nearest hospital clinic and emergency medical facilities are located in Rapid City, approximately 15.5 miles from the Project area. The Project is located in the service area of the Silver City Volunteer Fire Department (approximately 0.6 miles from the Project area) which provides fire suppression and emergency medical treatment (EMT) services. In addition, the BHNF Mystic Ranger District maintains a fire crew in its Rapid City and Hill City locations, which primarily responds to fires on National Forest System lands within the Mystic District.

Additional information on public health and safety conditions in the Project area is provided in Appendix F. Applicable laws, regulations, policy, and Forest Plan direction related to public health and safety can also be found in Appendix F.

#### 3.9.2 Alternative A – No Action

Under Alternative A, the Project would not occur. As such Alternative A would not result in changes to existing public health and safety conditions.
3.9.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct and indirect effects on air quality, light pollution, noise, and hazardous waste contamination could occur. Use of construction equipment would generate carbon dioxide. Site access and earth work would also temporarily generate dust within the immediate Project vicinity. It is not anticipated that the generated amounts of carbon dioxide and dust would reduce air quality standards below the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). These effects would be limited to the immediate construction area and only last for the duration of construction activities.

Light pollution from drilling could temporarily affect residences or recreationists that are within close proximity of the drill pads, causing temporary irritation to residents or causing recreationists to use other areas of the BHNF. These short-term light pollution effects would be minimized by natural visual barriers provided by the steep terrain and forested areas surrounding drill pads. Overall, light effects are anticipated to be minimal.

Short-term, localized noise from heavy equipment and increased vehicle traffic is expected to occur in the Project area during the day and night. Noise, associated with drilling, could temporarily affect residences or recreationists that are close to the drill pads, causing temporary irritation to residents or causing recreationists to use other areas of the BHNF. Noise may also be either lessened or exacerbated depending on wind direction. Based on the equipment F3 proposes to use, noise levels within 400 feet of the drilling equipment are anticipated to be 38.2 dB(A), approximately the equivalent noise levels experienced in suburban areas at night or a refrigerator hum and align with current ambient noise levels. Overall, noise effects are anticipated to be minimal. Once drilling is complete at a specific location, noise would once again match ambient conditions. Although all residences are more than 500 feet from Alternative B drilling locations, residences in closer proximity to Project activities would be notified prior to initiation.

Contamination could occur through inadvertent spills or leaks of fuel or oils from access/site preparation, drilling equipment, and/or lighting equipment. Project drilling would use water; no chemical-based solutions or fluids would be used. As such, drilling activities would not directly generate hazardous waste. As summarized in Appendix F, should any fluid leaks or spills occur, they would be handled in a manner consistent with permitting and regulatory requirements.

To address the potential effects on public health and safety, the Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (Table 2-1), in addition to Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines summarized in Appendix F.

3.9.4 Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on air quality and hazardous waste contamination would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

Under Alternative C, the potential effects of light pollution and noise would be the same as those described for Alternative B except drilling would be limited to one, 12-hour daytime shift (7:00am to 7:00pm) for drill pads within 500 feet of a residence. This timing restriction would mitigate potential
nighttime light pollution via use of floodlights and other equipment lighting, as well as mitigate potential nighttime equipment and drilling noise. This applies to drill pads SCP-12, SCP-020, and SCP-033 (see Figure 2-1 in Appendix F).

### 3.10 Cumulative Effects Analysis

Cumulative effects result from incremental consequences of an action “when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions” (40 CFR 1508.7). The effects of an action may be minor when evaluated in an individual context, but these effects can add to other disturbances and collectively may lead to a measurable environmental change. By evaluating the effects of the proposed action with the effects of other actions, the relative contribution of the proposed action to a projected cumulative effect can be estimated.

#### 3.10.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

The Project is anticipated to last approximately one year from start-up through reclamation. Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area’s existing landscape.

The following projects are proposed near the Project vicinity in the reasonably foreseeable future:

- **SD Network** is proposing installation of a buried fiberoptic line in the Project vicinity in 2021. The project will consist of placement of approximately 15 miles of buried fiberoptic cable, primarily within existing road rights-of-way, as well as installation of several new service towers. Although the project construction area is primarily outside the Project area, the SD Network project would introduce construction traffic and potential roadside distractions to the Project vicinity.

- **The South Dakota Network LLC (SDN) Tower Construction Project** is being proposed near the communities of Silver City and Rochford. The proposed network project is a centralized 5G wireless solution with towers that will wirelessly provide high speed broadband internet to customers. The Silver City portion of the project is located near Silver City Community Hall, approximately 0.2 miles south of Project area. The Rochford location is approximately 6 miles west of the Project area.

- **The USFS maintains the Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures of the Silver City Allotment within the Project area. Permitted numbers in the Silver City Allotment are 93 cow/calf pairs with a period of use from June 1 through October 15. Grazing may occur within the allotments during construction of the Project.**

- **The USFS maintains a number of other routine land management practices in the Project area and has approved timber sales and prescribed burns on parcels overlapping the Project boundaries. Timber harvests must occur within five years of an approved sale, and prescribed burns occur on an as needed basis under suitable weather conditions. It is possible that timber harvest and/or**
prescribed burns could occur during construction of the Project; should this be the case the Project would coordinate with USFS staff.

- The USFS administers permits for annual recreational events in the Project vicinity, including permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses from May through October and for Off Road Riders Association events on Memorial Day and Labor Day.

- As noted above, USFS has constructed roads and trails for vehicular, OHV, and recreation use. These facilities are expected to continue to be available for these uses both during and after the Project.

### 3.10.2 Alternative A - No Action

There would be no cumulative effects under Alternative A because the Project would not occur and would therefore not result in direct or indirect effects.

### 3.10.3 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B), and implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1), National BMPs (see Appendix E), Region 2 WCPs (see Appendix E), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Appendix B through Appendix F), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on the following resources: botanical, cultural, soil, geology, hydrology, wildlife and fisheries, and public health and safety. There is a potential for minor cumulative effects on transportation and recreation resources. See Appendix B through Appendix F for additional information on potential cumulative effects for each resource.

### 3.10.4 Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), and implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1), National BMPs (see Appendix E), Region 2 WCPs (see Appendix E), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Appendix B through Appendix F), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on the following resources: botanical, cultural, soil, geology, hydrology, wildlife and fisheries, and public health and safety. There is a potential for minor cumulative effects on transportation and recreation resources. See Appendix B through Appendix F for additional information on potential cumulative effects for each resource.
4 Agency and Public Engagement

4.1 Public Involvement Plan

A Public Involvement Plan was prepared for the Project to identify and document collaborative efforts that were made to involve, interact, and cooperate with Project stakeholders. The Public Involvement Plan is provided in Appendix G.

Individuals and organizations with an interest in the Project were encouraged to participate in the public involvement process to express concerns and identify issues related to the Project. Stakeholders were identified by the USFS, F3, review of stakeholder lists from projects in similar geographies, or were self-identified or assumed (e.g., non-governmental organizations or nearby landowners with an assumed interest in the Project). Stakeholders also included governmental organizations such as tribal, federal, state, and local agencies with overlapping permitting authority or information pertaining to local resource conditions. The stakeholder list was updated throughout the EA development process and is provided in Appendix G.

4.2 Project Scoping Letters

Scoping letters were distributed on January 6, 2020, to 308 stakeholders and adjacent landowners; this date also represented the start of the 30-day public scoping period. Comments were requested via mail, email, or by facsimile for a period of 30-days following the public scoping mailing; all comments received after this date were also accepted by USFS.

A total of 339 comment letters were submitted. One comment letter consisted of a form letter that was submitted by 196 people. Comments were reviewed and cataloged based on resource issues. Issues identified in the comment letters were used to help inform the development of this EA. Project scoping letters and comments provided in Appendix H.

4.3 Interagency Scoping Meeting

On January 6, 2020, the USFS extended an invitation to 16 potentially interested agencies to participate in an interagency scoping meeting hosted on January 16, 2020, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. MST at the USFS Mystic Ranger District Office. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Project, discuss data needs, and solicit input regarding possible issues and concerns. A total of 20 people attended the meeting, including representatives from the following entities: USFS, Oglala Lakota Nation, SD GFP, SD DANR – Mining and Minerals Program, Pennington County, City of Rapid City, and Barr Engineering Co.

4.4 Government to Government Consultation

The USFS solicited government to government consultation interest in a mailing distributed to 16 Tribal entities on January 6, 2020, including the following tribes; Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Yankton Sioux Tribe each responded with requests for consultation. The USFS responded in writing to determine consultation meeting dates on March 13, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Cultural Resources Inventory was provided to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers as identified per 36 CFR 800.3, to provide comment on the Agency’s (USFS) determination of the proposed undertaking’s effect to cultural resources on July 2, 2021.

Consultation efforts resumed in early 2022. Government to government consultation was held with the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe on January 27, 2022, the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe on January 28, 2022, and with the Three Affiliated Tribes (MHA Nation) on February 22, 2022, and April 11, 2022. In addition, pre-consultation meetings occurred with the Yankton Sioux Tribe on February 2 and February 23, 2022.

4.5 Public Information Meeting

A public information meeting was held on January 16, 2020, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the USFS Mystic Ranger District Office to provide information on the Project and as a means of allowing the public to bring forward Project questions or comments. Barr and USFS staff members attended this meeting in person and were available to answer questions throughout the meeting. The public information meeting was an open-house format for the majority of meeting with a short presentation toward the middle of the meeting. A total of 101 people attended the meeting.

The USFS also participated in the following two additional stakeholder outreach meetings to discuss the Project and address any Project-specific questions:

- City of Rapid City Public Works Department and Ellsworth Air Force Base - March 11, 2020
- National Forest Advisory Board – April 15, 2020

4.6 Draft EA Public Review and Comment Period

A legal notice was published on September 22, 2021, in the Rapid City Journal, newspaper of record, announcing availability of and an opportunity to comment on the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Draft EA. In addition, all parties who submitted a scoping comment or requested to be added to the Project mailing list received a postcard or email notifying them of the availability of the Draft EA and opportunity to comment on it. In situations where a mailing address was not provided, an email notification was sent.

All Project materials were made available on the Black Hills National Forest website at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428. The Draft EA was made available for a 30-day agency and public review period. During this time, comments on the Draft EA were accepted via US Mail (8221
Mount Rushmore Rd, Rapid City, SD 57702), via email (Comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-mystic@usda.gov) with “F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project” as the subject, or by facsimile (605-343-7134). Comments were requested within 30 days of the date of the legal notice. Comments submitted, including names and addresses of commenters, are public information.

Approximately 416 comment letters, including 6 form letters, were received; however, 20 of these comment letters were received after the 30-day comment period. All comments that were received were reviewed and cataloged based on resource issue and USFS provided responses to each comment. Draft EA comments and responses are included in Appendix I.
5 References


Appendix A

Draft Reclamation Plan
Introduction
F3 Gold’s proposed Jenny Gulch Exploratory Drilling Project will be conducted entirely within the Black Hills National Forest, South Dakota. Guidance for project operating, reporting and reclamation parameters and requirements are defined by the State of South Dakota Codified Law (SDCL) 45-6C. Surface impact reclamation, travel restrictions and timing will be guided by SDCL 45-6C and 36 CFR Part 228 (A). The following parameters, processes and considerations represent F3 Gold’s best management practices for conducting a minimally invasive, safe exploratory drilling program. Pending input from the United States Forest Service (USFS), F3 Gold, its representatives and contractors will abide the following guidance.

General
F3 Gold and its contractors will strive to minimize the surface impact of the exploratory drilling program through constant vigilance and open communication with regulatory authorities. F3 Gold representatives and contractors working on the project shall employ low-impact methodology aimed at minimizing surface occupancy, the generation of new surface disturbance, and the creation of visual changes to the project area.

The goal of the reclamation process will be to restore surface impacts of the proposed exploratory drilling program to pre-project conditions, or as near as possible. Deviation from this objective will be guided exclusively by the surface owner (USFS) and State of South Dakota.

General project-wide surface impact reclamation will include:

Concurrently with project operations:

- Stockpiling of removed topsoil for later regrading
- Installment of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to manage drainage and sedimentation during precipitation and snow melt (e.g., berm installation, sediment logs, use of swales and water bars)

Following project completion:
• Recontouring drill pads and temporary access routes to conform with surrounding topography following project completion

• Spreading stockpiled topsoils and brushed vegetation to encourage flora regrowth

• Seeding with local native species as guided by the surface owner and local conservation office. Stabilizing and/or growth medium may be used to encourage regrowth of native species, the use of which will be directed by the Forest Service and local conservation office.

Replanting and reseeding will take place following recontouring and regrading of disturbed areas. Reclamation processes, seed mixes, seasonal constraints and timing and guidance will be based on USFS (36 CFR 228.8 (G)), State of South Dakota (SDCL 45-6C) and Pennington County NRCS requirements and preferences.

**Access Route Maintenance and Reclamation**

**Existing Access Routes**
Minor modification and/or maintenance of existing U.S. Forest Service infrastructure will be coordinated directly with the Forest Service on an as-needed basis. Anticipated modification/maintenance may include minor brush cutting to provide adequate clearance for vehicles and equipment. Maintenance of existing access routes will be performed during project operations and will maintain or improve road bed conditions. Actions will include:

• Grading/back blading existing and/or developed ruts

• Maintaining adequate/existing drainage

• Snow clearing/plowing as needed during winter months

Following project completion, previously existing access routes will be restored to pre-existing conditions, or improved or reclaimed as required by the USFS and State of South Dakota.

**New Access Routes**
New access routes proposed for access to drill pads for this Plan of Operations will be constructed for safe passage of project personnel and materials. During project operations, proposed maintenance of new access routes will reflect similar actions as those defined for Existing access routes, above. Following project completion, new access routes will be reclaimed to pre-project conditions or as near as possible. This may involve the following actions, as directed by the USFS and State of South Dakota:

• Recontouring to pre-existing surrounding topography
• Redistribution of topsoil as available

• Spreading of brushed materials

• Seeding and placement of growth medium as directed by the USFS and State of South Dakota, and approved by the Pennington County NRCS office

**Drill Pads and Laydowns Reclamation**

Drill pads and staging areas will be reclaimed following the completion of the project. Reclamation will constitute:

• smoothing and contouring to pre-existing topography using stockpiled topsoils and excavation materials

• Reseeding with an approved seeding reclamation mix, as directed by USFS, State of South Dakota and Pennington County NRCS

Safety signage will be removed from the area, and stockpiled brushed materials will be either spread over the pad/laydown clearing area, stacked in soil-free piles or removed and disposed of offsite (as guided by USFS and State of South Dakota).

**Operations**

**Drilling & Borehole Abandonment**

Drill holes will be plugged in accordance with ARSD 74:11:08, and will be permanently abandoned upon the completion of the drill hole.

F3 Gold does not anticipate a need to leave a drill hole open for longer than 30 days following completion. However, in the unlikely event that a drill hole needs to remain open for more than 30 days for downhole data collection purposes, F3 Gold will apply in writing to the Board of Minerals and Environment for permission to temporarily keep the test hole open, per SDLC 45-6C-28. If the application is approved, temporary capping will be performed per ARSD 74:11:08:08.

Drill cuttings and water used to flush the drill hole will be collected in tanks at the drill site. Cuttings and fines will settle out and the water will be recycled and reused for drilling. Upon completion of each drill hole, cuttings and fines will be dispersed in the disturbed area. Topsoil will be placed on the cuttings for reclamation including reseeding and planting as necessary.

**Drill Sites, Refuse and Hazardous Materials**

All refuse, solid waste, garbage, or trash associated with this Plan of Operations will be removed from site on a regular basis and disposed of in proper disposal containers or sites.
Human waste will be contained in the Porta-Potty/Porta-John located at staging areas and subsequently transported and disposed of at the proper facilities.

No hazardous materials or toxic substances are used to conduct the proposed drilling. The only hazardous materials utilized for the proposed project are for refueling the drill rig and support equipment and lubricating the mechanical parts. These materials include petroleum products, oils, lubricants and fuels, including diesel and gasoline.

Refueling and relubrication of the drill rig and its components will occur on an as-needed basis. Transportation of fuel and materials to an active drill rig will occur using DOT-compliant fuel tanks mounted on 4x4 pickup truck support vehicles. All storage of fuel and lubricant materials at the proposed laydown will be in DOT-compliant containers that are properly labeled and signed as necessary. Additional containment will be in accordance with EPA SPCC regulations as necessary. Petroleum product-specific spill kits will be available at all sites where petroleum products are stored or utilized.

In the event of a spill, F3 Gold and its contractors will report the spill immediately to the USFS and the State of South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Active containment and cleanup will be initiated and coordinated as necessary, in accordance with federal and state requirements. All reporting and response processes will be in accordance with SDCL Chapter 34A-12 and ARSD Chapter 74:34, and 40 CFR 302.

**Water Quality Monitoring**

Ongoing visual inspection of water used during the drilling operations will be conducted by project personnel to ensure proper capture and flow into the holding and settling tank circuit of the drill rigs. Erosion from drilling operations or water usage is not anticipated due to the nature of the water recycling measures that will be applied at the drill sites. Berming, silt fencing and sediment logs will be used as necessary on drill sites. Open and regular communication with the State of South Dakota during the drill program will ensure all SDCL 45-6C requirements are met with respect to water quality monitoring.

Consideration of topography and slope for surface water runoff and erosion control has been considered for the proposed drill pad locations. The size of the drill pads is relatively small (average 50 feet x 50 feet) which will limit overall surface disturbance and avoid significant impacts to surface water runoff from average rainfall or other normal weather events.
Appendix B

Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report
Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project

Prepared for
United States Forest Service

May 2022
# Access, Transportation, and Recreation and Technical Report

**May 2022**

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Access and Transportation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Information Sources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Applicable Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2.1</td>
<td>Forest Plan Direction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Study Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Affected Environment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Access and Transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Environmental Consequences</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A – No Action</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B – Proposed Action</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>Information Sources</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.1</td>
<td>Forest Plan Direction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3</td>
<td>Study Methodology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Affected Environment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Management Areas</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>Motorized/Non-motorized Trails</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3</td>
<td>Campgrounds and Cabins</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4</td>
<td>Aquatic Recreation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.5</td>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Environmental Consequences</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A – No Action</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B – Proposed Action</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C – Proposed Action</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Cumulative Effects .............................................................................................................................................................19
4.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions ........................................................................................................19
4.2 Cumulative Effects to Transportation and Recreation ..................................................................................................19
5 References ...........................................................................................................................................................................20

List of Tables

Table 2-1 Motorized Vehicle Travel Management by Applicable Management Area ...........................................3
Table 3-1 Existing Trails within the Project Area ...........................................................................................................13

List of Figures

Figure 2-1 Transportation Network Overview .................................................................................................................6
Figure 2-2 Alternative B Proposed Access Routes .............................................................................................................9
Figure 2-3 Alternative C Proposed Access Routes ..........................................................................................................11
Figure 3-1 Recreation Resources Overview .....................................................................................................................14
Figure 3-2 Scenic Integrity Objectives Overview ...........................................................................................................16
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATVs</td>
<td>all-terrain vehicles</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHNF</td>
<td>Black Hills National Forest</td>
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<td>BMP</td>
<td>Best Management Practices</td>
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</tr>
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1 Introduction

This technical report summarizes access, transportation, and recreation resources within the vicinity of the F3 Gold Jenny Gulch Gold Exploratory Drilling Project in Pennington County, South Dakota (Project; Figure 1-1 of the Environmental Assessment (EA)), as well as potential effects resulting from Project alternatives. This technical report is intended to supplement the assessment of environmental effects related to access, transportation and recreation resources found in the accompanying EA.

The purpose and need of the Project is discussed in Section 1.2 of the EA. This technical report analyzes environmental effects for three alternatives: Alternative A (No Action), Alternative B (Proposed Action), and Alternative C (Modified Proposed Action). Each of these alternatives is described in detail in Section 2 of the EA.
2 Access and Transportation

2.1 Introduction

This section addresses access and transportation in the Project area and its immediate surroundings and the potential effects on these resources as a result of the Project. The only issue relevant to the analysis, as identified by comments received during scoping, was that the project could lead to an increase in construction traffic, which may damage roads.

2.1.1 Information Sources

There are several existing documents and data sources containing baseline information on transportation in the Project area. The three documents reviewed were:

- Forest Service Handbook 7709.59 Road System Operations and Maintenance Handbook
- United States Forest Service (USFS) Guidelines for Road Maintenance Levels
- USFS Motor Vehicle Use Map

Other sources of information used in the analysis include the following GIS information provided by USFS:

- Motorized Trails
- Roads
- Level 1 Roads
- Recreation Residence

2.1.2 Applicable Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction

Direction for USFS transportation management is directed by regulations found in the Forest Service Plan and Road Systems Operations and Maintenance Handbook (reference (1)). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (16 U.S.C. 4321) governs USFS transportation management:

2.1.2.1 Forest Plan Direction

The Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) Forest Plan identifies standards and guidelines to inform management related to various resources, including transportation. As summarized in the Forest Plan, a standard is defined as a limitation on management activities that is within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce. Standards are used to determine if individual projects are in compliance with the Forest Plan. Deviation from the requirement requires a Forest Plan amendment. A guideline is a preferred or advisable course of action. Deviation from a guideline is permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

Forest Plan standards and guidelines for the transportation considered applicable to the Project are those related to transportation system management, transportation and travel management in riparian areas and wetlands, and forest development roads.
Transportation System Management

Forest Plan standard 9105 (Construct temporary roads when there is a one-time need for a transportation facility. Return the road to vegetative production when the one-time need is fulfilled) is related to transportation system management and applies to the Project.

Forest Plan guideline 9103 (Management of motorized vehicle travel as summarized in Table 2-1, which only includes Management Areas applicable to the project) is related to transportation system management and applies to the Project.

Table 2-1 Motorized Vehicle Travel Management by Applicable Management Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Area Number – Management Area Name</th>
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\(^1\) Seasonal or yearlong restrictions may apply.
\(^2\) To designated routes.

Transportation and Travel Management in Riparian Areas and Wetlands

The following Forest Plan guidelines related to transportation and travel management in riparian areas and wetlands apply to the Project:

- 9107. Prohibit land vehicles from entering perennial streams where resource damage would occur except to cross at specified points.
- 9108. Vehicular traffic, except for snowmobiles, will be restricted to roads and trails in riparian areas.
- 9109. Walk-in fisheries are closed to motorized travel.

The Forest Plan does not contain standards related to transportation and travel management in riparian areas and wetlands.

Forest Development Roads

The following Forest Plan guidelines related to forest development roads apply to the Project:

- 9202. Reduce the long-term impact of roads on soils:
  a. Revegetate the entire road prism of temporary and local native-surface roads upon completion of project work;
  b. Revegetate cut-and-fill slopes of all newly constructed or reconstructed roads;
  c. Give roads and trails special design considerations to prevent resource damage on capability areas containing soils with high shrink/swell capacity;
  d. Provide permanent drainage and establish protective vegetative cover on all new temporary roads or equipment ways, and all existing roads that are being removed from the transportation system; and
  e. Provide adequate road and trail cross drainage to reduce erosion.
9204. Reduce the impact of new Forest Development and temporary road construction on wildlife. New roads will generally not be located in meadows. When topography allows, roads should not be within 400 feet of the meadow edge.

The Forest Plan does not contain standards related to Forest Development roads; however, the USFS has national BMPs related to Road Management Activities that are applicable to the Project. In addition, the handbook and guidelines noted in Section 2.1.1 of this document also establish requirements for managing USFS roads and trails.

2.1.3 Study Methodology

Based on the information sources gathered, review of public scoping comments, and using professional experience and judgment, this analysis:

- Identifies the activities that could affect access and transportation; and
- Discusses the likely effects of the three alternatives on access and roadways.

Project scoping indicated concerns related to potential effects from access and transportation, primarily due to the increase in construction traffic and potential for this to damage roads. Potential effects are assessed by evaluating the extent, location, and timing of construction traffic and potential for roadway damage.

2.2 Affected Environment

2.2.1 Access and Transportation

Several existing roadways would be used to access the Project area. The main access from the north would be from National Forest System Road (NFSR) 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via county Highway 237 (Rochford Road). The primary access from the south would be from NFSR 671 (Sunnyside Gulch Road) or NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via Silver City Road. Additional NFSRs that are anticipated to be used for access are NFSR 720.2B, 141.2B, and 261.2B; National Forest System Trails (NFSTs) 6207, 6209, and 6210 will also likely be used (Figure 2-1).

The USFS classifies maintenance of NSFRs in categories ranging from 1 to 5 (reference (2)). These maintenance classifications are briefly described as:

- The Maintenance level 1 road classification is a temporary classification used to designate roads that are temporarily closed to public motor vehicle use. Level 1 roads may be opened any time and managed at any other maintenance level. These roadways are closed to vehicular traffic but may be available and suitable for public nonmotorized use.
- Maintenance level 2 roads are maintained for high-clearance vehicles and generally are not suitable for passenger cars. Level 2 roads are designed for low traffic volumes traveling at low speeds and have little signage or other traffic control measures. This type of roadway is considered a local road that connects to collector roads and other local roads and may not be passable during periods of inclement weather.
• Maintenance level 3 roads are designed for low to moderate traffic volumes traveling at low speeds. These roads are typically single laned with an aggregate surface that may be subject to potholes and washboarding. Level 3 roads are considered local or collector roadways, typically connecting to arterial and collector roads or other Level 3 roads.

• Maintenance level 4 roads are designed to accommodate moderate traffic volumes and speeds. These roads are typically double laned with a paved or aggregate surface, though some may only contain a single driving lane. Level 4 roads are intended to be collector roads and may connect to Level 5 roads or state and county roads.

• Maintenance level 5 roads are designed to accommodate high traffic volumes and speeds. These roads are normally double lane, paved facilities with defined shoulders, though some may have an aggregate surface. Level 5 roads are intended to be arterial or collector roads and typically connect to state and county roadways.

The Project will use roads classified as maintenance level 1 (NFSR 141.2B, 261.2B, and 720.2B), 2 (NFSR 671), 3 (NFSR 261), and 4 (Silver City Road) (Figure 2-1), as well as trails (NFST 6207, 6209, and 6210). There are no maintenance level 5 roadways in the Project area.
TRANSPORTATION NETWORK OVERVIEW
Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project
Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 2-1 Transportation Network Overview

Imagery: USDA-FSA NAIP (2020)
2.3 Environmental Consequences

The analysis of effects to access and transportation assumes that applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines and applicant-proposed impact minimization measures would be implemented during all Project activities. This analysis discusses the expected effects resulting from the implementation of the no action alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and the modified proposed action (Alternative C).

2.3.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A – No Action

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) provides a baseline to evaluate the effects of the proposed action (Alternative B) and the modified proposed action (Alternative C) as described in Section 2 of the EA. Alternative A would not result in any changes to existing access and transportation conditions.

2.3.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B – Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct effects on access and transportation could occur primarily through generation of project-related traffic and through construction of new temporary routes to access drill sites. In addition to the existing USFS roads, the Project intends to use, approximately 4,700 linear feet of 8-foot wide temporary overland trails which would be improved for drill site access, resulting in approximately 0.86 acres of additional temporary surface disturbance (Figure 2-2). These temporary overland trails would be obliterated and returned to natural conditions after Project completion. Existing access routes and overland trails would be improved to provide Project access only if needed and only to the extent necessary to gain safe access to the site, and the level of improvement would match what is needed for equipment (work vehicle, drilling rig, water truck, etc.) to safely access the site.

Alternative B anticipates using the following types and numbers of construction vehicles at various points during the Project:

- One to four diamond drill rigs;
- Six to eight four-wheel drive pickup trucks for access to drilling sites;
- Four all-terrain vehicles for access to drilling sites;
- Two snowmobiles for access to drilling sites (for winter use only);
- One water truck, as needed to fill water storage tanks;
- One excavator;
- One dozer; and
- One skid-steer.

Although the additional traffic generated by the Project would be staggered throughout the life of drilling, and reclamation and is not expected to be significant in the context of the setting, it would pose a short-term change to maintenance level 2 and 3 roadway users who may not be accustomed to maneuvering in the presence of larger vehicles in this area. To minimize potential for vehicle and traffic conflicts, F3 would limit traffic to and from the drill sites through use of signage and/or temporary fencing. Access to the sites would only be authorized to F3 personnel for shift changes, management oversight, sample pickup, water and fuel re-filling, unplanned/emergency equipment maintenance, and
site restoration. It is expected that the water truck would be used one to two times per day for each active drilling site. Refueling would also occur one to two times per day for each active drilling site. Refueling would typically occur at the start of each shift, and fuel would be supplied as part of normal drilling operations to minimize traffic beyond normal work crew traffic. Contractor equipment would not exceed local road width restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities. Safety signage (i.e., construction use, warning signs, drilling signs, trucks entering signs, etc.) would be posted through the work area to communicate construction equipment use of the roadway. All signage placed on USFS roads and trails would meet guidelines in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and Engineering Management series 7100-15 Sign and Poster Guidelines for the USFS. USFS would review and approve the signage plan prior to implementation.

Additional traffic on maintenance level 1, 2, and 3 roadways has the potential to create or expand existing potholes, exacerbate washboard conditions on the road surface, cause rutting, increase soil erosion, and pose other roadway condition concerns. Travel on wet roads can enhance rutting to the road surface, which may require further additional measures (gravel surfacing, drainage, etc.). To minimize potential for roadway damages, F3 and/or its contractors would adhere to seasonal road restrictions and equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities. In addition, all road improvements, reconstruction, maintenance, and/or restoration would need to be designed to USFS standards and approved by USFS engineering personnel. F3 would be responsible for repairing any unexpected road damage to the appropriate maintenance level standards as soon as possible based on appropriate contractor availability, and all trails/roads would be returned to their original widths as part of reclamation. As such, roadway damage resulting from the Project is anticipated to be short-term and localized to the identified project access routes. In addition, adjacent vegetation along existing roads and temporary overland access routes may need to be removed to provide adequate access for drilling activities. Upon completion of the Project, all overland trails would be regraded and reseeded using the appropriate seed mixture as directed by the USFS. Localized, short-term increases in traffic-generated noise may also occur under Alternative B; these affects are addressed in the Public Health and Safety technical report.
FIGURE 2-2

ALTERNATIVE B PROPOSED ACCESS ROUTES

Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project
Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report
Pennington County, SD
2.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C

Alternative C relocates some of the drilling pads and access routes proposed in Alternative B to avoid impacts to sensitive resources; however additional drilling pads are needed to collect an equivalent level of information compared to Alternative B. Under Alternative C, approximately 5,700 feet (1.1 mile) of existing local roadways would be used to access Project features. In addition, up to approximately 9,925 linear feet (1.88 miles) of 12-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access routes may be developed or improved for drill site access, resulting in up to approximately 2.73 acres of additional temporary surface disturbance (Figure 2-3). Potential effects from site access and transportation would be similar as those described for Alternative B. Alternative C would result in more direct effects from the construction of new and overland access routes; however, it would avoid direct impacts to sensitive resources and would require the same level of reclamation as Alternative B.
3 Recreation

3.1 Introduction
This section identifies recreational resources within the Project area and its immediate surroundings, and the Project’s potential effects to recreational resources. The only issue relevant to the analysis, as identified by comments received during scoping, was concern the Project could alter the quality of recreation and tourism as a result of increased traffic, noise, visual impacts, and pollution.

3.1.1 Information Sources
Sources of information used in the analysis were publicly available GIS data and information provided by the USFS.

3.1.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction
USFS recreation policy is dictated by federal regulations and the Forest Plan. NEPA (16 U.S.C. 4321) governs Forest Service recreation resources:

3.1.2.1 Forest Plan Direction
The BHNF Forest Plan identifies standards and guidelines to inform management related to various resources, including transportation. As summarized in the Forest Plan, a standard is defined as a limitation on management activities that is within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce. Standards are used to determine if individual projects are in compliance with the Forest Plan. Deviation from the requirement requires a Forest Plan amendment. A guideline is a preferred or advisable course of action. Deviation from a guideline is permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

The following Forest Plan standards related to developed recreation apply to the Project:

- 5204. Facilities may dominate but must harmonize and blend with the adjacent natural landscape.
- 5207. In areas of high to moderate potential for valuable mineral deposits, perform site-specific mineral evaluations prior to making substantial capital investments, such as recreational developments.
- 5211. Do not issue special-use permits that will preclude future recreational developments.

3.1.3 Study Methodology
Based on the information sources gathered, review of public scoping comments, and using professional experience and judgment, this analysis:

- Identifies the activities that could affect recreation; and
- Discusses the likely effects of the three alternatives on recreation.
3.2 Affected Environment

3.2.1 Management Areas

The Project area is located within three management areas (MAs): MA 5.1 (Resource Production Emphasis), MA 5.4 (Big Game Winter Range Emphases), and MA 8.2 (Developed Recreation Complexes). These management areas are described further in Section 1.3.3.1 of the EA.

MA 8.2 is managed for recreational opportunities and aesthetics adjacent to developed recreation sites and bodies of water and does not list new mineral development as an activity/opportunity. This MA encompasses 11,368 acres of land (excluding water), or less than 1% of the BHNF (Figure 3-1). Approximately 122.6 acres within the Project area are classified as MA 8.2.

3.2.2 Motorized/Non-motorized Trails

The BHNF offers over 3,600 miles of motorized travel in the forest, including over 700 miles of system trails (reference (3)). There are approximately 7.33 miles of motorized trails in the Project area (Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1). These trails are available for both motorized and non-motorized use. Motorized uses may include snowmobiling, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), motorcycles, and vehicular traffic, while non-motorized uses may include hiking, horseback riding, nature viewing. No non-motorized trails are located within the Project area.

Table 3-1  Existing Trails within the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail ID</th>
<th>Authorized Vehicle Type</th>
<th>Timing of Allowed Use</th>
<th>Length (miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6208</td>
<td>Open to vehicles 62 inches or less in width</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6245</td>
<td>Open to vehicles 62 inches or less in width</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6224</td>
<td>Open to all vehicle</td>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6207</td>
<td>Open to all vehicles</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6244</td>
<td>Open to motorcycles</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6210</td>
<td>Open to vehicles 62 inches or less in width</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6209</td>
<td>Open to vehicles 62 inches or less in width</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6242</td>
<td>Open to motorcycles</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6233</td>
<td>Open to motorcycles</td>
<td>Yearlong</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7.33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.3 Campgrounds and Cabins

The BHNF has 30 campgrounds with more than 682 individual camp sites (reference (4)). There are no public campgrounds located within the Project area. Bear Gulch Campground is the closest campground to the Project area and is located approximately two miles southeast of the Project area near the Pactola Reservoir. There is one privately owned residence located within the Project area, along Sunnyside Gulch Road in the southeastern corner of the Project area (Figure 3-1).
RECREATION RESOURCE OVERVIEW
Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project
Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 3-1

Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Management Area 8.2
Recreation Residence
Water Influence Zone (WIZ)
Existing USFS Roads Used

Motorized Trails
- Trails Open to All Vehicles (Yearlong)
- Trails Open to All Vehicles (Seasonal)
- Trails Open to Motorcycles (Yearlong)
- Trails Open to Vehicles 62" or less in width (Yearlong)

Imagery: USDA-FSA NAIP (2020)
3.2.4 Aquatic Recreation

The Pactola Reservoir is located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the Project area and is the primary source of aquatic recreation in this region of the BHNF. There are no natural lakes present in the Project area. One perennial stream, Jenny Gulch Stream, is located within the Project area and flows southeast to the outlet into Pactola Reservoir. The reservoir offers visitors with recreation opportunities such as fishing, ice fishing, swimming, and boating.

There are several USFS-designated Watershed Influence Zones (WIZ) in the Project area (Figure 3-1). A WIZ is a designated zone adjacent to stream channels and other waterbodies for which focused efforts are made to maintain and improve water quality or other water and riparian dependent values such as habitat, recreation, and visual and aesthetic qualities.

3.2.5 Aesthetics

The USFS Scenery Management System provides an overall framework for inventory, analysis, and management of scenery. The Forest Plan establishes Scenic Integrity Objectives (SIOs) for the BHNF. A SIO is the state of naturalness or the state of disturbance by human activities or alteration. The highest SIO ratings are given to those landscapes that have little or no deviation from the character valued by its constituents for its aesthetic appeal. SIO rankings in the Project area are primarily low and moderate, with smaller amounts of high areas (Figure 3-2). A high value indicates that human activities are not visually evident. A moderate value indicates the landscape character appears slightly altered, and noticeable deviations remain visually subordinate to the greater landscape character. A low value indicates the scenic integrity of the landscape appears moderately altered and deviations from the natural (i.e., unaltered) state begin to dominate the setting.
SCENIC INTEGRITY OBJECTIVES
Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 3-2

Drill Pad Locations - Alternative C

Imagery: USDA-FSA NAIP (2020)
3.3 Environmental Consequences

The analysis of effects for recreation resources assumes that Forest Plan standards and guidelines and applicant-proposed impact minimization measures would be implemented during all Project activities. This analysis discusses the expected disturbance resulting from the implementation of the no action alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and the modified proposed action (Alternative C).

3.3.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A - No Action

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) provides a baseline to evaluate the effects of the proposed action (Alternative B) and the modified proposed action (Alternative C) as described in Section 2 of the EA. Alternative A would not result in any changes to existing recreational amenities.

3.3.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct effects on recreation could occur primarily through generation of project-related traffic and potential for noise and visual disturbances in the Project area. Traffic-related impacts to recreation are similar to those described in Section 2.3.2 of this technical report. Project equipment used for drilling and clearing would primarily utilize existing motorized trails and some new trails during Project drilling and reclamation. Increased traffic, construction-related noise, and the visual impacts of large equipment may temporarily disrupt outdoor-based recreation activities in the Project area, causing recreational users to either be inconvenienced or to temporarily find other locations for these activities. In addition, off-road vehicle users would need to be mindful of the construction-related traffic that would be traveling the area. As stated in Section 2.3.2, safety signage would be posted through the work area to communicate construction equipment use of the roadway.

Three drilling sites would be located within MA 8.2, which focuses on recreational opportunities. The Forest Plan designates that no new mineral development is allowed and the majority of the MA around Pactola Lake has been withdrawn from mineral entry. However, the three drill pads (SCP -017, SCP-018, SCP -019) proposed in MA 8.2 for Alternative B are positioned in an area that is not withdrawn from mineral entry. Though exploration drilling is not prohibited in portions of the MA that are not currently withdrawn from mineral entry, the USFS would need to issue a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to authorize this activity.

No direct effects on the existing recreational cabin or campgrounds are anticipated as a result of Alternative B. There are no campgrounds in the Project area. The existing recreational cabin is located 0.08 miles from the nearest drilling pad and may experience short-term, localized impacts from increased traffic, noise, and dust. Potential Project-generated noise effects are described further in the Public Health and Safety technical report.

No long-term effects to fishing or aquatic activities are anticipated as a result of Alternative B; however, Alternative B does include placement of three drill pads (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) within designated WIZ areas, which may result in short-term, localized alteration of visual and aesthetic qualities in adjacent waterways and potential increased short-term sedimentation and turbidity in this reach of the
Jenny Gulch Stream. F3 would be responsible for restoring these sites to pre-Project conditions after completing drilling activities.

Alternative B would include implementing site-specific design criteria, Forest Plan direction, and BMPs to address the potential for effects on surface water and associated aquatic recreation. This could include installing silt fencing to minimize sedimentation; storing all fuels and oils associated with Project activities in appropriate containers/tanks and secondary containment to mitigate or minimize any spill hazards; and ensuring crossing ephemeral streams occurs in a manner that maintains stream integrity. Water used during drilling operations would be visually inspected to make sure the water is being properly captured into the holding and settling tank circuit. Drill pads, staging areas, and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completing all Project activities.

Alternative B would include short-term disruption to aesthetics in the immediate Project viewshed due to the presence of equipment during drilling and associated ground disturbance. Disturbances would be located in areas of low or moderate SIO. Before returning areas of disturbance to original grades and final reclamation, drilling pads and access routes may create unnatural shapes on the landscape. However, the purpose of contouring and re-vegetation during reclamation is to blend project-related disturbance back into the landscape. Potential effects would be temporary and are anticipated to last until reclaimed vegetation becomes established.

3.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C – Proposed Action

Under Alternative C, the potential effects to recreation resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B, with some exceptions. Under Alternative C, three drill pads (SCP -017, SCP-018, SCP -019) would be relocated outside of MA 8.2. Although exploration drilling is allowed in this portion of MA 8.2, selecting Alternative C would avoid the need for a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to authorize drilling and preserve the MA 8.2 recreation focus.

In addition, Alternative C includes relocating three drill pads (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) from WIZ areas in the interest of maintaining WIZ integrity and minimizing water quality and recreation (including visual and aesthetic) concerns.
4 Cumulative Effects

The following section provides an assessment of the potential cumulative effects on transportation and recreation resources resulting from implementation of the Project and the potential interaction with the effects on these resources from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Because the potential effects to transportation and recreation resources are comparable for Alternative B and Alternative C, they are discussed together with regard for their potential for cumulative effects.

4.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area's existing landscape. Present and foreseeable future activities may contribute to effects on transportation and recreation resources. The effects of these present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B and/or C could potentially result in cumulative effects on transportation and recreation resources. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New radio tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses

4.2 Cumulative Effects to Transportation and Recreation

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), and F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines, the Project in combination with other present and reasonably foreseeable actions is anticipated to result in minor cumulative effects on transportation and recreation resources.
5 References


Appendix C

Botany Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Botany Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project

Prepared for
United States Forest Service

May 2022
# Contents

1. **Introduction** ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.1 Purpose and Need.......................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.2 Project Area Location .................................................................................................................................................... 1  
2. **Alternatives**............................................................................................................................................................................. 3  
   2.1 Alternative A – No Action ............................................................................................................................................ 3  
   2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action............................................................................................................................... 3  
      2.2.1 Drilling and Staging.................................................................................................................................................. 3  
      2.2.2 Site Access.................................................................................................................................................................... 4  
      2.2.3 Proposed Equipment ............................................................................................................................................... 4  
      2.2.4 Vegetation and Soil Removal ............................................................................................................................... 5  
      2.2.5 Reclamation ................................................................................................................................................................. 5  
      2.2.6 Monitoring and Implementation......................................................................................................................... 5  
      2.2.7 Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures .................................................................................. 6  
   2.3 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action ........................................................................................................... 8  
3. **Existing Conditions**............................................................................................................................................................12  
4. **Sensitive Flora Species** .....................................................................................................................................................14  
   4.1 Federally Listed Flora Species ..................................................................................................................................14  
   4.2 U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species .................................................................................................14  
   4.3 Species of Local Concern ...........................................................................................................................................14  
5. **Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Botanical Resources** ....19  
   5.1 Forest Plan Direction ...................................................................................................................................................19  
      5.1.1 Soil Disturbance .......................................................................................................................................................19  
      5.1.2 Rehabilitation and Revegetation..........................................................................................................................19  
      5.1.3 Surface Water Runoff ..............................................................................................................................................20  
      5.1.4 Stream Channels ......................................................................................................................................................20  
      5.1.5 Reclamation ...............................................................................................................................................................20  
      5.1.6 Riparian Protection .................................................................................................................................................21  
6. **Summary of Potential Effects** ........................................................................................................................................22
6.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A – No Action .......................................................... 22
6.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B and C ........................................................................... 22
6.3 Cumulative Effects .............................................................................................................................. 23
   6.3.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions ................................................................. 23
   6.3.2 Cumulative Effects to Botany .................................................................................................. 24

List of Tables

Table 2-1 Summary of Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures ................................................. 6
Table 2-2 Summary of Alternative C Additional Impact Minimization Measures ....................................... 10
Table 4-1 U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Plant Species: Summary of Suitable Habitat, Distribution, and Potential Affects ............................................................................................................ 15
Table 4-2 Species of Local Concern: Summary of Suitable Habitat, Distribution, and Potential Affects ..................................................................................................................................................... 17
Table 6-1 Summary of Potential Effects by Alternative ............................................................................... 23

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Project Location Map .................................................................................................................. 2
Figure 2-1 Alternative B and C Overview .................................................................................................... 11
Abbreviations

BHNF  Black Hills National Forest
ESA   Endangered Species Act
MA    Management Area
NEPA  National Environmental Policy Act
NFSR  National Forest System Road
PO    plan of operations
R2    Region 2
SOLC  species of local concern
SS    Sensitive Species
USFS  U.S. Forest Service
WIZ   water influence zone
1 Introduction

This technical report summarizes the botanical resources within the vicinity of the F3 Gold, LLC (F3) Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project in Pennington County, South Dakota (Project; Figure 1-1), as well as potential effects resulting from Project alternatives. This technical report is intended to supplement the assessment of environmental effects related to botanical resources found in the accompanying Environmental Assessment.

1.1 Purpose and Need

F3 has submitted a PO proposing exploration drilling on National Forest System Lands open to mineral location. F3 has a statutory right to perform exploration drilling as proposed per the General Mining Act of 1872. The USFS administers exploration and development on National Forest System lands under mining regulations defined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228, Subpart A. Entities wishing to undertake mineral exploration are required to submit a PO for review by the District Ranger.

The purpose of the exploration drilling is to identify the geological resources located with the Project area. The need for this Project relates to F3’s statutory right to access for exploration purposes. F3 is seeking USFS authorization of their proposal to exercise their rights under current mining laws to perform exploration drilling while minimizing environmental effects in accordance with USFS regulations for locatable minerals.

The Forest Service’s purpose is to decide whether to approve F3’s proposed PO and, if approved, what requirements are appropriate to minimize impacts on surface resources in accordance with 36 CFR 228, subpart A. After evaluating the proposed PO, the Forest Service determined that approving the proposed mining plan of operations would be a major Federal action subject to the National Environmental Policy Act as defined in 40 CFR 1508.1. Accordingly, the Forest Service prepared an Environmental Assessment, which this report is a part of.

The need for the Forest Service’s action is to comply with regulations governing the use of surface resources for operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands under 36 CFR 228, subpart A. These regulations require that the Forest Service respond to parties who submit a proposed plan of operations for approval to conduct operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands for part or all of their planned actions including mining, mineral processing, and uses reasonably incident thereto. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the submittal of F3’s proposed PO requires the Forest Service to consider whether to approve the proposed mining plan of operations or to require changes or additions necessary for the plan to meet the purpose of the regulations for locatable mineral operations.

1.2 Project Area Location

The Project area is located north of Silver City and includes all or portions of Sections 19, 30, 31, T2N R5E and Sections 13, 14, 24, 25, T2N R4E, Black Hills Meridian, Pennington County, South Dakota (Figure 1-1).
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Public Land Survey Township
County Boundary
Existing USFS Roads to be Utilized

FIGURE 1-1

Project Location
Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Botany Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Pennington County, SD
2 Alternatives

2.1 Alternative A - No Action

The NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14) requires a study of the No Action Alternative to use as a basis for comparing the effects of the proposed action and other action alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), the USFS would not approve F3’s plan of operations (PO) to conduct exploration drilling activities. There would be no environmental effects associated with Alternative A. However, Alternative A does not meet the Project’s purpose and need to allow F3 to access and explore for minerals on lands open to the public domain in accordance with the General Mining Act of 1872.

2.2 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Alternative B is the proposed action as described in the PO submitted by F3. Alternative B includes diamond core drilling at up to 42 drill sites, access road maintenance (as needed), drill pad clearing (as needed), and reclamation activities (Figure 2-1). Alternative B would require an amendment to the Forest Plan to allow three drill pads in Management Area (MA) 8.2. The Forest Plan designates that no new mineral development (including exploratory drilling to inform future mineral development) is allowed and the majority of the MA around Pactola Lake has been withdrawn from mineral entry (reference [1]). The USFS would be required to prepare a Project specific amendment to the Forest Plan to authorize the drilling activities, despite the F3-proposed drilling locations coinciding with one of the areas that has not been withdrawn from mineral entry.

2.2.1 Drilling and Staging

Each drill site would have a maximum footprint of approximately 2,500 square feet (0.06 acres), where the drilling rig, rod tray, support vehicles, portable cutting tank, and water truck will be placed. Drill holes would range from 500 to 6,000 feet in depth dependent on the results of each hole. Although depths up to 6,000 feet would be authorized, very few holes are planned to extend to this depth; most holes would be drilled to a depth of approximately 1,000 feet. Exploration drilling involves drilling holes vertically and at an angle from the surface. That angle can vary between -90 degrees (vertical) and -45 degrees. Once the angle is set, the drill will remain at that angle until completion of the drill hole. Directional drilling that controls the direction of the boring during drilling (as commonly used in oil and gas development) or horizontal drilling methods will not be used. The number of holes drilled on each drill pad will depend on the findings in the field, with the average drill pad having one to two holes and some having up to four holes. Depending on the results of preceding drill holes, some of the drill sites may not end up being required and would ultimately not be constructed. Drilling operations would take place 24-hours a day divided between two 12-hour shifts. Two staging areas (0.25 acres each) would be used to store equipment and tools. Drill pads and staging areas would result in 3.0 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Drill pad locations were selected based on local geology, subsurface target concepts, and surface conditions that allow F3 to best test its scientific theories while minimizing surface disturbance.

The drilling process proposed by F3 would use water mixed with industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds or other natural and/or biodegradable additives to more efficiently and
safely drill and seal boreholes. No other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling. Any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters. Water would be trucked from the municipal or industrial source to storage holding tanks either at a drill site and/or one of the staging areas. Approximately 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water would be used per day per drill rig. During drilling activities, water would be circulated using a water pump with water lines transporting water from the storage tanks to the drill site. At the end of drilling operations, excess water would be disposed of at a municipal wastewater disposal location, in agreement with the municipality.

Drill cuttings and used water would be recovered and collected in tanks at the drill site. Settlement would be used to separate the cuttings, allowing the water to be reused in the drilling process. Upon completion of a drill hole, the cuttings would be either thin-spread and buried beneath the topsoil (which is the industry standard for low-sulfur cuttings management in the western U.S.) or transported off-site to an approved disposal location. Spread drill cutting depth would be dependent on hole depth with most sites resulting in a spread drill cuttings depth of 0.25 inches; however, some sites (holes up to 6,000 feet deep) may result in up to approximately 1.50 inches of drill cuttings spread across the drill pad. Topsoil would be placed on on-site cuttings and reseeded/replanted to match surrounding vegetation. Burying cuttings on-site allows the cuttings to be protected from erosion until vegetation is re-established. Drill pads would be reclaimed upon completion of all drilling activities, as one reclamation effort at the end.

2.2.2 Site Access

Main access from the north would be from NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via county Highway 237 (Rochford Road). The primary access from the south would be from NFSR 671 (Sunnyside Gulch Road) or NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via Silver City Road. Additional NFSRs that are anticipated to be used for access include NFSR 261, 720.2B, 671, 141.2B, and 261.2B. National Forest System Trails (NFST) 6207, 6209, and 6210 are also anticipated to be used for access, all of which allow motorized vehicle use (Figure 1-1). Approximately 5,280 feet (one mile) of existing local roadways noted above would be used to access Project features. In addition, approximately 4,700 linear feet (0.89 miles) of 8-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access route may be constructed for drill site access, resulting in less than 1 acre of additional temporary surface disturbance. These temporary overland trails would be obliterated and returned to natural conditions after Project completion. Existing access roads and overland trails would be improved only if needed and only to the extent necessary to gain access to the site.

2.2.3 Proposed Equipment

F3 proposes to use the following equipment to complete drilling and associated restoration of the Project:

- One to four diamond drill rigs;
- Drill rod racks with drill pipe and casing pipe;
- Six to eight four-wheel drive pickup trucks for access to drilling sites;
- Four all-terrain vehicles for access to drilling sites;
- Two snowmobiles for access to drilling sites (for winter use only);
• One water truck, as needed to fill water storage tanks;
• One excavator;
• One dozer;
• One skid-steer;
• One to three water storage tanks, up to 10,000 gallons in size;
• Up to four water supply pumps; and
• Water line/hose, mud pump, and mixing tanks for grouting and/or cementing drill holes.

Drilling equipment (e.g., drill rigs, drill rod racks, drill pipe, casing pipe) would be used at each drilling site as this equipment is needed to perform the drilling. Other equipment, such as the excavator, dozer, and skid-steer would be used on an as-needed basis to facilitate access, maintenance, and reclamation. When not in use, this equipment would be stored at one of the staging areas.

2.2.4 Vegetation and Soil Removal

Tree clearing and other vegetation removal would be limited to only that which is needed to facilitate access. Any soils that may need to be removed for pad clearing would be stockpiled for later use in site reclamation.

2.2.5 Reclamation

Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per Administrative Rules of South Dakota 74:11:08.

Drill pads and staging areas would be reclaimed upon completion of drilling by re-grading the pads to pre-Project contours and reseeding with Black Hills reclamation seed mix, as noted in the PO. Safety signage would be removed from the area, and stockpiled soils would be either spread over the drill pad area, stacked in soil-free piles, or disposed off-site at an approved facility. Overland trails used for access to drill pads would be re-seeded and returned to pre-existing conditions under the direction of the USFS.

2.2.6 Monitoring and Implementation

F3 would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USFS as part of the EA decision. In addition, F3 will be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the Project. F3 is required to submit a reclamation plan to the USFS prior to authorization for Project initiation in accordance with USFS Manual 2840. In addition, F3 is responsible for submitting a reclamation bond to the USFS for the Project, with the bond amount determined by the USFS. F3’s PO would be administered by the USFS Minerals Specialist, and other governmental entities with permitting authority will be responsible for enforcing their permit conditions as they deem appropriate. Sites will be monitored for a minimum of three years after reclamation.
2.2.7 Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures

As part of their Plan of Operations, F3 intends to implement impact minimization measures into Project design, as summarized in Table 2-1. These measures have been developed in response to comments received during the Project scoping process.

Table 2-1 Summary of Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access and Transportation</strong></td>
<td>• Overland trails used for access would be regraded and reseeded as directed by USFS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Any unexpected road damage would be repaired as soon as possible based on contractor availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contractor equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Traffic to and from the drill sites would be limited to site set-up, driller shift changes, management oversight, sample pickup, and site restoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional safety signage (construction use, warning signs, drill signs, trucks entering signs, etc.) would be posted throughout the work area to communicate construction equipment use of the road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Botanical Resources/Reclamation</strong></td>
<td>• Tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary. In areas where tree removal is unavoidable, the affected area would be reseeded/replanted as part of reclamation with Black Hills seed mix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disturbed areas would be reclaimed and reseeded according to USFS standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fisheries and Wildlife</strong></td>
<td>• Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnyside Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15 – August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drill sites would not be located in limestone areas to avoid potential vertigo snail habitat disturbance. In addition, protection of the WIZ surrounding streams/seeps/springs would also provide protection for vertigo snails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drilling within 500-feet of a known bat roost location would occur outside the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31). Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry & Soils | • Holding tanks would be used to store drilling water rather than sumps to minimize potential for sedimentation and infiltration.  
• All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.  
• Materials used for the Project would be stored either at staging areas or at the drill sites; materials would not be stored along access roads or other locations.  
• Any soils that may need to be removed for clearing drill pads or staging areas would be stockpiled on-site for later use in site reclamation.  
• Upon completion of a drill hole, the drill cuttings and fines would be dispersed in the disturbed area.  
• Topsoil would be placed on cuttings and reseeded/replanted as necessary to match surrounding vegetation.  
• Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities.  
• Drilling would primarily require the use of water. In addition to water, F3 may also use industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds, or other natural and/or biodegradable additives, during drilling to more efficiently and safely drill and seal boreholes. No other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling. Rock core, water, and fine-grained rock drill cuttings generated by drilling would be stored in holding tanks. Water would be recycled back into the drilling process, and drill cuttings would be disposed as noted above. |
| Hydrology – Water Quality/Quantity | • The only fluids used for the Project are fuel (for vehicles/machinery), oil (for vehicles/machinery), water, and industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds or other natural and/or biodegradable additives.  
• All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.  
• Water would not be extracted from local surface waters; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source.  
• Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per Administrative Rules of South Dakota 74:11:08. Drill holes would be sealed within 24 to 48 hours of drilling completion prior to moving the drill rig.  
• Casing will be used, when necessary, to protect groundwater in unconsolidated, surficial geologic units. The need for casing is expected to be minimal as most drilling is proposed directly on bedrock with little to no soil or surficial geologic units. |
### Public Health and Safety
- Residences in close proximity to drilling activities would be notified prior to Project initiation.
- An emergency response plan would be developed for the Project and would be provided to local first responders in advance of Project initiation. This plan would be developed in coordination with local first responders and would address a number of emergency situations (i.e., fire, injury, etc.).
- All drilling sites and staging areas would be equipped with spill kits to immediately address any fuel or oil spill. All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.
- All vehicles, drill rigs, and other on-site equipment would be inspected as part of daily safety checks and will be equipped with more than one fire extinguisher, which would also be inspected routinely.
- A site security plan would be developed to maintain site safety and limit risk of public interference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Public Health and Safety | • Residences in close proximity to drilling activities would be notified prior to Project initiation.  
• An emergency response plan would be developed for the Project and would be provided to local first responders in advance of Project initiation. This plan would be developed in coordination with local first responders and would address a number of emergency situations (i.e., fire, injury, etc.).  
• All drilling sites and staging areas would be equipped with spill kits to immediately address any fuel or oil spill. All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.  
• All vehicles, drill rigs, and other on-site equipment would be inspected as part of daily safety checks and will be equipped with more than one fire extinguisher, which would also be inspected routinely.  
• A site security plan would be developed to maintain site safety and limit risk of public interference. |

### 2.3 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action
Alternative C was developed in response to issues identified during Project scoping. This alternative meets the Project’s purpose and need in a way that implements siting factors (i.e., factors that influence where features are sited or positioned) and additional mitigation measures to further minimize Project effects. The additional measures or siting differences included in Alternative C are summarized below. Specifically, Alternative C has been developed to minimize effects by avoiding cultural resources, eliminating the need for a Forest Plan Amendment, as discussed below, and to minimize effects to the water influence zone (WIZ). In order to minimize effects, additional drilling pads would be needed to achieve a comparable level of data collection as explained below.

Alternative C proposes drilling 47 exploration drilling pads as shown in Figure 2-1; this number of drill pads in combination with the two staging areas would result in 3.3 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Alternative C relocates 5 drilling pads, one staging area, and associated access roads proposed in Alternative B to avoid effects to cultural resources; however, F3 has determined that additional drilling pads are needed to collect an equivalent level of information compared to Alternative B. Under Alternative C, approximately 5,700 feet (1.1 mile) of existing local roadways would be used to access Project features. In addition, up to approximately 9,925 linear feet (1.88 miles) of 12-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access route may be developed for drill site access, resulting in up to approximately 2.73 acres of additional temporary surface disturbance as compared to Alternative B. Alternative C would require a 12-foot wide access corridor to accommodate the more rugged terrain traversed compared to Alternative B.

Existing USFS administrative roads not open for public use (i.e., administrative roads), as defined in the USFS 2010 Travel Management Record of Decision, would be used to access sites to the extent practicable; in some cases, this may include travel through the WIZ on existing administrative roads. Locations accessed through the WIZ would be planned for winter construction to the extent practicable; however, should site conditions at the time of construction warrant these administrative roads unusable
(i.e., flooding in the WIZ or another reason), three drilling pads (SPC-045, SPC-046, and SPC-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ; this shift has been accounted for in the access road measurements provided above. The use of alternate drill pad and access road locations would require coordination with and authorization by USFS engineers and the District Ranger.

As mentioned above in Section 2.2, Alternative B includes three drilling sites in an area designated by the Forest Plan as MA 8.2, Developed Recreation Complexes. Alternative C relocates these three drilling sites from MA 8.2 to avoid the need for a Project-specific Forest Plan amendment.

Alternative B includes three drilling sites immediately adjacent to USFS-identified WIZ. A WIZ is a designated zone adjacent to stream channels and other waterbodies for which focused efforts are made to maintain and improve water quality or other water and riparian dependent values such as habitat, recreation, and visual and aesthetic quality. In the interest of maintaining the integrity of established WIZ areas and minimizing water quality and recreation concerns, Alternative C relocates three drill sites outside of WIZ areas. To avoid the need for tree clearing and construction of new temporary site access, as mentioned above, it is possible that the WIZ may be crossed during frozen conditions to access certain drilling sites. If the WIZ is impassable without causing considerable damage to soils, wetlands, and other resources, three drilling pads immediately adjacent to the WIZ (SPC-45, SPC-46, and SPC-47) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. This would be determined on a case by case basis and in coordination with the Forest Service hydrologist, engineers, PO administrator and District Ranger.

The impact minimization measures noted in Table 2-1 would be applied to both Alternative B and Alternative C; however, Alternative C would also include impact minimization measures beyond those noted in Table 2-1; these additional impact minimization measures are summarized in Table 2-2.
## Table 2-2 Summary of Alternative C Additional Impact Minimization Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Additional Impact Minimization Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botanical Resources/Reclamation</td>
<td>• Each drill pad and temporary overland access route would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use rather than upon completion of all drilling activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/Heritage Resources</td>
<td>• Relocates drilling pads and access roads to avoid potential cultural resources conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>• Drilling pads within 500 feet of a residence would limit drilling to one, 12-hour daytime shift (7:00am – 7:00pm) to mitigate nighttime noise potential. This applies to drill pads SCP-012 and SCP-020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology – Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>• Alternative C includes a provision that the WIZ may be crossed during frozen conditions to access certain sites; however, if seasonal conditions indicate the WIZ is impassable without causing considerable damage to soils, wetlands, and other resources, the three drilling pads immediately adjacent to the WIZ (SPC-045, SPC-046, and SPC-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. The use of alternate drill pad and access road locations would require coordination with and authorization by USFS engineers and the District Ranger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Travel Management</td>
<td>• Alternative C relocates three drill pads from MA 8.2, which is managed for recreational opportunities and visual qualities adjacent to developed recreation sites and bodies of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alternative C relocates three drill pads (SPC-45, SPC-46, and SPC-47) from WIZ areas in the interest of maintaining WIZ integrity and minimizing water quality and recreation concerns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ALTERNATIVE B AND C OVERVIEW

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Botany Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 2-1
3 Existing Conditions

The Project area is located within the Black Hills Plateau ecoregion of the Middle Rockies ecoregion. The area shares a similar montane climate, hydrography, and land use pattern as the Rocky Mountains. The Black Hills Plateau ecoregion is a relatively flat, elevated expanse covering the mid-elevation slopes and grasslands of the Black Hills. It includes areas of sharply tilted metamorphic rock and lower elevation granite outcrops (reference [2]). Elevations along the Project area range from approximately 4,700 feet above sea level at the southern edge of the Project area to about 5,500 feet above mean sea level near the western edge of the Project area.

The Black Hills region has a continental climate that experiences very hot summers and very cold winters. According to the Koppen Climate Classification, the Project area is within a warm-summer humid continual climate (reference [3]). The Black Hills tend to have a higher mean temperature and receive more precipitation annually than the surrounding Great Plains. Hill City, a town close to the Project area with accessible climate data, has an annual high temperature of 82° Fahrenheit (F) and an annual low of 12° (F), with an average of 21 inches of precipitation annually and 58 inches of snow annually (reference [4]).

Plant communities within the Project area include forested areas and meadows. Mergen Ecological Delineations, Inc. previously conducted botanical surveys within the Project area in the summer and fall of 2008 (reference [5]). The following plant communities, listed in order of prevalence, were identified within the Impact area:

- Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forest;
- Ponderosa pine/quaking aspen;
- Meadow plant; and
- White spruce (*Picea glauca*)/quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*).

The ponderosa pine occurs on low to high elevations on all soil types and on all aspects and is the most abundant and widely distributed tree in the BHN (reference [6]). It is a seral or an occasional species in white spruce and quaking aspen dominated forests, and an occasional tree in more xerophytic bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) dominated woodlands or in shrub-steppe or steppe vegetation (reference [6]). In the BHN, ponderosa pine is aggressive; reproduction of the species is prompt and in sufficient quantities to maintain the population. After fire or logging, ponderosa pine reestablishes and often produces extremely dense stands. The understory vegetation in ponderosa pine forests consists of shrubs such as, common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), russet buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*), common snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), and bur oak.

In the Black Hills, it is common for quaking aspen to occur between ponderosa pine forests on coarse textured soils on mountain slopes and adjacent grasslands parks with fine-textured soils. Most stands of quaking aspen are initiated by destruction of coniferous forests (reference [6]). In most ponderosa pine/quaking aspen stands, paper birch is a codominant species; its height is less than that of quaking
aspen, and in numerous places, its ecologic role is that of an undergrowth shrub. Quaking aspen is an early successional species and will typically come in after a disturbance.

In the Black Hills, meadow plant communities are typically found in the narrower drainage bottoms surrounded by pine forest, often with ponderosa pine encroaching. The common descriptions of the meadows includes grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Forbs are often represented by a diverse array of herbaceous species. Grasses are often introduced species.

In the Black Hills, white spruce occurs at high elevations and in cool canyon bottoms, on soils derived from both igneous and limestone parent material (reference [6]). White spruce dominates at the higher elevation subalpine forest zone. Ponderosa pine, quaking aspen, and paper birch are common seral species in white spruce communities. However, white spruce rarely occurs in vegetation dominated by either ponderosa pine or quaking aspen.
4 Sensitive Flora Species

Sensitive flora species with the potential to occur in the Project area are described in the following subsections. Specifically, the following subsections include descriptions of the habitat, distribution, and conservation status of sensitive plant species that are designated as:

- federally listed threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA);
- USFS Region 2 (R2) Sensitive Species (SS); and
- USFS species of local concern (SOLC).

4.1 Federally Listed Flora Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation website was queried for federally listed threatened and endangered species within the Project area (reference [7]). There is one federally listed flora species listed within Pennington County, the Leedy’s roseroot (Rhodiola integrifolia ssp. Leedyi). It was listed as threatened in April 1992 (57 FR 14649 14653). The global conservation status of Leedy’s roseroot is G5T1 (critically imperiled subspecies of a widespread global species). In South Dakota, this species is ranked S1 (Critically imperiled) (reference [8]).

Leedy’s roseroot is typically found on specialized cliffside habitat along the shore of a lake; in South Dakota, this species has been documented on granite cliffsides (reference [9]). The species is known to occur in one location in the Black Hills in the Black Elk Wilderness in Pennington County outside of the Project area. Additionally, there is no suitable habitat for the species within the Project area.

4.2 U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species

SS are USFS-designated species whose population trends or habitat capacity is of concern. Table 4-1 lists the 13 USFS R2 SS within the BHNF and summarizes information regarding their potential habitat, distribution, and potential to be effected by the Project.

4.3 Species of Local Concern

SOLC are USFS designated species that do not meet the criteria for sensitive status. These could include species with declining trends in only a portion of R2, or those that are important components of diversity in a local area. Table 4-2 below summarizes suitable habitat, distribution, and potential affects to SOLC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species; Growth Habit</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</th>
<th>Documented Distribution</th>
<th>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</th>
<th>Species known within or near Project area?</th>
<th>Potential for Project Effect?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn willow (Salix senissima); shrub/tree</td>
<td>Obligate wetland shrub species that occurs predominantly in boreal regions where it occupies cold, often calcareous bogs, and fens, swamps, lakeshore, sandy habitats, and stream banks at low to mid elevations. In the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF), autumn willow’s known habitats are limited to cold seep or spring-fed saturated substrates from 5,200 to 6,000 feet in elevation (reference [10]).</td>
<td>Populations of the species in South Dakota are disjunct from its main distribution in northeastern North America. Known occurrences of autumn willow in the Black Hills consist of two populations in the BHNF and two populations on private land in Lawrence County (reference [10]).</td>
<td>G4/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species is not known to occur within Pennington County where the Project is located.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis); forb</td>
<td>Perennial forb that is a common in eastern deciduous forests. In the Black Hills, bloodroot occupies floodplains, forested terraces, drainage bottoms, and north-facing footslopes in open, rich hardwood plant communities, including bur oak, hophornbeam (Ostrya) forest, (black) hawthorne (Crataegus douglasii-Crataegus chrysocarpa) shrubland, and paper birch-hazelnut (Betula papyrifera-Corylus cornuta) forest (reference [11]).</td>
<td>Populations of the species in South Dakota are disjunct from its main distribution in eastern North America. To date, 22 occurrences of bloodroot have been found in the northern and northeastern portions of the Black Hills. In the BHNF, bloodroot occurrences are locally abundant, possibly in response to the open conditions within its habitats (reference [11]).</td>
<td>GS/S4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented to occur within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxtail sedge (Carex alopecoidea); herb</td>
<td>Foxtail-sedge is typically found in riparian wetlands. It is associated with perennial flowing water and can be found above the saturated edge of the water line, especially on and along the edges of abandoned beaver ponds (reference [12]). In the Black Hills, foxtail sedge is typically found adjacent to ponderosa pine and quaking aspen within riparian woodlands dominated by black willow (Salix bebbiana), fireberry hawthorn (Crataegus chrysocarpa), beaked hazelnut (Corylus cornuta), and paper birch (Betula papyrifera) (reference [12]).</td>
<td>Foxtail sedge is endemic to North America, occurring in 5 Canadian provinces and in 21 states within the United States. Documented occurrences are distributed throughout the northeastern United States extending westward to the Rocky Mountains and southward to Tennessee. Seven of the 10 documented locations in South Dakota occur in the Black Hills in Lawrence County (reference [12]).</td>
<td>GS/S3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented to occur within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giant Helleborine (Epipactis gigantea); forb</td>
<td>Giant helleborine occupies a variety of habitats such as seeps, springs and perennial springs (reference [13]). In the Black Hills giant helleborine is known to occur in calcareous habitats such as minerotrophic fens, thermal seeps and springs. Giant helleborines distribution follows other rare taxa including geysers panarica (Dicentra macrocistum Var thermal) southern maidenhair fern (Adiantum capillus veneris). The occurrence of the species in the Black Hills appears to be dependent upon the constant moisture and warmth provided by Cascade springs (reference [13]). It is unlikely for the species to survive elsewhere in the BHNF.</td>
<td>The giant helleborine is widely but sparsely distributed west of the continental divide from southern British Columbia to Colorado and eastern to western Montana, South Dakota and western Texas. In the Rocky Mountains the orchid occurs from 2,630 to 8,000 feet elevation in association with thermal springs and seeps, non-thermal springs, seeps and fens, on sandstone cliffs and hillsides, and on both limestone and granitic substrates reference [14].</td>
<td>G3/G4/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; no warm springs in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great-spurred violet (Viola selkirkii); forb</td>
<td>Great-spurred violet is typically found in the boreal and Rocky Mountain regions of North America. In the Black Hills, the species is restricted to spruce-dominated forests in cold, shady ravines from 5,400 to 7,000 feet elevation on soil derived from granite parent material.</td>
<td>Great-spurred violet is a circumboreal species that occupies the boreal regions of North America south to Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and British Columbia, with disruption occurrences in the Black Hills of South Dakota and the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and New Mexico. There are 10 known occurrences of great-spurred violet in Black Hills National Forest; 8 in the Black Elk Wilderness, and 2 in the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve (reference [15]).</td>
<td>GS/S2S3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented to occur within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highbush cranberry (Viburnum opulus var. americanum)</td>
<td>Highbush cranberry tends to grow in part shade in areas with moist soil, such as fens, shores, and river banks. Across both South Dakota and North Dakota, highbush cranberry is described as occurring along wooded lakeshores and low wet woods, in moist, springy substrates or even on rocky and bushy hillsides that are moist (reference [16]).</td>
<td>Highbush cranberry has a wide range in North America, it occurs from the east coast in the United States and Canada, westward to the Pacific Coast in Canada, south to Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, and Wyoming. South Dakota Populations of the species are considered peripheral and disjunct from the eastern populations.</td>
<td>GS/Not ranked in SD</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented to occur within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large round-leaf orchid (Platanthera orbiculata)</td>
<td>The Large round-leaf orchid typically occupies damp, rich humus soil in the deep shade of heavily forested areas (reference [17]). In the BHNF, the large round-leaf orchid populations are restricted to the Northern Hills, higher elevations of the granitic Central Core, and the Bear Lodge Mountains. The occurrences are scattered in sheltered, northwest – to northeast-facing cool, shady slopes and draws in mid- to late-succesional paper birch/hazelnut forest, often with an over story of white spruce.</td>
<td>The Large round-leaf orchid is endemic to North America from Newfoundland to southern Alaska and south to Tennessee, Minnesota, and Oregon. In the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming, the large round-leaf orchid has a disjunct distribution. The Black Hills population are distributed in the northwestern Black Hills, the Bear Lodge Mountains of Wyoming, and in the Black Elk Wilderness Area.</td>
<td>GS/S3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; north facing birch/hardwood stands are not found within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Species; Growth Habit

Mountain lady’s slipper (Cypripedium montanum)

Narrowleaf peatmoss (Sphagnum angustifolium)

Prairie moonwort (Botrychium campestre)

Sage willow (Salix candida)

Trailing clubmoss (Lycopodium complanatum)

Yellow lady’s slipper (Cypripedium parviflorum)

Suitable Habitat Characteristics

Mountain lady’s slipper’s most often occur in open mixed conifer or mixed conifer hardwood forests but are also documented in forest openings, shrub thickets and alpine meadows. Moisture regimes vary from dry to moist. Elevation ranges from approximately 1,600 to 6,900 feet. Associated tree species include Douglas-fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii), various species of fir (Abies), lodgepole pine (Pinus contorta), ponderosa pine, quaking aspen, and oak (Quercus spp.) (reference [18]).

Through its range, narrowleaf peatmoss is typically found growing in wet peat in low- to mineral-rich fens, sedge fens, exposed bogs, forming blankets, floating carpets or hillocks, filling in cavities but remain above the water table (reference [20]).

Prairie moonwort is typically found in tall to mid-grass prairies where dead leaf litter from grasses is present, Populations are susceptible to drought, and light cover helps shade soils and keep soils moist (reference [21]). In the BHNF, populations are typically found in calcareous meadows and grasslands.

Throughout its range, sage willow is typically associated with fens, bogs, marshes, and other areas of permanently saturated soils where peat is present. Theses habitats often have high mineral content and alkaline pH and are characterized as “rich” or “extreme rice” fens. In South Dakota, the species appears to prefer calcareous fen communities (reference [23]).

In North America, trailing clubmoss are associated with temperate to sub-arctic boreal forest, dry open coniferous forest, mixed sub-alpine and northern forests, thicketts and bogs, and sheltered north-facing slopes. In the BHNF, clubmoss is associated with high moisture microhabitats within remnant boreal spruce habitats: occurring primarily in the northern Black Hills on north facing slopes with paper birch (reference [24]).

The yellow lady’s slipper is often found in shady deciduous and mixed woods. In South Dakota, the species is most often found in shady deciduous and mixed woodlands, usually between 1,500 and 6,445 ft in elevation. The mixed forests typically include species of oak, ash (Fraxinus spp.), and hazelnut ( Corylus spp.) woodland; or shrublands, swamps, bogs, and spruce ( Picea spp.) and pine ( Pinus spp.) forests (reference [25]).

Few occurrences of Mountain Lady’s slipper are found in Region 2. The known populations are limited to two counties (Johnson and Sheridan) in Wyoming (reference [19]).

In the United States, narrowleaf peatmoss is found in northeastern states to North Carolina, inland to Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, extending west to Washington, Wyoming, Utah, Oregon, and California. In South Dakota, it has been recorded in Pennington County, at four separate occurrences along South Rochford Road.

Prairie moonwort is distributed across North America in 14 states and five Canadian provinces. There are seven known occurrences of the species in South Dakota. It is estimated that a total of over 1000 plants occur at these sites (with the majority of them a single site in Wind Cave National Park, South Dakota) (reference [22]).

Sage willow is a boreal species whose distribution is concentrated in the northern tier of the United States including Alaska, and in Canada from Newfoundland to British Columbia. In R2 occurrences are rare and scattered in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado, where they are peripheral or disjunct from the more northern center of distribution. In South Dakota, sage willow is restricted to the southwestern corner of the state.

Trailing clubmoss is distributed across North America from Alaska to Newfoundland south in the Rocky Mountains to Arizona and New Mexico, and in the Appalachians south to Kentucky and North Carolina with disjunct occurrences in Saskatchewan and South Dakota. There are only two currently verified occurrences of stiff clubmoss in the Black Hills. A relatively large occurrence is in the Upper Sand Creek Botanical Area, and a second, smaller occurrence of approximately 50 stems is on Strawberry Creek in Lawrence County, South Dakota (reference [24]).

Yellow lady’s slipper is distributed in boreal regions of the northern hemisphere. The species can be found in all five states of R2. Occurrences of the species within the BHNF represents a minor disjunction from the Bighorn Mountains in Wyoming, Western Montana, and northeastern North and South Dakota (Mergen 2006). An estimated 4,000 individuals exist in over 200 locations on the Forest (Bearlodge, Mystic and Northern Hills Ranger Districts).


documents distribution

G4/S2

G5/S1

G3G4/S2S3

G5/S1

G5/S2

G5/S34

Not likely; the Project area occurs well outside of known geographic area of the species.

Not likely; the Project will not directly impact an Fens or bogs.

Potentially, suitable habitat for the species occurs within the Project area.

Not likely; the Project will not affect any fens or bogs.

Not likely; no suitable boreal spruce habitats are located within the Project area.

Not likely; Project area does not countain suitable deciduous mixed forest.
Table 4-2  Species of Local Concern: Summary of Suitable Habitat, Distribution, and Potential Affects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species; Growth Habit</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</th>
<th>Documented Distribution</th>
<th>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</th>
<th>Previously known within or near Project area?</th>
<th>Potential for Project Effect?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpine mountain sorrel (Oxyria digyna)</td>
<td>Alpine mountain sorrel is typically found in stony, moist to wet soil of moraine, rock outcrops, meadows, talus slopes; upper subalpine and alpine areas (reference [27]). The species prefers high elevations from 1,000 to 8,700 feet with a west facing aspect (reference [28]).</td>
<td>Alpine Mountain mountain sorrel is common in the tundra of the artic and can be found growing in high mountainous areas in the northern Hemisphere.</td>
<td>G5/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely, the geographical and elevational range and steep granite outcrops do not occur within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrowleaf sweet coltsfoot (Petrastis frigidus var. sagittatus)</td>
<td>Arrowleaf sweet coltsfoot is an obligate wetland species that occurs predominantly in boreal regions. Typically found in bogs, marshes, fens, marshy tundra, alluvial flats, roadside ditches and disturbed sites such as clear cuts. In the Black Hills National Forest (BHFN), Arrowleaf sweet coltsfoot is found in open or shaded, low-lying habitats, along streams, often with peaty substrate (reference [29]).</td>
<td>Arrowleaf sweet coltsfoot is distributed from eastern Alaska and southern Yukon east to Labrador and south to Washington, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota and Colorado. In the BHFN, arrowleaf sweet coltsfoot is known only from two locations along Rapid Creek, one in Pennington County near Solomon Gulch, the other in the Black Fox Valley Botanical Area in Lawrence County (reference [29]). Two other occurrences are known from private lands in Lawrence County (reference [29]).</td>
<td>G5/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; project features will not cross existing wetlands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaked spikerush (Eleocharis rostellata)</td>
<td>Beaked spikerush is an obligate wetland species, (reference [30]) that occurs in many types of alkaline wetlands including salt and brackish marshes, tidal flats, alkaline seeps, bogs, stream margins, hot spring edges, and swamps. In BHFN, beaked spikerush is typically associated with warm, calcareous, perennial water source, with open canopies (reference [31]).</td>
<td>Beaked spikerush distribution is widespread in the Americas from across southern Canada to northern Mexico, to the West Indies, the Caribbean, and the Andes of South America. The South Dakota population of beaked spikerush extends along Cascade Creek from the headwaters at Cascade Springs to within one-half mile of the confluence with the Cheyenne River, and the species is especially abundant along the reach between Cascade Springs to just below Cascade Falls (reference [31]).</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; no warm springs are located within the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-lipped twayblade (Lislera convallariaoides)</td>
<td>Broad-lipped twayblade most often grows in somewhat acidic mulch in forest seeps, northern white cedar swamps, boreal forests, and other wet-mesic forests in the eastern part of its range. With some populations growing in moist sand along streams under cedar (reference [32]).</td>
<td>Broad-lipped twayblade is endemic to North America, found across most of the continent, with a gap across the drier climates in Minnesota and South Dakota and areas to the north. In the west it is restricted to mountainous areas, from British Columbia to Arizona and Nevada (reference [32]). There are four known occurrences on the BHFN with one site extending onto BLM land. Occurrences are restricted to a 20 square mile area in the northern Black Hills, south of Lead, South Dakota</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the Project area is outside of the geographical range of the existing populations in the BHFN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common maidenhair (Adiantum capillus-veneris)</td>
<td>Common maidenhair occupies shaded, calcareous, moist banks, canyon walls, or pours rocky sites, often within the spray of waterfalls, and grows on masonry storm drains and limestone. In the BHFN, southern maidenhair fern is dependent on constant moisture and warmth provided by Cascade Springs (reference [24]).</td>
<td>In North America, common maidenhair fern is distributed across the southern third of the United States, with disjunct populations in South Dakota and British Columbia Canada. All occurrences of the species in the BHFN occur within Cascade Valley. The fern is not believed to have ever occurred at other warm springs habitats in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; warm springs in Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downy gentian (Gentiana puberulenta)</td>
<td>Downy gentian typically occurs in dry to mesic grassland and forest transition habitats, often with patchy shrub cover. In the Great Plains, downy gentian occurs in moist big bluestem (Andropogon gerardii) uplands and open woodlands (reference [33]).</td>
<td>Downy gentian is an eastern North American species ranging from Quebec and Virginia to the eastern Dakotas and scattered in sandy parts of Nebraska. Typically confined to wet meadows, wet prairies, and wet woods. A few colonies exist in the eastern edge of the Black Hills (reference [33]).</td>
<td>G4G5/S4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; mesic limestone meadows do not occur in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fivestamen mitrewort (Mitella pentandra)</td>
<td>Fivestamen mitrewort typically occurs in moist woods, stream banks, avalanche tracks and wet mountain meadows, bogs, fens, and wetlands. The species can be found at elevations of 3,280 to 12,100 feet frequently in moist slightly shaded environments. Occasional in middle elevation forests (reference [34]).</td>
<td>In North America, Fivestamen is distributed across the western third of the United States and Canada. In the BHFN, the species occurs in white spruce, paper birch, and hazelnut communities along small perennial and intermittent streams.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; project features won’t effect suitable perennial and intermittent stream habitat.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All available information regarding the F3 Project was compiled using field reconnaissance, survey records, district records, and available database(s) information (GIS and Black Hills National Forest plant database (reference [26]).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species; Growth Habit</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</th>
<th>Documented Distribution</th>
<th>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</th>
<th>Previously known within or near Project area?</th>
<th>Potential for Project Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leathery grape fern</td>
<td>Leathery grape fern typically occurs in old pastures, meadows, woodland margins, riverbanks and bottomlands in sub acidic soil (Anderson 2005). In Region 2 (R2), leathery grape fern has been documented in a variety of habitats including wet meadows, forest edges, lake shores, rocky lake margins, in willow clumps at the edge of a pond, next to trails and near beaver dams. Leathery grape fern is distributed worldwide in temperate and north temperate habitats. In North America, the area of highest diversity for this subgenus is east of the Mississippi River from the southern Gulf Coast to the northern coasts of the Great Lakes. In South Dakota, the species is known from 5 sites in the Black Hills. Of these five sites three are located within the Black Elk Wilderness Area and one is the Norbeck Wildlife Preserve in Pennington County.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; Project area is outside of the range of the current BHNF populations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limber pine (Pinus flexis)</td>
<td>Limber pine typically occurs on steep, rocky, well drained windswept, and nutrient-poor sites on exposed ridges and summits, often reported growing on calcareous soil. The species can be found across a wider range of elevations, inhabiting some of the driest sites capable of supporting trees. A population of limber pine in the Black Hills is associated with interior ponderosa pine and white spruce. Understory species include beaverry and common juniper (reference [35]). Limber pine occurs from Alberta and British Columbia south to California, Arizona, and New Mexico. It is scattered widely across the Great Basin in Utah, Nevada, and into Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Isolated populations occur in the Dakotas and Nebraska (reference [35]). In the Black Hills P. flexis is known to occur within a two square mile area of the Black Elk Wilderness (Harney Peak area) and Custer State Park. Black Hills sites are characterized by large granite outcrops.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; no granite outcrops are located within the Project area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern hollyfern (Polystichum lanschitis)</td>
<td>Northern hollyfern typically occurs on rock crevices or at base of boulders, mostly in boreal and subalpine coniferous forests or alpine regions (reference [36]). It is commonly associated with white spruce, paper birch, and hazel in moist, shaded north facing slopes in forested ravines and gulches on limestone substrate at elevations from 4,160 to 5,540 feet (reference [37]). Northern hollyfern can be found throughout much of western North America and northeastern North America. The species has been reported in the northern Black Hills and Bear Lodge Mountains (USFS 2006).</td>
<td>G5/S25</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; moist, shaded, forested limestone ravines are not located in project area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern shining willow (Salix lucida)</td>
<td>Eastern shining willow grows in wet to moist sites along streams, rivers, and lakeshores and in seeps, wet meadows, freshwater swamps, and moist alluvial bottomlands. Typically found at middle to high elevations. It dominates many tall willow shrublands, and codominates some riparian mixed-shrublands and mixed-deciduous woodlands. The species is commonly associated with other willows, cottonwoods, and balsam poplar (reference [38]). Eastern shining willow is distributed from Alaska east to Labrador and south to California, Kansas, and North Carolina. There is only one documented occurrence of S. lucida on the Black Hills National Forest. An additional historical (1913) location near Deadwood, SD has not been relocated and is likely extirpated. The single central Black Hills site has two individuals and is in a dense willow (Salix spp.) shrubland floodplain along Rapid Creek at an elevation of 5,140 feet.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; suitable riparian habitat will not be disturbed by the Project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western shining willow (Salix lasiandra var. caudata)</td>
<td>Western shining willow grows in wet to moist sites; along streams, rivers, and lakeshores and in seeps, wet meadows, freshwater swamps, and moist alluvial bottomlands. The species occurs from sea level to 10,000 feet across its range (reference [39]). Western shining willow is widely distributed in western United States and Canada with the Black Hills being the easternmost occurrence of the species. It is mostly absent from dry interior regions of the intermountain west. There are four documented occurrences of western shining willow on the BHNF all of which occur on floodplains or stream banks. Black Hills occurrences range in elevation from 4,260 to 5,620 feet.</td>
<td>G5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; suitable floodplain habitat will not be disturbed by the Project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern showy sedge (Carex bella)</td>
<td>Southwestern showy sedge typical habitat includes streambanks, meadows and moist woods or open slopes at high altitude in the mountains often above timberline (reference [30]). Within the BHNF, southwestern showy sedge is restricted to moist sites at high elevations, about 6,000 feet or higher, most found in damp woods and along low order streams often with partial to full shade. Southwestern showy sedge occurs in the high mountains of Arizona and New Mexico, northern to central Utah, northern Colorado, and South Dakota. In the BHNF, the species is found within the Black Elk Wilderness and in the adjacent Custer State Park (Glisson 2003d). Southwestern showy sedge is known to occur within a two square mile area of the BHNF.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; outside geographical distribution and no high elevation white spruce forests are found in project area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiff clubmoss (Lycopodiun annotinum)</td>
<td>In North America, stiff clubmoss is associated with temperate to sub-arctic boreal forest, dry open coniferous forest, mixed sub-alpine and northern forests, thickets and bogs, and sheltered north-facing slopes. In the BHNF, stiff clubmoss is associated with high moisture microhabitats within remnant boreal spruce habitats that are disjunct from the main distribution of white spruce to the north (Hornbeck 2003h). Stiff clubmoss is distributed across North America from Alaska to Newfoundland south in the Rocky Mountains to Arizona and New Mexico, and in the Appalachians south to Kentucky and North Carolina with disjunct occurrences in Saskatchewan and South Dakota. There are only two currently verified occurrences of stiff clubmoss in the BHNF. One population in Upper Sand Creek Botanical area and the second along Strawberry Creek in Lawrence County (Hornbeck 2003h).</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; boreal white spruce/birch habitat does not occur within the Project area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Botanical Resources

Direction for USFS botanical resources is dictated by laws, regulations, and the Forest Plan. The following are the primary laws and regulations that govern USFS botanical resources management:

- Endangered Species Act of 1973; and
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1970

Impacts to federally listed species are prohibited under the ESA. Impacts to sensitive plant species must be avoided, minimized, and/or mitigated under NEPA.

5.1 Forest Plan Direction

The BHNF Forest Plan identifies standards and guidelines to inform management related to various resources, including botanical resources. As summarized in the Forest Plan, a standard is defined as a limitation on management activities that is within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce (reference [1]). Standards are used to determine if individual projects are in compliance with the Forest Plan. Deviation from the requirement requires a Forest Plan amendment. A guideline is a preferred or advisable course of action. Deviation from a guideline is permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

Forest Plan standards and guidelines for the botanical resources considered applicable to the Project include those related to soil disturbance, rehabilitation and revegetation, and surface water runoff, stream channels, reclamation, and riparian protection. F3 will be required to comply with the applicable standards and guidelines, as described in further detail below, throughout the duration of the Project.

5.1.1 Soil Disturbance

Standard 1105: Limit roads and other disturbed sites to the minimum feasible number, width, and total length consistent with the purpose of specific operations, local topography, and climate.

Standard 1106: Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion.

5.1.2 Rehabilitation and Revegetation

Standard 1109: Reclaim roads and other disturbed sites when use ends, as needed, to prevent resource damage.

Standard 1110: Initiate re-vegetation as soon as possible, not to exceed 6 months after termination of ground-disturbing activities. Re-vegetate all disturbed soils with native species in seed and plant mixtures that are noxious-weed free. On areas needing immediate establishment of vegetation, non-native, non-aggressive annuals (for example, wheat, oats, and rye) or sterile species may be used while native perennials are becoming established, or when native species are not available (for example, during...
drought years when wildfires burn large acreages in the United States). Other aggressive non-native perennials (for example, smooth brome and timothy) would not be used. Seed would be tested for noxious weeds. If mulches are used, they are to be noxious-weed free. Weed-free alfalfa seed may be used only when native legume seed is not available and only when there is extensive disturbance associated with road construction or mine reclamation where topsoil is no longer available.

- **High Elevations Uplands**
  - 25% slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachcaulus*)
  - 30% annual ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*)
  - 10% Canada wildrue (*Elymus Canadensis*)
  - 10% Canby bluegrass (*Poa canbyi*)
  - 20% green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*)
  - 5% purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*) or American vetch (*Vicia Americana*)

- **Low Elevations Uplands**
  - 35% annual ryegrass (*Lolium multiflororum*)
  - 25% slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*)
  - 5% purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*) or American vetch (*Vicia Americana*)
  - 20% any combination of four warm season grasses, including bluegrama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), indiangrass (*Sorghastrum mutans*), or sideoats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)

Guideline 1111. Stabilize, scarify or recontour temporary roads, constructed skid trails, and landings prior to seeding.

### 5.1.3 Surface Water Runoff

Standard 1114: When construction of maintenance level 1 roads, temporary roads, skid trails and landings occur, install structures to divert runoff when needed.

Standard 1115: When ground disturbing or vegetation management occurs, use vegetative buffer strips or barriers to reduce sediment. Determine buffer width between stream and road or trails using equation in Appendix J of the Forest Plan.

### 5.1.4 Stream Channels

Standard 1203: Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to provide for passage of flow and sediment, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life.

### 5.1.5 Reclamation

Standard 1501: A Plan of Operations shall contain proposed reclamation objectives and practices to maintain water quality and soil stability during mining and exploration activities, including post mining
and exploration, and any temporary shutdowns. Reclamation objectives should include the planned uses of the management area or reasons why these uses can no longer be achieved.

Standard 1502: Reclamation will be considered satisfactory when the disturbed area has been reclaimed in accordance with the operating plan.

**5.1.6 Riparian Protection**

Guideline 1506: Minimize disturbance to the riparian area by mineral activities. Initiate timely and effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas and restore riparian areas to a state of productivity comparable to that before disturbance.

a. a. Prohibit the depositing of material from drilling, processing or site preparation in natural drainages.
b. b. Locate the lower edge of disturbed or deposited soil banks outside of natural drainages and riparian areas.
c. c. Prohibit stockpiling of topsoil or any other disturbed soil in natural drainages or riparian areas.
d. d. Prohibit mineral processing (milling) activities within natural drainages or riparian areas.
6 Summary of Potential Effects

Impacts to botanical resources would be minimized by F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines. Additionally, applicant-proposed impact minimization measures would be implemented during all Project activities. This analysis discusses the potential effects resulting from the implementation of the no action alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and the modified proposed action (Alternative C).

6.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A - No Action

Under Alternative A, no vegetation clearing or earth work would occur. Therefore, Alternative A would not result in direct or indirect effects.

6.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B and C

Alternatives B and C would result in direct impacts to botanical resources, including meadows and trees, due to the necessary clearing activities required to construct temporary access roads and for grading some drill pad locations. Alternative B would result in approximately 3.88 acres of temporary vegetation disturbance from the construction of site access, drill pads, and staging areas. Alternative C would result in approximately 6.05 acres of temporary vegetation disturbance from the construction of site access, drill pads, and staging areas. These effects would be temporary and/or negligible.

It is unlikely for sensitive flora species, including federally listed, USFS R2 SS, or SOLC to occur within the Project area, given lack of suitable habitat and/or given their lack of documented occurrences within direct proximity of the Project area.

There is no suitable habitat present within the impact area for the federally listed Leedy's roseroot and; therefore, the determination is there would be no effect to federally listed threatened or endangered species.

Survey of the impact area has not been completed to confirm the absence of sensitive plant species including R2 SS and SOLC; however, there are no known occurrences of the species within the impact area, and in some cases there is not suitable habitat. Therefore, it was determined the Alternative B and C may adversely affect R2 SS individuals, but they are not likely to result in a loss of viability in the Project area, nor cause a trend toward federal listing for any of the R2 SS as summarized in Table 6-1.

There are no known occurrences of plant SOLC in the Project area. Due to the small scale of the proposed project in relation to habitats available across the BHNF, SOLC are likely to persist because the proposed project is consistent with Forest Plan direction for SOLC habitats, and therefore Objective 221 (conserve or enhance habitat for ... species of local concern).
Table 6-1  Summary of Potential Effects by Alternative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
<th>Alternative C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leedy’s roseroot (<em>Rhodiola integrifolia ssp. Leedyi</em>)</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn willow (<em>Salix serissima</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII¹</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloodroot (<em>Sanguinaria canadensis</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxtail sedge (<em>Carex alopecoidea</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giant helleborine (<em>Epipactis gigantea</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great-spurred violet (<em>Viola selkirkii</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highbush cranberry (<em>Viburnum opulus var. americanum</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large round-leaf orchid (<em>Platanthera orbiculata</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain lady’s slipper (<em>Cypripedium montanum</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrowleaf peatmoss (<em>Sphagnum angustifolium</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie moonwort (<em>Botrychium campestre</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage willow (<em>Salix candida</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailing clubmoss (<em>Lycopodium complanatum</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow lady’s slipper (<em>Cypripedium parviflorum</em>)</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>No Effect</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ MAII – May adversely impact individuals but not likely to result in a loss of viability in the Planning area nor cause a trend toward federal listing

6.3 Cumulative Effects

The following section provides an assessment of the potential cumulative effects on sensitive flora species from implementation of the Project and the potential interaction with the effects on these resources from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Because the potential effects to sensitive flora species are comparable for Alternative B and Alternative C, they are discussed together with regard for their potential for cumulative effects.

6.3.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area’s existing landscape. Present and foreseeable future activities may contribute to effects on federally listed species and USFS Region 2 sensitive species. The effects of present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B or Alternative C could potentially result in cumulative effects on federally listed species and USFS Region 2 sensitive species. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.
**Foreseeable Future Projects**

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New radio tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses

**6.3.2 Cumulative Effects to Botany**

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), and F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines, the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on federally listed species and USFS Region 2 sensitive species or SOLC.
References


Appendix D

Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/ Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/ Biological Evaluation and Technical Report

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project

Prepared for
United States Forest Service

May 2022
# Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.1 Purpose and Need .......................................................................................................................................................... 1  
   1.2 Project Area Location .................................................................................................................................................... 2  
2 Alternatives............................................................................................................................................................................. 4  
   2.1 Alternative A – No Action ............................................................................................................................................ 4  
   2.2 Alternative B – Proposed Action .................................................................................................................................. 4  
      2.2.1 Drilling and Staging .................................................................................................................................................. 4  
      2.2.2 Site Access ............................................................................................................................................................. 5  
      2.2.3 Proposed Equipment ............................................................................................................................................... 5  
      2.2.4 Vegetation and Soil Removal ............................................................................................................................... 6  
      2.2.5 Reclamation ............................................................................................................................................................. 6  
      2.2.6 Monitoring and Implementation ......................................................................................................................... 6  
      2.2.7 Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures .................................................................................. 7  
   2.3 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action ........................................................................................................... 9  
3 Existing Conditions ............................................................................................................................................................13  
   3.1 Wildlife Data Sources ..................................................................................................................................................13  
4 Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation of Federally Protected and Region 2 Sensitive Species ...................................................................................................................................................................................................15  
   4.1 Federally Protected Wildlife and Fish Species ...................................................................................................15  
      4.1.1 Northern Long-Eared Bat .....................................................................................................................................15  
      4.1.2 Whooping Crane ....................................................................................................................................................16  
      4.1.3 Rufa Red Knot ...........................................................................................................................................................16  
      4.1.4 Bald Eagle ..............................................................................................................................................................16  
   4.2 U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species ...................................................................................................16  
   4.3 Potential Effects .............................................................................................................................................................22  
   4.4 Effects of Alternative A – No Action .......................................................................................................................22  
   4.5 General Effects of Alternative B and C ..................................................................................................................22  
      4.5.1 Potential Effects on Federally Protected Threatened and Endangered Species ..............................................23
List of Tables

Table 2-1  Summary of Applicant-Proposed Minimization Measures................................................................. 7
Table 2-2  Summary of Alternative C Additional Impact Minimization Measures ........................................ 11
Table 4-1  USFS Region 2 Sensitive Species that could occur within or adjacent to the Project Area 18
Table 4-2  Potential Effects on USFS Region 2 Sensitive Species .............................................................. 25
Table 5-1  Wildlife Species of Local Concern that could be Present within or adjacent to the Project Area .......................................................................................................................... 29
Table 5-2  Management Indicator Species that could occur with or adjacent to the Project area ...... 32
Table 5-3  Potential Effects on Species of Local Concern ........................................................................ 35
Table 5-4  Potential Effects on Management Indicator Species ............................................................. 38

List of Figures

Figure 1-1  Project Location Map .................................................................................................................. 3
Figure 2-1  Alternative B and C Overview ................................................................................................. 12
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>amsl</td>
<td>above mean sea level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Biological Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Biological Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHNF</td>
<td>Black Hills National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Endangered Species Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPaC</td>
<td>Information Planning and Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Management Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>Management Indicator Species</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFMA</td>
<td>National Forest Management Act</td>
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<td>NFSR</td>
<td>National Forest System Road</td>
</tr>
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<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resource Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHV</td>
<td>off highway vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Plan of Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLC</td>
<td>Species of Local Concern</td>
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<td>USFS</td>
<td>U.S. Forest Service</td>
</tr>
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<td>USFWS</td>
<td>U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIZ</td>
<td>water influence zone</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

This document contains a wildlife and fisheries Biological Assessment (BA)/Biological Evaluation (BE) and a technical report to assess the potential effects of F3 Gold’s, LLC (F3) Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project (Project) on sensitive wildlife and fisheries resources. The Project is located on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands within the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) in South Dakota (Figure 1-1).

This report describes the Project, alternatives, and existing conditions. The next part of this document (Section 4) is the BA/BE, which assesses the potential effects of the Project on federally listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species and their habitats, as well as USFS Region 2 sensitive species and their habitats (reference (1)). This BA/BE meets the requirements of section 7(a)(2) of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, which requires federal agencies to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species, or result in the adverse modification of critical habitat and follows the standards established in the Forest Service Manual direction (2672.42). This document also meets the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), which requires that the USFS manage wildlife and fish habitat to maintain viable populations of existing native and desired non-native vertebrate species in the planning area and ensures that its actions do not contribute to trends toward federal listing. This document tiers directly to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Black Hills Forest Plan (reference (2)) and the Phase II Amendment to the Forest Plan (reference (3)).

The final part of the document (Section 5) is the wildlife and fisheries technical report. This technical report assesses the potential effects of the Project on Species of Local Concern (SOLC) (reference (4)) and Management Indicator Species (MIS) to ensure the Project is consistent with the 1997 BHNF Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), as amended by the 2006 Phase II amendment (reference (3)). The Forest Plan is required by the rules implementing the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Act of 1974, as amended by the NFMA.

The Forest Plan, as amended, provides management direction for all resource management activities on the BHNF. In regard to wildlife and fisheries resources, the Forest Plan establishes goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines for maintaining an appropriate mix and balance of habitats that support populations that will be sustainable and would not result in any individual species trending toward or becoming listed as threatened or endangered.

1.1 Purpose and Need

F3 has submitted a PO proposing exploration drilling on National Forest System Lands open to mineral location. F3 has a statutory right to perform exploration drilling as proposed per the General Mining Act of 1872. The USFS administers exploration and development on National Forest System lands under mining regulations defined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228, Subpart A. Entities wishing to undertake mineral exploration are required to submit a PO for review by the District Ranger.
The purpose of the exploration drilling is to identify the geological resources located with the Project area. The need for this Project relates to F3’s statutory right to access for exploration purposes. F3 is seeking USFS authorization of their proposal to exercise their rights under current mining laws to perform exploration drilling while minimizing environmental effects in accordance with USFS regulations for locatable minerals.

The Forest Service’s purpose is to decide whether to approve F3’s proposed PO and, if approved, what requirements are appropriate to minimize impacts on surface resources in accordance with 36 CFR 228, subpart A. After evaluating the proposed PO, the Forest Service determined that approving the proposed mining plan of operations would be a major Federal action subject to the National Environmental Policy Act as defined in 40 CFR 1508.1. Accordingly, the Forest Service prepared an Environmental Assessment, which this report is a part of.

The need for the Forest Service’s action is to comply with regulations governing the use of surface resources for operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands under 36 CFR 228, subpart A. These regulations require that the Forest Service respond to parties who submit a proposed plan of operations for approval to conduct operations authorized by the United States mining laws on National Forest System lands for part or all of their planned actions including mining, mineral processing, and uses reasonably incident thereto. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the submittal of F3’s proposed PO requires the Forest Service to consider whether to approve the proposed mining plan of operations or to require changes or additions necessary for the plan to meet the purpose of the regulations for locatable mineral operations.

### 1.2 Project Area Location

The Project area is located north of Silver City and includes all or portions of Sections 19, 30, 31, T2N R5E and Sections 13, 14, 24, 25, T2N R4E, Black Hills Meridian, Pennington County, South Dakota (Figure 1-1).
2 Alternatives

2.1 Alternative A - No Action

The NEPA (40 CFR 1502.14) requires a study of the No Action Alternative to use as a basis for comparing the effects of the proposed action and other action alternatives. Under the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), the USFS would not approve F3’s plan of operations (PO) to conduct exploration drilling activities. There would be no environmental effects associated with Alternative A. However, Alternative A does not meet the Project’s purpose and need to allow F3 to access and explore for minerals on lands open to the public domain in accordance with the General Mining Act of 1872.

2.2 Alternative B - Proposed Action

Alternative B is the proposed action as described in the PO submitted by F3. Alternative B includes diamond core drilling at up to 42 drill sites, access road maintenance (as needed), drill pad clearing (as needed), and reclamation activities (Figure 2-1). Alternative B would require an amendment to the Forest Plan to allow three drill pads in Management Area (MA) 8.2. The Forest Plan designates that no new mineral development (including exploratory drilling to inform future mineral development) is allowed and the majority of the MA around Pactola Lake has been withdrawn from mineral entry (reference (3)). The USFS would be required to prepare a Project specific amendment to the Forest Plan to authorize the drilling activities, despite the F3-proposed drilling locations coinciding with one of the areas that has not been withdrawn from mineral entry.

2.2.1 Drilling and Staging

Each drill site would have a maximum footprint of approximately 2,500 square feet (0.06 acres), where the drilling rig, rod tray, support vehicles, portable cutting tank, and water truck will be placed. Drill holes would range from 500 to 6,000 feet in depth dependent on the results of each hole. Although depths up to 6,000 feet would be authorized, very few holes are planned to extend to this depth; most holes would be drilled to a depth of approximately 1,000 feet. Exploration drilling involves drilling holes vertically and at an angle from the surface. That angle can vary between -90 degrees (vertical) and -45 degrees. Once the angle is set, the drill will remain at that angle until completion of the drill hole. Directional drilling that controls the direction of the boring during drilling (as commonly used in oil and gas development) or horizontal drilling methods will not be used. The number of holes drilled on each drill pad will depend on the findings in the field, with the average drill pad having one to two holes and some having up to four holes. Depending on the results of preceding drill holes, some of the drill sites may not end up being required and would ultimately not be constructed. Drilling operations would take place 24-hours a day divided between two 12-hour shifts. Two staging areas (0.25 acres each) would be used to store equipment and tools. Drill pads and staging areas would result in 3.0 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Drill pad locations were selected based on local geology, subsurface target concepts, and surface conditions that allow F3 to best test its scientific theories while minimizing surface disturbance.

The drilling process proposed by F3 would use water mixed with industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds or other natural and/or biodegradable additives to more efficiently and
safely drill and seal boreholes. No other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling. Any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters. Water would be trucked from the municipal or industrial source to storage holding tanks either at a drill site and/or one of the staging areas. Approximately 5,000 to 10,000 gallons of water would be used per day per drill rig. During drilling activities, water would be circulated using a water pump with water lines transporting water from the storage tanks to the drill site. At the end of drilling operations, excess water would be disposed of at a municipal wastewater disposal location, in agreement with the municipality.

Drill cuttings and used water would be recovered and collected in tanks at the drill site. Settlement would be used to separate the cuttings, allowing the water to be reused in the drilling process. Upon completion of a drill hole, the cuttings would be either thin-spread and buried beneath the topsoil (which is the industry standard for low-sulfur cuttings management in the western U.S.) or transported off-site to an approved disposal location. Spread drill cutting depth would be dependent on hole depth with most sites resulting in a spread drill cuttings depth of 0.25 inches; however, some sites (holes up to 6,000 feet deep) may result in up to approximately 1.50 inches of drill cuttings spread across the drill pad. Topsoil would be placed on on-site cuttings and reseeded/replanted to match surrounding vegetation. Burying cuttings on-site allows the cuttings to be protected from erosion until vegetation is re-established. Drill pads would be reclaimed upon completion of all drilling activities, as one reclamation effort at the end.

2.2.2 Site Access

Main access from the north would be from NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via county Highway 237 (Rochford Road). The primary access from the south would be from NFSR 671 (Sunnyside Gulch Road) or NFSR 261 (Jenny Gulch Road) via Silver City Road. Additional NFSRs that are anticipated to be used for access include NFSR 261, 720.2B, 671, 141.2B, and 261.2B. National Forest System Trails (NFST) 6207, 6209, and 6210 are also anticipated to be used for access, all of which allow motorized vehicle use (Figure 1-1). Approximately 5,280 feet (one mile) of existing local roadways noted above would be used to access Project features. In addition, approximately 4,700 linear feet (0.89 miles) of 8-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access route may be constructed for drill site access, resulting in less than 1 acre of additional temporary surface disturbance. These temporary overland trails would be obliterated and returned to natural conditions after Project completion. Existing access roads and overland trails would be improved only if needed and only to the extent necessary to gain access to the site.

2.2.3 Proposed Equipment

F3 proposes to use the following equipment to complete drilling and associated restoration of the Project:

- One to four diamond drill rigs
- Drill rod racks with drill pipe and casing pipe
- Six to eight four-wheel drive pickup trucks for access to drilling sites
- Four all-terrain vehicles for access to drilling sites
- Two snowmobiles for access to drilling sites (for winter use only)
• One water truck, as needed to fill water storage tanks
• One excavator
• One dozer
• One skid-steer
• One to three water storage tanks, up to 10,000 gallons in size
• Up to four water supply pumps
• Water line/hose, mud pump, and mixing tanks for grouting and/or cementing drill holes.

Drilling equipment (i.e., drill rigs, drill rod racks, drill pipe, casing pipe) would be used at each drilling site as this equipment is needed to perform the drilling. Other equipment, such as the excavator, dozer, and skid-steer would be used on an as-needed basis to facilitate access, maintenance, and reclamation. When not in use, this equipment would be stored at one of the staging areas.

2.2.4 Vegetation and Soil Removal

Tree clearing and other vegetation removal would be limited to only that which is needed to facilitate access. Any soils that may need to be removed for pad clearing would be stockpiled for later use in site reclamation.

2.2.5 Reclamation

Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per Administrative Rules of South Dakota 74:11:08.

Drill pads and staging areas would be reclaimed upon completion of drilling by re-grading the pads to pre-Project contours and reseeding with Black Hills reclamation seed mix, as noted in the PO. Safety signage would be removed from the area, and stockpiled soils would be either spread over the drill pad area, stacked in soil-free piles, or disposed off-site at an approved facility. Overland trails used for access to drill pads would be re-seeded and returned to pre-existing conditions under the direction of the USFS.

2.2.6 Monitoring and Implementation

F3 would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USFS as part of the EA decision. In addition, F3 will be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the Project. F3 is required to submit a reclamation plan to the USFS prior to authorization for Project initiation in accordance with USFS Manual 2840. In addition, F3 is responsible for submitting a reclamation bond to the USFS for the Project, with the bond amount determined by the USFS. F3’s PO would be administered by the USFS Minerals Specialist, and other governmental entities with permitting authority will be responsible for enforcing their permit conditions as they deem appropriate. Sites will be monitored for a minimum of three years after reclamation.
2.2.7 Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures

As part of their Plan of Operations, F3 intends to implement impact minimization measures into Project design, as summarized in Table 2-1. These measures have been developed in response to comments received during the Project scoping process.

Table 2-1    Summary of Applicant-Proposed Minimization Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Applicant-Proposed Impact Minimization Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Access and Transportation    | • Overland trails used for access would be regraded and reseeded as directed by USFS.  
                                 • Any unexpected road damage would be repaired as soon as possible based on contractor availability.  
                                 • Contractor equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities.  
                                 • Traffic to and from the drill sites would be limited to site set-up, driller shift changes, management oversight, sample pickup, and site restoration.  
                                 • Additional safety signage (construction use, warning signs, drill signs, trucks entering signs, etc.) would be posted throughout the work area to communicate construction equipment use of the road. |
| Botanical Resources/Reclamation | • Tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary. In areas where tree removal is unavoidable, the affected area would be reseeded/replanted as part of reclamation with Black Hills seed mix.  
                                 • Disturbed areas would be reclaimed and reseeded according to USFS standards.                                                                                                                                                             |
| Fisheries and Wildlife       | • Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnyside Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15 – August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.  
                                 • Drill sites would not be located in limestone areas to avoid potential vertigo snail habitat disturbance. In addition, protection of the WIZ surrounding streams/seeps/springs would also provide protection for vertigo snails.  
                                 • Drilling within 500-feet of a known bat roost location would occur outside the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31). Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger. |
### Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry & Soils

- Holding tanks would be used to store drilling water rather than sumps to minimize potential for sedimentation and infiltration.
- All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.
- Materials used for the Project would be stored either at staging areas or at the drill sites; materials would not be stored along access roads or other locations.
- Any soils that may need to be removed for clearing drill pads or staging areas would be stockpiled on-site for later use in site reclamation.
- Upon completion of a drill hole, the drill cuttings and fines would be dispersed in the disturbed area.
- Topsoil would be placed on cuttings and reseeded/replanted as necessary to match surrounding vegetation.
- Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities.
- Drilling would primarily require the use of water. In addition to water, F3 may also use industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds, or other natural and/or biodegradable additives, during drilling to more efficiently and safely drill and seal boreholes. No other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling. Rock core, water, and fine-grained rock drill cuttings generated by drilling would be stored in holding tanks. Water would be recycled back into the drilling process, and drill cuttings would be disposed as noted above.

### Hydrology – Water Quality/Quantity

- The only fluids used for the Project are fuel (for vehicles/machinery), oil (for vehicles/machinery), water, and industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and muds or other natural and/or biodegradable additives.
- All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.
- Water would not be extracted from local surface waters; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source.
- Upon completion of drilling at each hole, the hole would be capped, sealed, and plugged per Administrative Rules of South Dakota 74:11:08. Drill holes would be sealed within 24 to 48 hours of drilling completion prior to moving the drill rig.
- Casing will be used, when necessary, to protect groundwater in unconsolidated, surficial geologic units. The need for casing is expected to be minimal as most drilling is proposed directly on bedrock with little to no soil or surficial geologic units.
### Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Health and Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Residences in close proximity to drilling activities would be notified prior to Project initiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An emergency response plan would be developed for the Project and would be provided to local first responders in advance of Project initiation. This plan would be developed in coordination with local first responders and would address a number of emergency situations (i.e., fire, injury, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All drilling sites and staging areas would be equipped with spill kits to immediately address any fuel or oil spill. All fuels and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All vehicles, drill rigs, and other on-site equipment would be inspected as part of daily safety checks and will be equipped with more than one fire extinguisher, which would also be inspected routinely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A site security plan would be developed to maintain site safety and limit risk of public interference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3 Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action

Alternative C was developed in response to issues identified during Project scoping. This alternative meets the Project’s purpose and need in a way that implements siting factors (i.e., factors that influence where features are sited or positioned) and additional mitigation measures to further minimize Project effects. The additional measures or siting differences included in Alternative C are summarized below. Specifically, Alternative C has been developed to minimize effects by avoiding cultural resources, eliminating the need for a Forest Plan Amendment, as discussed below, and to minimize effects to the water influence zone (WIZ). In order to minimize effects, additional drilling pads would be needed to achieve a comparable level of data collection as explained below.

Alternative C proposes drilling 47 exploration drilling pads as shown in Figure 21; this number of drill pads in combination with the two staging areas would result in 3.3 acres of temporary surface disturbance. Alternative C relocates 5 drilling pads, one staging area, and associated access roads proposed in Alternative B to avoid effects to cultural resources; however, F3 has determined that additional drilling pads are needed to collect an equivalent level of information compared to Alternative B. Under Alternative C, approximately 5,700 feet (1.1 mile) of existing local roadways would be used to access Project features. In addition, up to approximately 9,925 linear feet (1.88 miles) of 12-foot wide temporary overland trails and/or temporary access route may be developed for drill site access, resulting in up to approximately 2.73 acres of additional temporary surface disturbance as compared to Alternative B. Alternative C would require a 12-foot wide access corridor to accommodate the more rugged terrain traversed compared to Alternative B.

Existing USFS administrative roads not open for public use (i.e., administrative roads), as defined in the USFS 2010 Travel Management Record of Decision, would be used to access sites to the extent practicable; in some cases, this may include travel through the WIZ on existing administrative roads. Locations accessed through the WIZ would be planned for winter construction to the extent practicable; however, should site conditions at the time of construction warrant these administrative roads unusable.
(i.e., flooding in the WIZ or another reason), three drilling pads (SPC-045, SPC-046, and SPC-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ; this shift has been accounted for in the access road measurements provided above. The use of alternate drill pad and access road locations would require coordination with and authorization by USFS engineers and the District Ranger.

As mentioned above in Section 2.2, Alternative B includes three drilling sites in an area designated by the Forest Plan as MA 8.2, Developed Recreation Complexes. Alternative C relocates these three drilling sites from MA 8.2 to avoid the need for a Project-specific Forest Plan amendment.

Alternative B includes three drilling sites immediately adjacent to USFS-identified WIZ. A WIZ is a designated zone adjacent to stream channels and other waterbodies for which focused efforts are made to maintain and improve water quality or other water and riparian dependent values such as habitat, recreation, and visual and aesthetic quality. In the interest of maintaining the integrity of established WIZ areas and minimizing water quality and recreation concerns, Alternative C relocates three drill sites outside of WIZ areas. To avoid the need for tree clearing and construction of new temporary site access, as mentioned above, it is possible that the WIZ may be crossed during frozen conditions to access certain drilling sites. If the WIZ is impassable without causing considerable damage to soils, wetlands, and other resources, three drilling pads immediately adjacent to the WIZ (SPC-45, SPC-46, and SPC-47) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. This would be determined on a case by case basis and in coordination with the Forest Service hydrologist, engineers, PO administrator and District Ranger.

The impact minimization measures noted in Table 2-1 would be applied to both Alternative B and Alternative C; however, Alternative C would also include impact minimization measures beyond those noted in Table 2-1; these additional impact minimization measures are summarized in Table 2-2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Additional Impact Minimization Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botanical Resources/Reclamation</td>
<td>• Each drill pad and temporary overland access route would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use rather than upon completion of all drilling activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural/Heritage Resources</td>
<td>• Relocates drilling pads and access roads to avoid potential cultural resources conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>• Drilling pads within 500 feet of a residence would limit drilling to one, 12-hour daytime shift (7:00am – 7:00pm) to mitigate nighttime noise potential. This applies to drill pads SCP-012 and SCP-020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology – Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>• Alternative C includes a provision that the WIZ may be crossed during frozen conditions to access certain sites; however, if seasonal conditions indicate the WIZ is impassable without causing considerable damage to soils, wetlands, and other resources, the three drilling pads immediately adjacent to the WIZ (SPC-045, SPC-046, and SPC-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. The use of alternate drill pad and access road locations would require coordination with and authorization by USFS engineers and the District Ranger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Recreation and Travel Management     | • Alternative C relocates three drill pads from MA 8.2, which is managed for recreational opportunities and visual qualities adjacent to developed recreation sites and bodies of water.  
• Alternative C relocates three drill pads (SPC-45, SPC-46, and SPC-47) from WIZ areas in the interest of maintaining WIZ integrity and minimizing water quality and recreation concerns. |
**ALTERNATIVE B AND C OVERVIEW**

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

**FIGURE 2-1**

Drill Pad (Alternative B)
Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Alternate Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Staging Area (Alternative B)
Staging Area (Alternative C)
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used
Proposed Access Routes (Alternative B)
Proposed Access Routes (Alternative C)
New Access Route
Alternate New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route

Imagery: USDA-FSA NAIP (2020)
3 Existing Conditions

The Project is located within the BHNF, which consists of 1.2 million acres of forested hills and mountains in western South Dakota. Elevations range from 4,700 feet above mean sea level (amsl), at the southern part of the Project area, to 5,500 feet amsl near the northwestern part of the Project area.

The Black Hills region has a continental climate that experiences very hot summers and very cold winters. According to the Köppen Climate Classification, the Project area is within a warm-summer humid continental climate (reference (5)). The Black Hills tend to have a higher mean temperature and receive more precipitation annually than the surrounding Great Plains. Hill City, a town close to the Project area with accessible climate data, has an annual high temperature of 82° Fahrenheit (F) and an annual low of 12° (F), with an average of 21 inches of rainfall annually and 58 inches of snow annually (reference (6)).

The landscape within the Project area is dominated by forest, with some meadows also present. The predominant forest type is ponderosa pine, with ponderosa pine/quaking aspen and white spruce and quaking aspen forest also present. The meadow communities are typically found in the narrower drainage bottoms surrounded by forest, often with ponderosa pine encroaching. Meadows are generally composed of grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Grasses are often introduced species.

Wildlife species inhabiting the Project area are those species that are well-habituated to ponderosa pine forest communities, such as small to medium sized mammals (e.g., squirrels, fox, and deer), large ungulates (e.g., bighorn sheep, elk, migratory birds, raptors), and several insect species. Fisheries species inhabiting the Project area include species that are habituated to small mountain streams, such as various minnow species. Trout (e.g., brown trout and rainbow trout) are stocked annually by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks.

3.1 Wildlife Data Sources

Several data sources were used in identifying sensitive wildlife and fisheries resources in the Project area and its vicinity. These data sources, which were obtained from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Barr Engineering Co. (Barr) field surveys, USFS field surveys, and communication with USFS personnel, assisted in the assessment of potential effects to federally listed species, USFS Region 2 sensitive species, SOLC, and MIS. Data sources include:

- USFWS Information Planning and Conservation (IPaC);
- Wildlife Areas to Protect (buffers around important habitat; USFS shapefile);
- NRM Wildlife Data Sets (USFS shapefiles):
  - Wildlife Observation Point/Wildlife Site Point;
  - Wildlife Observation Polygon/Wildlife Site Polygon;
- Special Management Areas (USFS shapefiles);
• Bald Eagle Nesting Habitat Buffer;
• Managed Goshawk Stands;
• Big Game Winter Range;
• Bighorn Sheep Range;
• Marten Connectivity (areas where American marten will use as breeding habitat and corridors to facilitate movement);
• Late Successional Landscape; and
• Developed Recreation Management Area;

• Mine Atlas Points (USFS shapefile);
• Undocumented mine shafts/adits (Barr field survey; reference (7)) with associated USFS review of sites for bat habitat; and
• Wildlife Timing Restrictions (timing restrictions based on USFWS Raptor Guidance and Forest Plan Direction; USFS shapefile).
4 Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation of Federally Protected and Region 2 Sensitive Species

This section identifies the federally protected and Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species that have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Project area and the potential effects on these species from the Project. This Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation is prepared in accordance with legal requirements set forth under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended, and follows standards established in Forest Service manual direction (2672.42). The Regional Forester issued a revised sensitive species list for the Rocky Mountain Region (reference (1)).

4.1 Federally Protected Wildlife and Fish Species

The ESA of 1973 defines a federally endangered species as a species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a major portion of its range (reference (8)). A federally threatened species is defined as any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a major portion of its range. A species proposed for listing is a species for which there is sufficient information on its biological status and threats to propose it as endangered or threatened. Critical habitat is defined as the specific areas within the geographic area, occupied by the species at the time it was listed, that contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species and that may need special management or protection (reference (8)).

The USFWS IPaC System was queried in April 2021 to obtain a list of federally protected species that could potentially be present within the vicinity of the Project area. The IPaC query identified one federally endangered and two federally threatened species known to occur in Pennington County that have the potential to be present in the Project area; these include:

- Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), a threatened mammal;
- Whooping crane (*Grus americana*), an endangered bird; and
- Red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), a threatened bird.

The IPaC query did not identify any designated critical habitat within or near the Project area for any of the federally protected species.

4.1.1 Northern Long-Eared Bat

The northern long-eared bat is a medium-sized bat that hibernates in caves and mines in the winter, and in the summer roosts singly or in colonies under the bark or in cracks and crevices of trees. The northern long-eared bat is relatively widespread in the U.S.; however, it is listed as a federally threatened species because populations are declining due to a fungal pathogen that causes white-nose syndrome. Trees, crevices, and abandoned mines within the Project area may provide suitable habitat for the northern long-eared bat (reference (7)).
4.1.2 Whooping Crane

The whooping crane is the tallest bird in North America. In the U.S., this species is found throughout the Midwest from North Dakota south to Texas and west into Colorado (reference (9)). Whooping cranes migrate through South Dakota along a band running from the south central to the north central parts of the state. They use shallow, seasonally, and semi-permanently flooded palustrine (marshy) wetlands for roosting and various cropland and emergent wetlands for feeding. During migration, whooping cranes are often recorded in riverine habitats. Currently there are three wild populations of whooping cranes in the U.S., one of which is naturally reproducing. The major threats to the whooping crane include habitat degradation, low productivity associated with drought, and mortality from collisions with powerlines along lengthy migratory routes (reference (10)). Habitat suitable for whooping cranes is present in the Project area; however, whooping cranes have not been documented in the Black Hills National Forest.

4.1.3 Rufa Red Knot

The rufa red knot is a small to medium sized shorebird that migrates long distances between summer in the Canadian arctic and wintering grounds in the southern United States to South America (reference (11)). The long migration routes require regular stopover points, referred to as staging areas, for feeding. Rufa red knots return every year to these staging areas, among which are the North Atlantic seaboard horseshoe crab breeding grounds, where the birds feed on crab eggs. Commercial fisheries in these areas, however, have significantly reduced the production of horseshoe crab eggs, which has been a major factor in the decline of the species and has prevented the red rufa from being able to maintain viable population levels. There are no documented observations of rufa red knot in the Black Hills National Forest, nor does the Project area provide suitable stopover habitat for rufa red knot.

4.1.4 Bald Eagle

In addition to the federally protected species summarized above, bald eagles have been documented within the vicinity of the Project area. Although bald eagles were removed from the federal list of threatened and endangered species in 2007, they are still protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. These acts prohibit the “take” or disturbance of bald eagles. The biggest threats to bald eagles include environmental contamination and human disturbance (reference (12)).

The bald eagle is a large raptor that can be found throughout North America. Most bald eagles breed in Canada and the northern U.S. and move south in winter (reference (12)). They typically nest in large trees near bodies of water or large rivers. There is potential bald eagle nest habitat near Pactola Lake, approximately 0.25 mile south of the Project area; however, no nests have been documented during field surveys.

4.2 U.S. Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species

Within the USFS, Regional Foresters identify native plants and animals (“sensitive” species) that show evidence of decline and potential sensitivity to national forest and national grassland activities and management (reference (13)). The USFS provides special management attention to these species to
conserve them on the lands and watersheds they manage to avoid contributing to their continued decline and eventual need for listing under the federal ESA. Within the BHNF, there are 33 USFS Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species.

Table 4-1 summarizes the 33 BHNF Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species and whether there is potential for them or their habitat to be present within the Project area. As identified in Table 4-1, 17 of the 33 BHNF Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species are known to occur within or near the Project area or have suitable habitat present within or near the Project area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name (Scientific Name)</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</th>
<th>Documented Distribution</th>
<th>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</th>
<th>Species Potentially Present</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Present</th>
<th>Potential for Effect and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American marten (Martes americana)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Late-successional spruce pine forests with complex near-ground structures including rock outcroppings, boulders, or tree snags.</td>
<td>Broadly distributed across the mountain ranges of the western U.S. It extends from the spruce-fir forests that dominate northern New Mexico to the northern forests in arctic Canada and Alaska.</td>
<td>G5/NA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Several breeding areas/corridors are present in the Project area (USFS Marten Connectivity shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-tailed prairie dog (Cynomys ludovicianus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Short and mixed-grass prairie with soils conducive to burrowing.</td>
<td>Primarily a Great Plains species.</td>
<td>G4T2/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringed myotis (Myotis thysanodes)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Dry coniferous forests with ponderosa pine, white spruce and quaking aspen that have peeling bark and large snags for roosting habitat. Rock crevices, caves, abandoned mines, and buildings provide cover for roosting and hibernating bats. During the evenings, these species feed in open meadow habitats, standing water, and along riparian corridors.</td>
<td>Across the intermountain west and along the Pacific coast. This bat species is known to occur year-round within the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G4T2/S2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Based on field review suitable habitat is present. Bat roosts are present in the Project area and have a 500-foot buffer around them (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoary bat (Lasiurus cinereus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Forests with trees that provide peeling bark and large snags for roosting habitat. During the evenings, these species feed in open meadow habitats, standing water, and along riparian corridors.</td>
<td>Across North and South America. Known to occur in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G3/S5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Based on field review suitable habitat is present. Bat roosts are present in the Project area and have a 500-foot buffer around them (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis canadensis)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Areas of steep or gentle slopes, broken cliffs, rock outcroppings, and canyons along riverbeds and mesa tops. They can be found grazing in open meadow habitats or clear-cut areas of mixed deciduous and coniferous forests. Bighorn sheep are known to lamb in areas of very steep terrain and the ewes will return to the same lambing grounds year after year.</td>
<td>Western mountain ranges of North America, with some outliers located in the badlands of North Dakota and the Black Hills of South Dakota. Most populations undergo seasonal migrations, going from larger upland areas in the summer to more concentrated valleys during the winter.</td>
<td>G4/S4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. A bighorn sheep summer use area is present in the southern part of Project area (USFS Bighorn Sheep Range shapefile). A lambing area is present in the southern edge of the Project area (USFS Wildlife Timing Restrictions shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend’s big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Open pine forests with trees that have peeling bark and large snags for roosting habitat. Rock crevices, caves, abandoned mines, and buildings provide cover for roosting and hibernating bats. During the evenings, these species feed over sagebrush dominated grasslands and along riparian corridors.</td>
<td>Found across western North America, and in two distinct populations across the central and eastern U.S. The western population’s easternmost extent reaches the Black Hills and Wyoming. This species is known to occur year-round within the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G3G4/S2S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Based on field review suitable habitat is present. Bat roosts are present in the Project area and have a 500-foot buffer around them (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift fox (Vulpes velox)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Shortgrass and mid-grass prairies, and sagebrush. They select low-growing vegetation, relatively flat terrain, friable soils and areas of high den availability and near roads.</td>
<td>From Wyoming south throughout eastern Colorado, western Kansas, the Oklahoma Panhandle, eastern New Mexico, and part of the extreme northern panhandle of Texas, with scattered, disjunct populations in Montana, South Dakota, and Nebraska.</td>
<td>G3/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name (Scientific Name)</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</td>
<td>Documented Distribution</td>
<td>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-backed woodpecker (Picoides arcticus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Coniferous forests, especially in areas with standing dead trees such as burns, bogs, and windfalls. Nesting occurs in cavities of dead or live trees.</td>
<td>from western and central Alaska to northern Saskatchewan and central Labrador, south to southeastern British Columbia, central California, northwestern Wyoming, southwestern South Dakota, central Saskatchewan, northern Minnesota, southeastern Ontario, and northern New England.</td>
<td>G5/S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. A documented black-backed woodpecker nest is present along northern edge of Project area (NRM observation point shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrowing owl (Athene cuculina)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Short/mixed grass prairie, usually associated with ground squirrels or prairie dogs.</td>
<td>Southern Canada into the western half of the U.S. and down to Central America.</td>
<td>G4/S3B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferruginous hawk (Buteo regalis)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Open grasslands, shrub-steppe, croplands, desert.</td>
<td>Western parts of Canada and the U.S.</td>
<td>G4/S3B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flammulated owl (Psiloscops flammeolus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Grasslands of intermediate height and are often associated with clumped vegetation interspersed with patches of bare ground.</td>
<td>Most of the U.S. east of the Rockies, southern U.S., and Central America.</td>
<td>G5/S4B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis's woodpecker (Melanerpes lewis)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Open ponderosa pine forests and fire maintained old growth forests. Nesting requires large snags commonly found in burned stands of forest. During the remainder of the nonbreeding season, they can be found in areas with large acorn and nut crops of deciduous forests.</td>
<td>Common across much of the intermountain west. The Black Hills is the easternmost distribution of the breeding range for the Lewis's woodpecker.</td>
<td>G4/S3B/S3N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loggerhead shrike (Lanius ludovicianus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Open landscapes that have short vegetation, including pastureland with fenced section lines, mowed road ditches, agricultural fields, riparian areas, and open woodlands. They are most commonly found in areas where there are scattered thick and thorny shrubs, which provide nesting, hunting perches, and prey impalement locations.</td>
<td>Found across the U.S. and Mexico. Overwinter in Mexico or the southern U.S. The loggerhead shrike is a breeding resident of South Dakota.</td>
<td>G4/S3S4B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-billed curlew (Numenius americanus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Short and mixed-grass prairie habitat with flat to rolling topography. Found at lower elevations of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>Western Canada and western and southeastern U.S.</td>
<td>G5/S3B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain plover (Charadrius montanus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Large, flat grasslands with sparse, short vegetation (shrub) and bare ground.</td>
<td>Breeding range is southeast Wyoming. No known occurrences in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G3/SX</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Northern goshawk (Accipiter gentilis)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>A variety of forest types and ages with various structural conditions for nesting sites and foraging. They typically favor nesting sites near running water and in areas of forest that are associated with open meadows, forest clearings, and logging trails.</td>
<td>Throughout North America and Central America.</td>
<td>G5/S3B/52N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Northern goshawk nests have been documented just north and west of the Project area (NRM observation point shapefile); 600-foot buffers are present around the nests, one of which overlaps a drill site location (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect). Nests also have a 0.5-mile timing restriction between April 1-August 15 (USFS Wildlife Timing Restrictions shapefile); several drill site locations are located in this timing restriction buffer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern harrier (Circus cyaneus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Large grasslands with tall dense vegetation.</td>
<td>Throughout North America and Central America.</td>
<td>G5/SSB</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive-sided flycatcher (Contopus cooperi)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Generally found in coniferous or mixed coniferous forest, along forest edges and openings caused by disturbances.</td>
<td>Canada, the western U.S. (including Alaska), the northeastern U.S., and throughout Central and South America.</td>
<td>G4/SUB</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern leopard frog (Lithobates pipiens)</td>
<td>Amphibian</td>
<td>This species travels within riparian corridors and across wetlands. Can be found in irrigation ditches, permanent ponds, wetlands, and other water sources with dense vegetation.</td>
<td>Across North America ranging from Canada to Kentucky.</td>
<td>G5/SS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Species was documented approximately 0.25 miles south of the Project area (NRM wildlife observation polygon shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills red butterfly snake (Storeria occipitomaculata pahasapae)</td>
<td>Reptile</td>
<td>Deciduous and mixed woodlands, in environments that are damp, moist and cool. Also found in open fields, bogs, or along the borders of swamps and wetlands.</td>
<td>In the South Dakota portion of the Black Hills, observations are mainly in the western foothills, limestone plateaus, and central areas of the hills with higher elevations.</td>
<td>G3T4Q/S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plains minnow (Hybognathus placitus)</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Cool spring-fed bogs, lakes and creeks, small, weedy, sluggish streams, and small lakes.</td>
<td>Canada, northcentral and northeastern U.S.</td>
<td>G5/SS</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake chub (Gueonius plumbeus)</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Cool, gravel-bottomed pools and runs of streams, rocky lake margins.</td>
<td>Canada and the northern U.S.</td>
<td>G5/SS</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain sucker (Catostomus platyrynchus)</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Clear, cold creeks and small to medium rivers with clear rubble, gravel or sand substrate.</td>
<td>Western U.S. and Canada.</td>
<td>G5/S3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sturgeon chub (Machrybopsis gelida)</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Turbid waters of the Great Plains.</td>
<td>Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, middle Mississippi River and the Wolf Island area of the lower Mississippi River.</td>
<td>G3/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name (Scientific Name)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooper’s rocky mountainsnail (<em>Oreohelix strigose cooperi</em>)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Ponderosa pine forests, with a strong deciduous tree presence of boxelder and birch. Areas of calcareous soils, and dense litter layer provide both food and shelter.</td>
<td>Known populations and distribution in the Black Hills are confined to two creek systems within the northern and western sections of the Black Hills. The closest known populations that reside outside the Black Hills includes a population in the Bighorn Mountains within south central Montana and Wyoming.</td>
<td>GST2T3Q/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arogos skipper (<em>Atrytone arogos</em>)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Undisturbed prairie.</td>
<td>Great Plains, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and New Jersey.</td>
<td>G2/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarch butterfly (<em>Danaus plexippus</em>)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>A variety of habitats including meadows, edges of agricultural fields, road ditches, gardens, and anywhere flowering plants and milkweed is found.</td>
<td>Nearly all of North America, except along the Pacific Northwest coast and Alaska.</td>
<td>G4/SNA</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottoe skipper (<em>Hesperia ottoe</em>)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Undisturbed, mixed-grass to tall-grass prairie with big bluestem.</td>
<td>Southern Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and from western Minnesota west to eastern Montana and south to Texas and Colorado, and southern Manitoba, Canada</td>
<td>G3/S2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Not likely; the species has not been documented within or adjacent to the Project area and suitable habitat is not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regal fritillary (<em>Speyeria idalia</em>)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Tall-grass or mixed-grass prairie with violets.</td>
<td>Great Plains and Central U.S.</td>
<td>G3/S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes. Although suitable habitat is not present in the Project area, individuals could be present. Field surveys documented individuals within 5 miles of Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western bumblebee (<em>Bombus occidentalis</em>)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Habitat generalist but requires abundant floral diversity that produces high amounts of pollen.</td>
<td>Once widespread across the western U.S. and western Canada. Since 1998, populations have drastically declined in much of its former range. It is rare throughout much of its current range from the Great Basin to the Rocky Mountains and Alaska.</td>
<td>G4/SNR</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Information obtained from NatureServe (https://explorer.natureserve.org/) and South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (https://gfp.sd.gov/conservation/). NA” refers to not applicable because not ranked in South Dakota.
2This information is based on USFS institutional knowledge, documented observations, or known distribution.
4.3 Potential Effects

The following section provides an assessment of the potential indirect, direct, and cumulative effects on federally protected and Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species resulting from implementation of the Project. The assessment evaluates potential effects from the no action alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and the modified proposed action (Alternative C). Alternative B and C were evaluated for general potential effects on wildlife and fish, and it was concluded that the general potential effects of these two alternatives are comparable. As such potential effects on federally protected and Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species from these two alternatives are discussed together.

Potential effects on federally protected and Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species would be minimized by F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines. Additionally, applicant-proposed impact minimization measures, as described in Table 2-1, would be implemented during all Project activities.

4.4 Effects of Alternative A – No Action

Under Alternative A, the Project would not occur and would therefore not result in indirect, direct, or cumulative effects on federally protected species or Region 2 sensitive wildlife and fish species.

4.5 General Effects of Alternative B and C

Alternatives B and C have the potential to result in indirect effects on wildlife in general; potential effects on federally protected species and Region 2 sensitive species are discussed below in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2, respectively. Short-term, indirect effects on wildlife could occur during vegetation clearing and drilling activities. These activities would result in increased noise and human activity. Many species, even those accustomed to human proximity, could temporarily abandon habitats within and near the Project area until the work is completed. These temporary effects are not expected to irreparably harm wildlife individuals or populations, and it is expected that once the Project is complete, wildlife would return to previous habitats within the Project area. Potential short-term, indirect effects on aquatic species could occur during Project activities as a result of sedimentation of aquatic habitat. However, these effects would be mitigated through implementation of Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2) and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3).

Alternatives B and C have the potential to result in direct effects on wildlife habitat in general; potential effects on habitat associated with federally protected species and Region 2 sensitive species are discussed below in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2, respectively. Short-term, direct effects on wildlife habitat could result from vegetation/habitat removal associated with drill sites, staging areas, and temporary access trails. Vegetation and tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary to facilitate access to the site and drilling activities. As discussed in Section 2, Alternative B would have up to 3.8 acres of temporary disturbance and Alternative C would have up to 6.1 acres of temporary disturbance. Tree clearing that does occur could create small forest gaps, having the potential to benefit some wildlife species that rely on these forest openings. Disturbed areas would be graded to pre-Project
contours and seeded, as described in Section 2. Fish species habitat would not be directly affected by Project activities, as no activities are planned to occur within permanent waterbodies or watercourses.

Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area’s existing landscape. The effects of present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B or Alternative C could potentially result in cumulative effects on wildlife and fish resources, including federally protected species and USFS Region 2 sensitive species. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.

Foreseeable Future Projects

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New radio tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on general wildlife and fish resources. The potential for cumulative effects on federally protected species and Region 2 sensitive species is discussed below in Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2, respectively.

4.5.1 Potential Effects on Federally Protected Threatened and Endangered Species

As summarized in Section 0, the USFWS IPaC query identified one federally endangered and two federally threatened species known to occur in Pennington County and have the potential to be present in the Project area. Because there are no documented occurrences or suitable habitat present within the Project area for whooping crane or rufa red knot, no further analysis is necessary and it has been determined that the Project would have no effect on these species.

There is potential that northern long-eared bats could occur within the Project area. Trees, crevices, and abandoned mine shafts/adits and caves within the Project area may provide suitable habitat for northern long-eared bats (reference (7)). The USFS provided recorded locations of known abandoned mine shafts/adits for consideration in this assessment. In addition, Barr conducted field surveys to identify undocumented mine shafts/adits in the Project area (reference (7)), and the USFS conducted subsequent field surveys of these area to assess their quality for potential bat habitat. Based on the information provided by USFS and the findings of these surveys, it has been determined that there is potential for
minimal day/night bat roosting habitat, but that habitat is not of high enough quality to warrant site buffers or timing restrictions for Project activities beyond what is already in place under the Forest Plan direction (Section 6.2). All Project tree clearing would adhere to the USFWS guidelines. Under Alternatives B and C, there would be no direct effects on northern long-eared bat known hibernacula or maternity roost trees. Northern long-eared bats that are present within the Project area would likely continue to be well supported in adjacent habitat. Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on northern long-eared bats. The determination was made that the Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the northern long-eared bat.

There is a potential that bald eagles could pass through the Project area. Although potential bald eagle nest habitat is present, approximately 0.25 mile south of the Project area, no bald eagle nests have been documented in this area or within the Project area. Suitable habitat, adjacent to bodies of water or large rivers, is not present in the Project area. It is anticipated that human activity and associated noise would deter bald eagles from approaching drilling sites. Under Alternatives B and C, there would be no direct effects on bald eagle nesting habitat. Populations of bald eagles would likely continue to be well supported within the vicinity of the Project area and the BHN. Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on bald eagles. The Project is not anticipated to measurably affect bald eagles.

4.5.2 Potential Effects on USFS Region 2 Sensitive Species

As summarized in Section 4.2, there are 33 Region 2 sensitive species in the BHN, 16 of which are not likely to be present in the Project area (Table 4-1). Because there are no documented occurrences or suitable habitat present within the Project area for these 16 species, no further analysis is necessary and that the Project would have no impact on these species.

As summarized in Table 4-1, there are 17 USFS Region 2 sensitive species that have the potential to occur within or near the Project area. Alternatives B and C could result in short-term, indirect and direct effects on Region 2 sensitive species. Potential short-term, indirect effects on Region 2 sensitive species could occur during vegetation clearing and drilling activities. These activities would result in increased noise and human activity. Many species, even those accustomed to human proximity, could temporarily abandon habitats within and near the Project area until the work is completed. These temporary effects are not expected to irreparably harm individuals or populations, and it is expected that once the Project is complete, these species would return to previous habitats within the Project area.

Potential short-term, direct effects on Region 2 sensitive species could result from vegetation/habitat removal associated with drill sites, staging areas, and temporary access trails. The effects of tree removal/loss of habitat would be greater for the Region 2 sensitive species that inhabit forest
communities, such as the American marten and bat and bird species (see Table 4-1). However, vegetation and tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary to facilitate access to the site and drilling activities. The level of disturbance would be minimal, with up to 3.8 acres of temporary disturbance for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres of temporary disturbance for Alternative C. There is abundant similar forested habitat adjacent to areas that would be disturbed and across the Black Hills National Forest. Tree clearing that does occur could create small forest gaps, having the potential to benefit some Region 2 sensitive bird species that rely on these forest openings. Disturbed areas would be graded to pre-Project contours and seeded, as described in Section 2.

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects (identified in Section 4.5) to contribute to cumulative effects on Region 2 sensitive species.

For 17 Region 2 sensitive species, the determination was made that the Project may adversely impact individuals but is not likely to result in a loss of viability in the Project area nor cause a trend toward federal listing (Table 4-2). Potential effects on Region 2 sensitive species would be minimized by F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2) and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3).

### Table 4-2  Potential Effects on USFS Region 2 Sensitive Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B</th>
<th>Alternative C</th>
<th>Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American marten (Martes americana)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringed myotis (Myotis thysanodes)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2. Clearing of any vegetation would not occur within 500 feet of a cave or abandoned mine that serves as a nursery or hibernacula per USFS standards. Drilling and associated tree clearing within 150-feet of a known bat maternity roost location would occur outside of the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31).2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name (Scientific Name)</td>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Alternative B&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Alternative C&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoary bat (<em>Lasiurus cinereus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2. Clearing of any vegetation would not occur within 500 feet of a cave or abandoned mine that serves as a nursery or hibernacula per USFS standards. Drilling and associated tree clearing within 150-feet of a known bat maternity roost location would occur outside of the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31).&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (<em>Ovis canadensis canadensis</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>If lambing is observed by USFS staff or the drilling contractor, drilling could be restricted in vicinity of Sunnyside Gulch Road between April 15-August 31 (per SDGFP request) to avoid disturbance during lambing season at USFS direction.&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend’s big-eared bat (<em>Corynorhinus townsendii</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2. Clearing of any vegetation would not occur within 500 feet of a cave or abandoned mine that serves as a nursery or hibernacula per USFS standards. Drilling and associated tree clearing within 150-feet of a known bat maternity roost location would occur outside of the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31).&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-backed woodpecker (<em>Picoides arcticus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flammulated owl (<em>Psiloscops flammeolus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasshopper sparrow (<em>Ammodramus savannarum</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis’s woodpecker (<em>Melanerpes lewis</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loggerhead shrike (<em>Lanius ludovicianus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern goshawk (<em>Accipiter gentilis</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive-sided flycatcher (<em>Contopus cooperi</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern leopard frog (<em>Lithobates pipiens</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name (Scientific Name)</td>
<td>Alternative A</td>
<td>Alternative B&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Alternative C&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills redbelly snake (<em>Storeia occipitomaculata pahasapae</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarch butterfly (<em>Danaus plexippus plexippus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regal fritillary (<em>Speyeria idalia</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western bumblebee (<em>Bombus occidentalis</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>MAII</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>MAII – May adversely impact individuals but not likely to result in a loss of viability in the Project area nor cause a trend toward federal listing.

<sup>2</sup>Applicant-proposed minimization measure.
5 Wildlife and Fisheries Species of Local Concern and Management Indicator Species Technical Report

This section identifies the SOLC and MIS that have the potential to occur within or near the Project area and the potential effects on these species from the Project.

5.1 Species of Local Concern

SOLC are species of fish, wildlife, or plants that do not meet the federal criteria for sensitive status. These could include species with declining populations in a portion of Region 2, or those that are important components of diversity in a local area. To be eligible for designation as a SOLC, the species must be recognized through an established scientific process and must be known to occur on USFS lands within the BHNF (reference (4)). Table 5-1 summarizes the wildlife and fish SOLC and whether there is potential for them or their habitat to be present within the Project area. As identified in Table 5-1, 18 of the wildlife and fish SOLC are known to occur within or near the Project area or have suitable habitat within or near the Project area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name (Scientific Name)</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</th>
<th>Documented Distribution</th>
<th>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</th>
<th>Species Potentially Present</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Present</th>
<th>Potential for Effect and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-eared myotis (Myotis evotis)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Coniferous forests that have peeling bark and large snags for roosting habitat. Rock crevices, caves, abandoned mines, and buildings provide cover for roosting and hibernating bats. During the evenings, these species feed over sagebrush dominated grasslands and along riparian corridors.</td>
<td>Endemic to the western U.S., from southwest Canada, south through California and east extending into the western extent of the Great Plains. This species is regularly distributed across much of its range but is never abundant.</td>
<td>G5/S1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Based on field review suitable habitat is present. Bat roosts are present in the Project area and have a 500-foot buffer around them (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-legged myotis (Myotis volans)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Forested mountain regions with trees that have peeling bark and large snags for roosting habitat. Rock crevices, caves, abandoned mines, and buildings provide excellent cover for roosting and hibernating bats. During the evenings, these species feed over sagebrush dominated grasslands and along riparian corridors.</td>
<td>Western North America, including Alaska and central Mexico.</td>
<td>G5/S5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Based on field review suitable habitat is present. Bat roosts are present in the Project area and have a 500-foot buffer around them (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western small-footed myotis (Myotis californicus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Open pine coniferous forests with trees that have peeling bark and large snags for roosting habitat. Rock crevices, caves, abandoned mines, and buildings provide excellent cover for roosting and hibernating bats. During the evenings, these species feed over sagebrush dominated grasslands and along riparian corridors.</td>
<td>Across Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas and in Alberta and Saskatchewan Canada.</td>
<td>G5/S5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Based on field review suitable habitat is present. Bat roosts are present in the Project area and have a 500-foot buffer around them (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow jumping mouse (Zapus hudsonicus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Riparian habitats along small streams and in meadows with dense, tall grass and forbs. They are occasionally found in upland grassy slopes that are near ponderosa pine forests. Within the northern Great Plains, they are commonly found at sites that border smaller streams and are restricted to riparian habitats.</td>
<td>Across the Great Plains, eastern U.S., and throughout Canada.</td>
<td>G5/S5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain goat (Oreamnos americanus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Rugged terrain with cliffs, rock faces, ledges and talus slopes, typically in higher elevations of the BHR.</td>
<td>Southeast Alaska to Washington, western Montana, central Idaho. Introduced to parts of South Dakota, Colorado, and Washington.</td>
<td>G5/S1A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern flying squirrel (Glaucomys sabrinus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Dense ponderosa pine and mixed coniferous deciduous forest; it roosts in cavities or builds nests. The squirrel is most often associated with cool moist habitat with abundant snags and large openings may inhibit gliding.</td>
<td>Across the Great Plains states, the northern Rocky Mountain states, the Pacific Northwest, New England states, and in portions of California, West Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. They are also abundant across Canada. Isolated populations are present in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G5/S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American dipper (Cinclus mexicanus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Cool moist habitat along rivers and streams that provide overhanging banks for nesting cover.</td>
<td>Mountainous regions of the western U.S.</td>
<td>G5/S2B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-and-white warbler (Mniotilta varia)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Mature and second growth deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forest with dense understory.</td>
<td>From the Rocky Mountains to the eastern U.S.</td>
<td>G5/S1B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No. Suitable habitat is not present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-winged hawk (Buteo platypterus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Mixed ponderosa pine and deciduous forests. Nest near openings in the forest or bodies of water.</td>
<td>From southern Canada, along the shores of the Great Lakes, and throughout much of the eastern U.S.</td>
<td>G5/S2B/S2N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Name (Scientific Name)</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</td>
<td>Documented Distribution</td>
<td>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</td>
<td>Species Potentially Present</td>
<td>Suitable Habitat Present</td>
<td>Potential for Effect and Rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper’s hawk (Accipiter cooperii)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Variety of forest types and ages with various structural conditions for nesting sites and foraging. They are commonly found within cities and prefer parks, quiet neighborhoods, fields, and backyard feeders.</td>
<td>Across the U.S.; nonbreeding time in Mexico and along the Gulf of Mexico.</td>
<td>G5/S3B/SZN</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. There is a Cooper’s hawk nest in the northwest part of the Project area and several nests north of the Project area (NRM Wildlife Observation point shapfile); 500-foot buffers are present around the nests (USFS Wildlife Areas to Protect). Nests also have a 0.25-mile time restriction between April 1-June 15 (USFS Wildlife Timing Restrictions shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern saw-whet owl (Aegolius acadicus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Dense coniferous or mixed forest for nesting habitat. Dense sapling-pole sized stands associated with riparian habitats are preferred for roosting. They can also be found in wooded swamps and tamarack bogs.</td>
<td>South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, southern Canada. The northern saw-whet owl is a year-round resident of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G5/S1B/SZN</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pygmy nuthatch (Sitta pygmaea)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Mixed coniferous and deciduous forests that have species such as lodgepole pine, oak, quaking aspen, maple, and Douglas-fir trees. This species is highly dependent on cavities within old trees for roosting and nesting.</td>
<td>Larger populations of pygmy nuthatches are typically found in Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Mexico with a small population in the Black Hills. The pygmy nuthatch is a year-round resident of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G5/S3B/SZN</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp-shinned hawk (Accipiter striatus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Variety of forest types and elevations for nesting sites and foraging. They typically favor habitat in areas of forest that are associated with open meadows, forest clearings, and logging trails.</td>
<td>Found year-round across the western mountainous region and throughout the Appalachian Mountains. The sharp-shinned hawk is a year-round resident of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G5/S3B/S3N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantis fritillary (Speyeria atlantis pahasapa)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Open meadows full of flowers among deciduous and coniferous forests. They are frequently found along streams or within moist meadows that provide ample amounts of flowers for foraging.</td>
<td>Endemic to the Black Hills.</td>
<td>G5T3/S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tawny crescent (Phyciodes tharsus)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Open meadows, riparian wet meadows, and woodlands that provide diverse floral nectar species.</td>
<td>Through much of central and western Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, central U.S. including Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.</td>
<td>G5/S2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callused vertigo (Vertigo artunii)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Forests dominated by white spruce and ponderosa pine, often with limestone soils.</td>
<td>Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.</td>
<td>G2/S2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockrell’s striate disc (Discus shemekii)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Montane forests with mixed coniferous canopies, often associated with limestone substrates.</td>
<td>Yukon Territory Canada, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, South Dakota, Oregon, California, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.</td>
<td>G5/S2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frigid ambersnail (Catinnella gelida)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Prefers moist to dry coniferous forest with a deep litter layer, deciduous tree/shrub understory, and limestone substrates.</td>
<td>South Dakota and Iowa.</td>
<td>G1Q/S1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No. Suitable habitat is not present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystery vertigo (Vertigo paradoxus)</td>
<td>Invertebrate</td>
<td>Moist shaded coniferous habitats mixed with hardwoods, exhibiting a deep litter layer and limestone substrates.</td>
<td>Moist shaded coniferous forest mixed with hardwoods, exhibiting a deep litter layer.</td>
<td>G4G5Q/S1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 ^Information obtained from NatureServe (https://explorer.natureserve.org/) and South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (https://gfp.sd.gov/conservation/); NA refers to not applicable because not ranked in South Dakota.

2 ^This information is based on USFS institutional knowledge, documented observations, or known distribution.
5.2 Management Indicator Species

The USFS defines a MIS as a plant or animal species or habitat component selected in a planning process that are used to monitor the effects of planned management activities on populations of wildlife and fish, including those that are socially or economically important (reference (3)). The NFMA directs national forests to identify MIS. MIS are chosen as a representative of certain habitat conditions important to a variety of other species. By monitoring and assessing populations of MIS, managers can determine if management actions are affecting other species’ populations.

According to the Forest Plan, the USFS identifies two mammals, six birds, and one fish as MIS for the BHNF. The purpose of this MIS evaluation is to identify the potential effects from the Project on MIS. MIS were reviewed to determine which are likely to be present or have suitable habitat within the Project area. Table 5-2 summarizes the wildlife and fish MIS and whether there is potential for them or their habitat to be present within the Project area. As identified in Table 5-2, eight of the wildlife and fish MIS are known to occur within or near the Project area or have suitable habitat within or near the Project area.
## Table 5-2 Management Indicator Species that could occur with or adjacent to the Project area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name (Scientific Name)</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Characteristics</th>
<th>Documented Distribution</th>
<th>Global (G) Conservation Rank/State (S) Conservation Rank</th>
<th>Species Potentially Present</th>
<th>Suitable Habitat Present</th>
<th>Potential for Effect and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American beaver (Castor canadensis)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Permanent sources of water and riparian areas.</td>
<td>Across the U.S. and Canada.</td>
<td>G5/S5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Beaver colonies have been reported within and adjacent to the Project area (NRM observation point shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus)</td>
<td>Mammal</td>
<td>Many types of habitat in mountains and lowlands, including various forests and woodlands, forest edges, shrublands, grasslands with shrubs, and residential areas.</td>
<td>Across the U.S. and Canada.</td>
<td>G5/S5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-backed woodpecker (Picoides arcticus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Coniferous forests, especially in areas with standing dead trees such as burns, bogs, and windfalls. Nesting occurs in cavities of dead or live trees.</td>
<td>From western and central Alaska to northern Saskatchewan and central Labrador, south to southeastern British Columbia, central California, northwestern Wyoming, southwestern South Dakota, central Saskatchewan, northern Minnesota, southeastern Ontario, and northern New England.</td>
<td>G5/S3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. A black-backed woodpecker nest documented along northern edge of Project area (NRM observation point shapefile).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown creeper (Certhia americana)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Most often found in coniferous and mixed forests.</td>
<td>Throughout North America from Canada and Alaska to as far south as northern Nicaragua.</td>
<td>G5/S2B/S3N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden-crowned kinglet (Regulus satrapa)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Coniferous forest and woodland (especially spruce), in migration and winter also deciduous woodland, scrub and brush.</td>
<td>Throughout North America.</td>
<td>G5/S4B/S4N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song sparrow (Melospiza melodia)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Brushy, shrubby, and deep grassy areas along watercourses; forest edge, bogs, brushy clearings, thickets, hedgerows, gardens, brushy past.</td>
<td>Across southern Canada and the U.S.</td>
<td>G5/S5B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasshopper sparrow (Ammodramus savannarum)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Grasslands of intermediate height and are often associated with clumped vegetation interspersed with patches of bare ground.</td>
<td>Most of the U.S. east of the Rockies, southern U.S. and Central America.</td>
<td>G5/S4B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffed grouse (Bonasa umbellus)</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Dense forest with some deciduous trees.</td>
<td>Central Alaska and most of forested Canada south to northern California, Idaho, Utah, South Dakota, Minnesota, Arkansas, Georgia, and Virginia; introduced and established in Iowa, Newfoundland, Nevada, and Michigan.</td>
<td>G5/S4B/S4N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes. Suitable habitat is present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain sucker (Catostomus platyrhynchos)</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Clear, cold creeks and small to medium rivers with clear rubble, gravel or sand substrate.</td>
<td>Western U.S. and Canada.</td>
<td>G5/S3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No. Suitable habitat is not present in the Project area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Also Region 2 sensitive species.
2Information obtained from NatureServe (https://explorer.natureserve.org/) and South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (https://gfp.sd.gov/conservation/).
3This information is based on USFS institutional knowledge, documented observations, or known distribution.
5.3 Effects of Alternative A - No Action

Under Alternative A, the Project would not occur and would therefore not result in indirect, direct, or cumulative effects on wildlife and fish SOLC or MIS.

5.4 General Effects of Alternative B and C

Alternatives B and C have the potential to result in indirect effects on wildlife in general; potential effects on SOLC and MIS are discussed in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, respectively. Short-term, indirect effects on wildlife could occur during vegetation clearing and drilling activities. These activities would result in increased noise and human activity. Many species, even those accustomed to human proximity, could temporarily abandon habitats within and near the Project area until the work is completed. These temporary effects are not expected to irreparably harm wildlife individuals or populations and it is expected that once the Project is complete, wildlife would return to previous habitats within the Project area. However, these effects would be mitigated through implementation of Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2) and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3).

Alternatives B and C have the potential to result in direct effects on wildlife habitat in general; potential effects on habitat associated with SOLC and MIS are discussed in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. Short-term, direct effects on wildlife habitat could result from vegetation/habitat removal associated with, drill sites, staging areas, and temporary access trails. Vegetation and tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary to facilitate access to the site and drilling activities. As discussed in Section 2, Alternative B would have up to 3.8 acres of temporary disturbance and Alternative C would have up to 6.1 acres of temporary disturbance. Tree clearing that does occur could create small forest gaps, having the potential to benefit some wildlife species that rely on these forest openings. Disturbed areas would be graded to pre-Project contours and seeded, as described in Section 2.

Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area’s existing landscape. The effects of present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B and/or C could potentially result in cumulative effects on wildlife and fish species, including SOLC and MIS. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.

Foreseeable Future Projects

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New radio tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses
Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on general wildlife and fish resources. The potential for cumulative effects on SOLC and MIS are discussed below in Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, respectively.

5.4.1 Potential Effects on Species of Local Concern

There are 19 wildlife and fish SOLC that occur in the BHNF, 18 of which have the potential to occur within the Project area (Table 5-1). Alternatives B and C could result in potential short-term, indirect and direct effects on SOLC. Potential short-term, indirect effects on SOLC could occur during vegetation clearing and drilling activities. These activities would result in increased noise and human activity. Many species, even those accustomed to human proximity, could temporarily abandon habitats within and near the Project area until the work is completed. These temporary effects are not expected to irreparably harm individuals or populations and it is expected that once the Project is complete, SOLC would return to previous habitats within the Project area.

Potential short-term, direct effects on SOLC could result from vegetation/habitat removal associated with, drill sites, staging areas, and temporary access trails. The effects of tree removal/loss of habitat would be greater for the SOLC that inhabit forest communities, such as the bat, bird, and invertebrate species (see Table 5-1). However, vegetation and tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary to facilitate access to the site and drilling activities. The level of disturbance would be minimal, with up to 3.8 acres of temporary disturbance for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres of temporary disturbance for Alternative C. There is abundant similar forested habitat adjacent to areas that would be disturbed and across the Black Hills National Forest. Tree clearing that does occur could create small forest gaps, having the potential to benefit some bird SOLC that rely on these forest openings. Disturbed areas would be graded to pre-Project contours and seeded, as described in Section 2.

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects (identified in Section 5.4.4.5) to contribute to cumulative effects on SOLC.

While habitat does exist in the Project area for 17 SOLC (Table 5-3), due to the small scale of the Project in relation to habitats available across the Black Hills National Forest, these SOLC are likely to persist because the Project is consistent with Forest Plan direction for SOLC habitats, and therefore Forest Plan Objective 221 (conserv or enhance habitat for Region 2 sensitive species or SOLC). Potential effects on SOLC would be minimized by F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2) and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species Name</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Alternative C&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long eared myotis (<em>Myotis evotis</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2. Clearing of any vegetation would not occur within 500 feet of a cave or abandoned mine that serves as a nursery or hibernacula per USFS standards. Drilling and associated tree clearing within 150-feet of a known bat maternity roost location would occur outside of the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31).&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-legged myotis (<em>Myotis volans</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2. Clearing of any vegetation would not occur within 500 feet of a cave or abandoned mine that serves as a nursery or hibernacula per USFS standards. Drilling and associated tree clearing within 150-feet of a known bat maternity roost location would occur outside of the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31).&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western small-footed myotis (<em>Myotis ciliolabrum</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2. Clearing of any vegetation would not occur within 500 feet of a cave or abandoned mine that serves as a nursery or hibernacula per USFS standards. Drilling and associated tree clearing within 150-feet of a known bat maternity roost location would occur outside of the pup-rearing season (June 1 through July 31).&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow jumping mouse (<em>Zapus hudsonicus campestris</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain goat (<em>Oreamnos americanus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern flying squirrel (<em>Glaucomys sabrinus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American dipper (<em>Cinclus mexicanus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad-winged hawk (<em>Buteo platypterus</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper’s hawk (<em>Accipiter cooperii</em>)</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 5.4.2 Potential Effects on Management Indicator Species

There are nine wildlife and fish MIS that occur in the BHNF, eight of which have the potential to occur within the Project area (Table 5-2). Alternatives B and C could result in potential short-term, indirect and direct effects on MIS. Potential short-term, indirect effects on MIS could occur during vegetation clearing and drilling activities. These activities would result in increased noise and human activity. Many species, even those accustomed to human proximity, could temporarily abandon habitats within and near the Project area until the work is completed. These temporary effects are not expected to irreparably harm wildlife individuals or populations and it is expected that once the Project is complete, MIS would return to previous habitats within the Project area.
Potential short-term, direct effects on MIS could result from vegetation/habitat removal associated with, drill sites, staging areas, and temporary access trails. The effects of tree removal/loss of habitat would be greater for the MIS that inhabit forest communities, such as the bird species (see Table 5-2Table 5-1). However, vegetation and tree removal would be minimized by only removing what is absolutely necessary to facilitate access to the site and drilling activities. The level of disturbance would be minimal, with up to 3.8 acres of temporary disturbance for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres of temporary disturbance for Alternative C. There is abundant similar forested habitat adjacent to areas that would be disturbed and across the Black Hills National Forest. Tree clearing that does occur could create small forest gaps, having the potential to benefit some bird MIS that rely on these forest openings. Disturbed areas would be graded to pre-Project contours and seeded, as described in Section 2.

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2), and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects (identified in Section 5.44.5) to contribute to cumulative effects on MIS.

While habitat does exist in the Project area for eight MIS (Table 5-4), due to the small scale of the Project in relation to habitats available across the Black Hills National Forest, there would be limited effect on Black Hills National Forest-wide habitat trends for any of these eight MIS. Therefore, the Project would not influence achievement of Forest Plan Objective 228 (maintain or enhance habitat for management indicator species). Potential effects on MIS would be minimized by F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines (see Section 6.2) and applicable impact minimization measures (see Table 2-1 and Section 2.3).
### Table 5-4  Potential Effects on Management Indicator Species

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species name</th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
<th>Alternative B&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Alternative C&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American beaver</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Castor canadensis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-tailed deer</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Odocoileus virginianus</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-backed woodpecker</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Picoides arcticus</em>)&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown creeper</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Certhia americana</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden-crowned kinglet</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Regulus satrapa</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song sparrow</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Melospiza melodia</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasshopper sparrow</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Ammodramus savannarum</em>)&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffed grouse</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Potential limited effect</td>
<td>Relevant FP standards and guidelines in Section 6.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<em>Bonasa umbellus</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Also Region 2 sensitive species

<sup>2</sup>Potential for limited effect but would maintain MIS populations.
6 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Wildlife and Fisheries Resources

6.1 Other Applicable Laws and Regulations

Direction for USFS wildlife and fisheries resources is dictated by laws, regulations, and the Forest Plan. The following laws related to wildlife and fisheries resources are applicable to the Project:

- Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531 et seq.)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703 et seq.)
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 USC 668-668c)
- National Forest Management Act (16 USC 1600)
- National Environmental Policy Act (42 USC § 4321 et seq)

6.2 Forest Plan Direction

The BHNF Forest Plan identifies standards and guidelines to inform management related to various resources, including wildlife and fisheries resources. As summarized in the Forest Plan, a standard is defined as a limitation on management activities that is within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce. Standards are used to determine if individual projects are in compliance with the Forest Plan. Deviation from the requirement requires a Forest Plan amendment. A guideline is a preferred or advisable course of action. Deviation from a guideline is permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

Forest Plan standards and guidelines for the wildlife and fisheries resources considered applicable to the Project include those related to surface water runoff, stream channels, water quality, riparian areas, WIZ, and wetlands, species conservation, caves, endangered and threatened species, sensitive species, northern goshawk, sensitive species and contractual obligations, and general fish and wildlife direction. F3 will be required to comply with the applicable standards and guidelines, as described in further detail below, throughout the duration of the Project.

6.2.1 Surface Water Runoff

Standard 1113: Construct roads and other disturbed sites to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes and wetlands.

Standard 1115: When ground disturbing or vegetation management occur, use vegetative buffer strips or barriers to reduce sediment.

6.2.2 Stream Channels

Standard 1203: Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to provide for passage of flow and sediment, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life.
6.2.3 Water Quality

Standard 1211: Place new sources of chemical and pathogenic pollutants where such pollutants will not reach surface or groundwater.

Standard 1212: Apply runoff controls to disconnect new pollutant sources from surface and groundwater.

6.2.4 General – Related to Riparian Areas, WIZ, and Wetlands

Standard 1301: In the WIZ next to perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands, allow only those actions that maintain or improve long-term stream health and riparian ecosystem condition.

Standard 1302: Maintain long-term ground cover, soil structure, water budgets, and flow patterns in wetlands to sustain their ecological function, per 404 regulations.

6.2.5 General – Riparian Protection

Guideline 1506: Minimize disturbance to the riparian area by mineral activities. Initiate timely and effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas and restore riparian areas to a state of productivity comparable to that before disturbance.

   a. Prohibit the depositing of material from drilling, processing or site preparation in natural drainages.
   b. Locate the lower edge of disturbed or deposited soil banks outside of natural drainages and riparian areas.
   c. Prohibit stockpiling of topsoil or any other disturbed soil in natural drainages or riparian areas.
   d. Prohibit mineral processing (milling) activities within natural drainages or riparian areas.

Guideline 1507: Confine heavy equipment use in riparian areas to areas necessary for mineral extraction.

6.2.6 Transportation and Travel Management in Riparian Areas and Wetlands

Guideline 9107: Prohibit land vehicles from entering perennial streams where resource damage would occur except to cross at specified points.

Guideline 9108: Vehicular traffic, except for snowmobiles, will be restricted to roads and trails in riparian areas.

6.2.7 Endangered and Threatened Species

Standard 3101: To protect endangered and threatened species:

   a. Organochlorine pesticides will not be used as chemical agents on the Black Hills National Forest (included as part of the standard, but not applicable to this Project).

   b. Prohibit new disturbances not existing at the time of bald eagle nest initiation, that may detrimentally influence nest success within one mile of bald eagle nests during the nesting season.
(February 1 through September 1). The distance may be reduced where forest characteristics or topography reduce the line-of-site distance from the nest, based on site-specific analysis.

c. Protect traditional communal bald eagle winter roost sites. Restrict activities that may disturb bald eagles within one mile of communal roosting areas from November 1 through April 1.

d. In stands being used by bald eagles on a transitory basis, avoid timber harvest activities when in use. Harvest may resume when birds have vacated the stands (included as part of the standard, but not applicable to this Project).

6.2.8 Sensitive Species

Standard 3102: Where caves are important nurseries or hibernacula for sensitive and local concern bat species protect the caves and maintain their microclimates when designing management activities (e.g., timber harvest, road construction, recreation facilities). Protect known bat day and night roosts.

Standard 3106: Riparian areas or wetlands where populations of sensitive species are located are to be avoided during ground disturbing activities. Use one or more of the following (or other mitigation measures) tied to the site-specific conditions for disturbances adjacent to known occurrences:

   a. Avoid removing riparian or wetland vegetation; filling or dredging the riparian area or wetland; diverting stream flow from the current channel.

   b. Prevent storm runoff from washing silt into the stream or wetland.

   c. Reseed and/or replant cut and fill slopes with native seed and/or native plants promptly to control erosion and for prevention of noxious-weed infestations. Use appropriate measures to control erosion on disturbed areas that are steep, are highly erosive, and/or adjacent to the riparian area.

   d. Timing, placement, and installation of temporary stream diversions shall allow passage of aquatic life and protect sensitive and species of local concern (included as part of the standard, but not applicable to this Project).

6.2.9 Northern Goshawk

Standard 3108: The following additional protective measures will apply relative to the northern goshawk for all projects involving the removal of trees in suitable habitat, except those done for the express purpose of enhancing goshawk habitat:

   a. Identify nest areas around historically active nests. Nest areas shall consist of 180 acres best suited for nesting habitat within one-half mile of the nest and greater than 300 feet from buildings. Nest areas need not be contiguous but must occur in 30-acre units or larger. Nest areas shall include alternate nests if known. If these conditions cannot be met, then nest areas will include stands that are not currently suitable but that could be managed to meet nesting conditions over time. Vegetation management activities within nest areas shall be limited to those that maintain or
enhance the stand’s value for goshawk (included as part of the standard, but not applicable to this Project).

b. If a nest area described above occurs within one-half mile of the project area and a protected area has not yet been identified for that nest, the project analysis will determine whether some of the protected acreage should occur within the project area.

Standard 3111: From April 1 through August 15, minimize additional human-caused noise and disruption beyond that occurring at the time of nest initiation (e.g., road traffic, timber harvests, construction activities) within one-half mile of all active goshawk nests up until the nest has failed or fledglings have dispersed.

6.2.10 Sensitive Species and Contractual Obligations

Standard 3115: A R2 sensitive species or species of local concern located after contract or permit issuance will be appropriately managed by active coordination between permittee, contractor or purchaser, Forest Service line officer, project administrator, and biologist and/or botanist. Solutions need to be based on the circumstances of each new discovery and must consider the species need, contractual obligations and costs, and mitigation measures available at the time of discovery.

Standard 3116: Avoid creating barriers (e.g., new open roads) between red-bellied snake hibernacula and wetlands.

6.2.11 General Wildlife and Fish Direction

Guideline 3202: Structures, such as fences and roads will be designed and built so that they do not create unnecessary or unreasonable barriers or hazards for wildlife and people.

Standard 3204: Protect known raptor nests. Consider potential effects of disturbance, nesting phenology, human activities existing at onset of nest initiation, species, topography, other Region 2 sensitive species and plant species of local concern, forest cover, nest protection standards and recommendations used by state or federal agencies, and other appropriate factors when designing protection.

Standard 3207: Where caves or abandoned mines serve as nurseries or hibernacula for bats, vegetative changes within 500 feet of the opening are allowed only if needed to maintain bat habitat or if topography or other features protect the openings from disturbance.
7 References


4. —. FSM 2600 - Wildlife, Fish, and Sensitive Plant Habitat Management - Chapter 20 - Habitat Planning and Evaluation. September 6, 2011.


Appendix E

Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report
Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project

Prepared for
United States Forest Service

May 2022
Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report
May 2022

Contents

1

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1

2

Soils and Geology ................................................................................................................................................................ 2

2.1

Introduction ...................................................................................................................................................................... 2

2.1.1

Information Sources ................................................................................................................................................. 2

2.1.2

Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Soil .............................................. 2

2.1.2.1

Forest Plan Direction ...................................................................................................................................... 3

2.1.3

Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Geology ........................... 4

2.1.3.1

Forest Plan Direction ...................................................................................................................................... 5

2.1.4

Study Methodology .................................................................................................................................................. 5

2.2

Affected Environment ................................................................................................................................................... 5

2.2.1

Soils ................................................................................................................................................................................. 5

2.2.1.1

Soil Physical Characteristics ......................................................................................................................... 9

2.2.1.2

Soil Erosion ........................................................................................................................................................ 9

2.2.2

Geology .......................................................................................................................................................................10

2.2.2.1

Regional Geology ..........................................................................................................................................10

2.2.2.2

Mineral Resources .........................................................................................................................................12

2.2.2.3

Geologic Hazards ..........................................................................................................................................12

2.3

Environmental Consequences .................................................................................................................................15

2.3.1

Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A – No Action ............................................................................. 15

2.3.1.1

Soils .....................................................................................................................................................................15

2.3.1.2

Geology .............................................................................................................................................................15

2.3.2

Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B – Proposed Action .......................................................... 15

2.3.2.1

Soils .....................................................................................................................................................................15

2.3.2.2

Geology .............................................................................................................................................................16

2.3.3

Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action..................................... 16

2.3.3.1

Soils .....................................................................................................................................................................17

2.3.3.2

Geology .............................................................................................................................................................17

2.4

Cumulative Effects ........................................................................................................................................................17

2.4.1

Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions ............................................................................. 17
List of Tables

Table 2-1  Soil Map Units in Project Area ................................................................................................. 9
Table 3-1  Summary of Streams in the Project Area .................................................................................. 23

List of Figures

Figure 2-1 Alternative B – Soil Resources ................................................................................................. 7
Figure 2-2 Alternative C – Soil Resources ................................................................................................. 8
Figure 2-3  Regional Geology Map .......................................................................................................... 11
Figure 2-4 Alternative B – Site Geology Map ........................................................................................... 13
Figure 2-5 Alternative C – Site Geology Map ........................................................................................... 14
Figure 3-1 Alternative B – Hydrology – Streams and WIZ ....................................................................... 25
Figure 3-2 Alternative C – Hydrology – Streams and WIZ ....................................................................... 26
Figure 3-3 Alternative B – Hydrology – Wetlands and Other Features ....................................................... 30
Figure 3-4 Alternative C – Hydrology – Wetlands and Other Features ....................................................... 31
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BHNF</td>
<td>Black Hills National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMPs</td>
<td>best management practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANR</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>executive order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMA</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCL</td>
<td>maximum contaminant level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRDS</td>
<td>Mineral Resources Data System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRCS</td>
<td>Natural Resources Conservation Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSMT</td>
<td>South Dakota School of Mines and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSURGO</td>
<td>Soil Survey Geographic Database</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>U.S. Forest Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGS</td>
<td>U.S. Geological Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIZ</td>
<td>water influence zones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

This technical report summarizes the soil, geology, and hydrology resources within the vicinity of the F3 Gold, LLC (F3) Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project in Pennington County, South Dakota (Project; Figure 1-1 in the Environmental Assessment (EA)), as well as potential effects resulting from Project alternatives. This technical report is intended to supplement the assessment of environmental effects related to soil, geology, and hydrology resources found in the EA.

The purpose and need of the Project is discussed in Section 1.2 of the EA. This technical report analyzes environmental effects for three alternatives: Alternative A (No Action), Alternative B (Proposed Action), and Alternative C (Modified Proposed Action). Each of these alternatives is described in detail in Section 2 of the EA. As part of their Plan of Operations, F3 intends to implement impact minimization measures into Project design; these measures, were developed in response to comments received during the Project scoping process. These applicant-proposed impact minimization measures are available in Table 2-1 of the EA.
2 Soils and Geology

2.1 Introduction

This section addresses the soils, geology, and geologic hazards in the Project area and vicinity and the potential effects on these resources as a result of the Project. Comments received during scoping resulted in the following issue relevant to the analysis:

- The Project could affect soil and geologic resources through site access and drilling activities.

2.1.1 Information Sources

There are several existing documents and data sources containing baseline information on soil and geologic resources in the Project area. The following documents and data sources were reviewed:

**Soils:**
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) / Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database

**Geology:**
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Mineral Resources Data System
- USGS Quaternary Fault and Fold Database of the United States
- USGS Earthquake Hazards Program Unified Hazard Tool
- USGS U.S. Landslide Inventory and Interactive Map
- USGS Latest Earthquakes
- USGS Karst in the United States Digital Map Compilation and Database
- USGS Geologic Maps (Scientific Investigations Map 2777 and Miscellaneous Investigations Series Map I-1910)

2.1.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Soil

Direction for USFS soil management is dictated by laws, regulations, and the Forest Plan. The following laws and regulations govern USFS soil management (reference (1)):

- Bankhead-Jones Act of 1937

In addition to the laws and regulations mentioned above, the USFS has three tiers of policy pertaining to the management of soil resources, these include: the USFS National Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands (reference (2)), the USFS Region 2 Forest Service Handbook 2509.25 – Watershed Conservation Practices (WCP) Handbook (reference (3)), and the Forest Plan (reference (4)).
The USFS national BMP program (reference (2)) was developed to improve the management of water quality consistently with the Federal Clean Water Act and State water quality programs. The BMPs represent specific practices or actions used to reduce or control impacts to water bodies from nonpoint sources of pollution, most commonly by reducing the loading of pollutants from such sources into storm water and waterways. The USFS national BMPs related to Minerals Management Activities and Road Management Activities are applicable to the Project (reference (2)).

The Region 2 WCP Handbook (reference (3)) provides direction for the management and protection of soil, water, and riparian resources during any use of national forests and grasslands. The handbook provides a series of management measures, similar to the Forest Plan standards and guidelines discussed below; these management measures are combined below with the applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines pertaining to soil resources.

2.1.2.1 Forest Plan Direction

The Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) Forest Plan identifies standards and guidelines to inform management related to various resources, including soils (reference (4)). As summarized in the Forest Plan, a standard is defined as a limitation on management activities that is within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce. Standards are used to determine if individual projects are in compliance with the Forest Plan. Deviation from the requirement requires a Forest Plan amendment. A guideline is a preferred or advisable course of action. Deviation from a guideline is permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

Forest Plan standards and guidelines for the soil resources considered applicable to the Project include those related to soil disturbance, rehabilitation and revegetation, and surface water runoff.

Soil Disturbance

The following Forest Plan standards related to soil disturbance are applicable to the Project:

- 1103. Manage land treatments to limit the sum of severely burned and detrimentally compacted, eroded, and displaced land to no more than 15 percent of any land unit. “Land treatments” are human actions that disturb vegetation, ground cover or soil. “Land unit” is a mapped land-type polygon or a mapped soil unit. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 13; reference (3).
- 1105. Limit roads and other disturbed sites to the minimum feasible number, width, and total length consistent with the purpose of specific operations, local topography, and climate. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 9; reference (3).
- 1106. Stabilize and maintain roads and other disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 11; reference (3).
- 1107. Where there is potential for toxic contamination of soil from ground disturbing activities (e.g., oil or gas drilling or mineral exploration), a contingency plan to prevent or rehabilitate soil contamination shall be developed.
The following Forest Plan guideline related to soil disturbance is applicable to the Project:

- 1104. Minimize soil compaction by reducing off-road vehicle passes, by skidding on snow, frozen or dry soil conditions, or by off-ground logging systems.

**Rehabilitation and Revegetation**

The following Forest Plan standards related to rehabilitation and revegetation are applicable to the Project:

- 1109. Reclaim roads and other disturbed sites when use ends, as needed, to prevent resource damage. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 12; reference (3).
- 1110. Initiate re-vegetation as soon as possible, not to exceed 6 months after termination of ground-disturbing activities.

The following Forest Plan guideline related to rehabilitation and revegetation is applicable to the Project:

- 1111. Stabilize, scarify, or recontour temporary roads, constructed skid trails, and landings prior to seeding.

**Surface Water Runoff**

The following Forest Plan standards related to surface water runoff are applicable to the Project:

- 1112. Manage land treatments to maintain enough organic ground cover in each land unit to prevent harmful increased runoff. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 2; reference (3).
- 1113. Construct roads and other disturbed sites to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 10; reference (3).
- 1114. When construction of maintenance level 1 roads, temporary roads, skid trails and landings occur, install structures to divert runoff when needed.
- 1116. Manage land treatments to conserve site moisture and to protect long-term stream health from damage by increased runoff. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 1; reference (3).

The following Forest Plan guideline related to surface water runoff is applicable to the Project:

- 1115. When ground disturbing or vegetation management occurs, use vegetative buffer strips or barriers to reduce sediment.

**2.1.3 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction Related to Geology**

Direction for USFS geologic management is dictated by laws, regulations, and the Forest Plan. The following laws and regulations govern USFS geologic management (reference (5)):

• General Mining Act of 1872 (43 CFR 3832; FSM 2811.3)
• Multiple Surface Use Mining Act of 1955 (69 Stat. 367; PL-167)
• 36 CFR 228, Subpart A – Locatable Minerals

2.1.3.1 Forest Plan Direction

Slope Stability
The following Forest Plan guidelines (reference (4)) related to slope stability are applicable to the Project:

• 1108. Reduce resource damage and investment loss in areas that have a mass movement potential.

Mineral and Energy Resources
The following Forest Plan standards related to mineral and energy resources are applicable to the Project:

• 1501. A Plan of Operations shall contain proposed reclamation objectives and practices to maintain water quality and soil stability during mining and exploration activities, including post mining and exploration, and any temporary shutdowns. Reclamation objectives should include the planned uses of the management area or reasons why these uses can no longer be achieved.
• 1502. Reclamation will be considered satisfactory when the disturbed area has been reclaimed in accordance with the operating plan.

2.1.4 Study Methodology
Based on the information sources gathered, review of public scoping comments, and using professional experience and judgment, this analysis:

• identifies the activities that could affect soils and geology, and
• discusses the likely effects of the three alternatives on geology and soils.

Project scoping indicated concerns related to potential effects on soil and geologic resources that could result from the Project. Potential effects are assessed by evaluating construction activities, drilling processes, materials used, and the well sealing plan, as well as reclamation methods.

2.2 Affected Environment

2.2.1 Soils
Soils in the Project area are relatively young and weakly developed, having formed from material weathered from underlying bedrock, alluvial and colluvial deposits, or various combinations of these materials. Soils are thin to absent on rock outcroppings; generally shallow on steep hills slopes; and relatively deep on the gentler hill slopes and in alluvial valleys.
The Project area contains four soil map units, as identified in Figure 2-1, Figure 2-2, and Table 2-1. The Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex and the Pactola-Pactola, shallow Rock outcrop complex soil map units represent approximately 97% of the soil resources in the Project area.
ALTERNATIVE B
SOIL RESOURCES

Jenny Gulch Gold
Exploration Drilling Project
Soil, Geology, and Hydrology
Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 2-1

Drill Pad (Alternative B)
Staging Area (Alternative B)
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used
Proposed Access Routes (Alternative B)
New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route

Soil Map Unit 1:
- Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex,
  10 to 40 percent slopes
- Pactola-Pactola, shallow-Rock outcrop
  complex, 40 to 80 percent slopes
- Virkula-Pactola complex,
  2 to 15 percent slopes
- Cordeston loam, high mica,
  2 to 10 percent slopes, flooded

Notes:
1. SSURGO soil data downloaded from the NRCS Web Soil Survey
FIGURE 2-2

Notes:
1 SSURGO soil data downloaded from the NRCS Web Soil Survey

ALTERNATIVE C
SOIL RESOURCES
Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Soil, Geology, and Hydrology
Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Alternate Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Staging Area (Alternative C)
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used

Soil Map Unit

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative C)
New Access Route
Alternate New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route

Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex, 10 to 40 percent slopes
Pactola-Virkula, shallow-Rock outcrop complex, 40 to 80 percent slopes

Virkula-Pactola complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes
Cordeston loam, high mica, 2 to 10 percent slopes, flooded

0 1,000 Feet

EXPLORATION DRILLING PROJECT
Soil, Geology, and Hydrology
Technical Report
Pennington County, SD
Table 2-1  Soil Map Units in Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Map Unit Symbol</th>
<th>Soil Map Unit Name</th>
<th>Compaction Potential (when soils are wet)(^1)</th>
<th>Erosion Hazard(^1)</th>
<th>Acres in Project Area</th>
<th>Percent of Project Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q0226E</td>
<td>Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex, 10 to 40 percent slopes</td>
<td>Severe/slight</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>979.4</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q0232G</td>
<td>Pactola-Pactola, shallow Rock outcrop complex, 40 to 80 percent slopes</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Very severe</td>
<td>681.3</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q0239D</td>
<td>Virkula-Pactola complex, 2 to 15 percent slopes</td>
<td>Severe/slight</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q0205C</td>
<td>Cordeston loam, high mica, 2 to 10 percent slopes, flooded</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: reference (6)
\(^1\) Data refined using dominant soil map units by reference (7)

2.2.1.1  Soil Physical Characteristics

Physical soil characteristics include soil depth, pore space and bulk density. Changes in these can occur when ground-based equipment makes repeated passes over the soil. These activities compress or compact soils and, if soils are wet enough, can result in rutting and puddling of the soil resource. In general, clay and loam soils compact more than sandy soils. These changes to the physical soil characteristics decrease the pore space volume, which can lead to reduced water infiltration rates, slower soil drainage, impediment to root growth, and a reduction in plant-available water and nutrients.

Some soils have a greater likelihood for increased potential for soil compaction. The soil rutting hazard interpretation, as defined by reference (6) and further refined using dominant soil map units in reference (7) was used to assess soil compaction potential. The NRCS ratings are based on depth to a water table, rock fragments on or below the surface, the Unified classification of the soil, depth to a restrictive layer, and slope. The hazard is described as slight, moderate, or severe. A rating of "slight" indicates that the soil is subject to little or no rutting. "Moderate" indicates that rutting is likely. "Severe" indicates that ruts form readily (reference (6)). As shown in Table 2-1, the soil map units within the Project area range from slight to severe for their compaction potential.

2.2.1.2  Soil Erosion

Soil erosion is the movement of soil particles by water, wind, or ice. Soil erosion can occur when the surface soil is disturbed from construction activities that compact the soil or when the loose surface soil and its protective layer of organic material are changed or removed. Compaction, rutting, and puddling can affect infiltration to the point that there can be a reduction in the movement of water into the soil and water can be channeled and concentrated. As a result, water runoff (overland surface flow) is increased and carries soil particles with it. Generally, depending on a variety of site characteristics, potential for the greatest erosion is on steeper slopes (above 30%) and the potential decreases as the slope decreases.
Soils are rated based on their potential for soil erosion. The soil erosion hazard interpretation, as defined by reference (6) and further refined using dominant soil map units in reference (7) was used to assess the potential for soil erosion. The soil erosion hazard ratings in this interpretation indicate the hazard of soil loss from off-road and off-trail areas after disturbance activities that expose the soil surface. The ratings are based on slope and soil erosion factor K (susceptibility of soil to erosion and the amount and rate of runoff). The soil loss is caused by sheet or rill erosion in off-road or off-trail areas where 50% to 75% of the surface has been exposed by logging, grazing, mining, or other kinds of disturbance. The erosion hazard ratings are categorized as "slight," "moderate," "severe," or "very severe." A rating of "slight" indicates that erosion is unlikely under ordinary climatic conditions; "moderate" indicates that some erosion is likely and that erosion-control measures may be needed; "severe" indicates that erosion is very likely and that erosion-control measures, including revegetation of bare areas, are advised; and "very severe" indicates that significant erosion is expected, loss of soil productivity and off-site damage are likely, and erosion-control measures are costly and generally impractical. As shown on Table 2-1, the erosion hazard for the four soil map units identified in the Project area range from slight to very severe.

2.2.2 Geology

This section describes the regional geology and potential geologic hazards around the Project area.

2.2.2.1 Regional Geology

The regional geology of the BHNF is shown in Figure 2-3. The Black Hills area consists of a Precambrian crystalline core surrounded by dipping Phanerozoic sedimentary units (reference (8)). The core generally consists of steeply dipping metasedimentary and metaigneous schist with granitic intrusions. Surrounding the core are limestone, shale, and sandstone units, which originally were deposited over and now dip at lower angles away from the core. Igneous emplacement at depth, during the Laramide orogeny (approximately 50-60 million years ago), led to an uplift event. Following the uplift, the overlying sedimentary layers have eroded, partially exposing the more resistant crystalline core. The Project area is located within the core, and the local bedrock is mainly metagraywacke and metamorphosed black and tuffaceous shale.
2.2.2.2 Mineral Resources

The Project area is located within the historic Silver City Mining District (reference (9)). Features related to mining and prospecting are shown on Figure 2-4 and Figure 2-5. Mining in this district produced gold, silver, lead, antimony, and copper. Quartz veins and iron-rich chert, which contain gold associated with sulfide minerals, are located in the schist. Operations consisted of underground and combined surface-underground mines in schist and slate host rock in areas with enriched gold and mineral zones. Ore and gangue minerals (referred to as mineralization) included minerals associated with metal leaching and acid mine drainage (e.g., pyrite, pyrrhotite).

2.2.2.3 Geologic Hazards

Seismicity

Earthquakes have occurred in the region, generally with magnitudes below 5 (reference (10)). The probable ground motion from any seismic event is low, with a 2% chance over 50 years of exceeding 0.14g (14% of the acceleration of gravity) for a short-period (0.2 second) wave and 0.04g (4% of the acceleration of gravity) for a long period (1 second) wave (reference (11)). Although extensive faulting from metamorphism and uplift is present in the crystalline core rock (reference (8)), Quaternary faults have not been documented (reference (12)). As a result, faults are unlikely to lead to earthquakes or ground rupture.

Subsidence

Subsidence hazards could include karst and underground mining. Karst is not present in the Project area and therefore does not present a subsidence risk. Although there is substantial potential for karst and pseudo-karst conditions in the general region, it is primarily present in the Phanerozoic sedimentary rocks and is not present in the Precambrian core that includes the Project area (reference (13)). The Project area is located within the Silver City Mining District, where historic mines including underground workings are present (reference (9)) (Figure 2-4 and Figure 2-5).

Slope Failure

The Project area is not located near any mapped landslide deposits (reference (14)) and is located in a "low incidence" zone for landslides (reference (15)). As noted in Section 2.2.1, most soils in the Project area are highly susceptible to erosion, especially those on steep slopes. Surface and near-surface occurrences of lower-grade metamorphic rock types (slate, phyllite) that may fracture are noted in map unit descriptions (reference (8); reference (12)). Slope failures resulting from the erosion of soil and rocks are possible.
ALTERNATIVE B
SITE GEOLOGY
Jenny Gulch
Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Soil, Geology, and Hydrology
Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 2-4

Drill Pad (Alternative B)
Staging Area (Alternative B)
Mining Features
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative B)
New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route
Geologic Unit:

Xs - Metamorphosed shale
Xgw2 - Metagraywacke unit 2
Xgw3 - Metagraywacke unit 3
Xts - Metamorphosed tuff and shale
Qal - Alluvial deposits
Precambrian
Xbs1 - Metamorphosed black shale

Geology Data Source:

Figure 2-4 Alternative B Site Geology Redden 2008 xref 3460576011

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Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

FIGURE 2-4

Drill Pad (Alternative B)
Staging Area (Alternative B)
Mining Features
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative B)
New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route
Geologic Unit:

Xs - Metamorphosed shale
Xgw2 - Metagraywacke unit 2
Xgw3 - Metagraywacke unit 3
Xts - Metamorphosed tuff and shale
Qal - Alluvial deposits
Precambrian
Xbs1 - Metamorphosed black shale

Geology Data Source:

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Geology Data Source:

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FIGURE 2-4

Drill Pad (Alternative B)
Staging Area (Alternative B)
Mining Features
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative B)
New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route
Geologic Unit:

Xs - Metamorphosed shale
Xgw2 - Metagraywacke unit 2
Xgw3 - Metagraywacke unit 3
Xts - Metamorphosed tuff and shale
Qal - Alluvial deposits
Precambrian
Xbs1 - Metamorphosed black shale

Geology Data Source:

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FIGURE 2-5

ALTERNATIVE C
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Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Alternate Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Staging Area (Alternative C)
Mining Features
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used

Precambrian
- Xbs1 - Metamorphosed black shale
- Xs - Metamorphosed shale
- Xgw2 - Metagraywacke unit 2
- Xgw3 - Metagraywacke unit 3
- Xts - Metamorphosed tuff and shale

Geology Data Source:

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative C)
- New Access Route
- Alternate New Access Route
- Overland/Trail Access Route

Geologic Unit
- Qal - Alluvial deposits

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Drill Pad (Alternative C) Alternate Drill Pad (Alternative C) Staging Area (Alternative C) Mining Features Project Area Project Exclusion Area/Private Property Existing USFS Roads Used

Note: The diagram shows various geological units and proposed access routes for the Alternative C site. The map includes details on the geology of the area, with specific focus on the geological units and access points identified for the project.
2.3 **Environmental Consequences**

The analysis of effects for soils and geology assumes that applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 2.1.3), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 2.1.3), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 2.1.3) would be implemented during all Project activities. This analysis discusses the expected disturbance resulting from the implementation of the no action alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and the modified proposed action (Alternative C).

### 2.3.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A - No Action

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) provides a baseline to evaluate the effects of the proposed action (Alternative B) and the modified proposed action (Alternative C) as described in Section 2 of the EA.

#### 2.3.1.1 Soils

Alternative A would not result in direct or indirect effects to soil resources. Alternative A would not result in changes to soil physical properties, such as soil compaction, or soil erosion from any of the activities proposed for the Project.

#### 2.3.1.2 Geology

Alternative A would not result in direct or indirect effects to geological resources from the Project. Alternative A would not result in changes to ground surface or stability from any of the Project activities.

### 2.3.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, the Project would occur as described in Section 2 of the EA.

#### 2.3.2.1 Soils

Under Alternative B, potential short-term direct and indirect effects on soil resources could occur. Project activities associated with access, clearing, and drilling could affect soil resources. The equipment used for drilling and clearing have the potential to lead to soil compaction and erosion within drill pad locations, staging areas, and temporary overland trails. As noted above in Table 2-1, the soil map units identified in the Project area are ranked slight to severe for their compaction. As such, with the exception of the Pactola-Pactola, shallow rock outcrop complex, soils throughout the entire Project area have a significant potential for being compacted if activities occur when soils are wet. The Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 2.1.3), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 2.1.3), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 2.1.3) to address the potential for soil compaction.

The Pactola-Pactola, shallow Rock outcrop complex and the Pactola-Virkula-Rock outcrop complex, which collectively represent 97% of the Project area, have soil erosion hazard ratings of very severe and moderate, respectively (Table 2-1). These soil map units are also located on slopes of 40 to 80% and 10 to 40%, respectively. The Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 2.1.3), Region 2 WCPs (see
Any soils that may need to be removed for clearing drill pads or staging areas would be stockpiled for later use in site reclamation. Upon completion of a drill hole, the drill cuttings and fines would be dispersed in the disturbed area. Topsoil would be placed on cuttings and reseeded/replanted as necessary to match surrounding vegetation. Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities.

2.3.2.2 Geology

Under Alternative B, potential short-term direct and indirect effects on geologic resources could occur. Project activities associated with access, clearing, and drilling could affect geologic resources.

Extraction of rock through drilling may result in the removal of mineral resources. However, the amounts are anticipated to be negligible. The presence of sulfide minerals in the bedrock suggests that the rock is potentially acid-generating. To mitigate this risk, drill cuttings that contain mineralized rock will be either thin-spread and buried beneath the topsoil (which is the industry standard for low-sulfur cuttings management in the western U.S.) or transported off-site to an approved disposal location. Spread drill cutting depth would be dependent on hole depth with most sites resulting in a spread drill cuttings depth of 0.25 inches; however, some sites may result in up to approximately 1.50 inches of drill cuttings spread across the drill pad.

With a minimal risk of seismic disturbance to the Project, disruption of Project activities and the need for containment is unlikely. The Project does not include activities with potential to cause significant induced seismicity.

Due to the absence of karst in the Project area, there is no potential for subsidence due to karst features (e.g., due to water injected during drilling) in the Project area. The movement and operation of equipment could lead to failure of historic underground mine workings. Known mining-related features have been mapped and considered in Project planning (Figure 2-4); planned drill holes are not anticipated to intersect any known historical mine shafts, holes, adits, or workings. The historic underground mines have been small, and workings have been within crystalline rock. Therefore, there is a low risk of activity triggering ground subsidence into underground mine workings.

Steep slopes (>40%) and the presence of slate indicate a potential for erosion and/or slope failure, although the area is considered a “low-incidence” zone for landslides (reference (15)). The management of soil erosion, as described in Section 2.2.1.2, and applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 2.1.3), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 2.1.3), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 2.1.3) will be implemented to address slope hazards. Additional assessment may be completed as part of Project design.

2.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

Under Alternative C, the Project would occur as described in Section 2 of the EA.
2.3.3.1 Soils
Under Alternative C, the potential effects to soil resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B with the following exception. Under Alternative C, each drill pad and temporary overland trail would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use, rather than upon completion of all drilling activities. This change would further minimize the potential for erosion by stabilizing the soil immediately versus waiting until all drilling activities were completed.

2.3.3.2 Geology
Under Alternative C, the potential effects to geological resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

2.4 Cumulative Effects
The following section provides an assessment of the potential cumulative effects on soils and geologic resources resulting from implementation of the Project and the potential interaction with the effects on these resources from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Because the potential effects to soil and geologic resources are comparable for Alternative B and Alternative C, they are discussed together with regard for their potential for cumulative effects.

2.4.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions
Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area’s existing landscape. Present and foreseeable future activities may contribute to effects on soil and geologic resources. The effects of these present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B and/or C could potentially result in cumulative effects on soil and geologic resources. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New radio tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses

2.4.2 Cumulative Effects to Soils and Geology
Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), and implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 2.1.3), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 2.1.3), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 2.1.3), the Project is not likely to interact
with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on soil and geologic resources.
3 Hydrology

3.1 Introduction
This section addresses the surface and groundwater resources in the Project area and vicinity and the potential effects on these resources as a result of the Project. Comments received during scoping resulted in the following issues relevant to the analysis:

- The Project could affect surface water quality.
- The Project could affect groundwater quality through drilling activities.

3.1.1 Information Sources
There are several existing documents and data sources containing baseline information on surface water and groundwater in the Project area. The following documents and data sources were reviewed:

- **Surface Water:**
  - Sources of information used in the analysis include GIS information gathered from USFS field surveys that were conducted in September of 2019 and April, May, and November of 2020 and publicly available data:
    - USFS Streams
    - USFS Protected Streams
    - USFS Springs
    - USFS Wetlands
    - USFS Fens - Peatlands
    - USFS Water Impoundments_Dams
    - USFS Water Influence Zones
    - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Hazard Map
    - South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR) Public Water Supply System (PWSS) data (regulated/unregulated well data from April 2021 and Zone A buffer data from 2016)

- **Groundwater:**
  - Sources of information used in the analysis include GIS information gathered from publicly available data:
    - South Dakota DANR Water Wells
  - Sources of information also include publicly available reports:
    - USGS Atlas of Water Resources in the Black Hills Area, South Dakota
    - USGS Ground-Water Resources in the Black Hills Area, South Dakota
    - South Dakota School of Mines and Technology Black Hills Aquifers
3.1.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction

Direction for USFS hydrology/water resources management is dictated by laws, regulations, and the Forest Plan. The following executive orders (EO) and laws apply to hydrology and/or water resources:

- EO Order 11988 – Floodplain Management
- EO 11990 – Protection of Wetlands
- Clean Water Act (33 USC. 1251 et seq.)

In addition to the laws and regulations mentioned above, the USFS has three tiers of policy pertaining to the management of soil resources, these include: the USFS National Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands (reference (2)), the USFS Region 2 Forest Service Handbook 2509.25 – Watershed Conservation Practices (WCP) Handbook (reference (3)), and the Forest Plan (reference (4)). See Section 2.1.2 for background information on these USFS policies. Similar to soil resources (Section 2.1.2), the USFS national BMPs related to Minerals Management Activities and Road Management Activities (reference (2)) are applicable to minimizing the potential effects on water resources from the Project. The Region 2 WCP Handbook (reference (3)) management measures relevant to water resources are applicable to the Project; these management measures are identified below with the summary of applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines pertaining to water resources.

3.1.2.1 Forest Plan Direction

Forest Plan standards and guidelines for hydrology/water resources considered applicable to the Project include surface water runoff, stream channels, water quality, and general measures related to riparian areas, water influence zones (WIZ), and wetlands. In addition, Forest Plan guidelines for mineral and energy resources related to the general requirements for riparian protection are applicable.

Surface Water Runoff

The Forest Plan standards and guidelines related to surface water runoff that are applicable to the Project are summarized above in Section 2.1.2.

Stream Channels

The following Forest Plan standard related to stream channels are applicable to the Project:

- 1201. Conduct actions so that stream pattern, geometry, and habitats are maintained or improved toward robust stream health. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 5; reference (3).
- 1203. Design and construct all stream crossings and other instream structures to provide for passage of flow, sediment, and debris, withstand expected flood flows, and allow free movement of resident aquatic life. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 4; reference (3).

The following Forest Plan guidelines related to stream channels are applicable to the Project:

- 1204. Naturally occurring debris shall not be removed from stream channels unless it is a threat to life, property, important resource values, or otherwise covered by legal agreement.
• 1206. When stabilizing damaged streambanks, preferentially use methods that emphasize vegetative stabilization. Use native vegetation for streambank stabilization whenever possible.

**Water Quality**

The following Forest Plan standards related to water quality are applicable to the Project:

• 1211. Place new sources of chemical and pathogenic pollutants where such pollutants will not reach surface or groundwater. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 15; reference (3).
• 1212. Apply runoff controls to disconnect new pollutant sources from surface and groundwater. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 16; reference (3).
• 1213. Apply chemicals using methods which minimize risk of entry to surface and groundwater. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 17; reference (3).

There are no Forest Plan guidelines related to water quality that are applicable to the Project:

**General - Related to Riparian Areas, WIZ, and Wetlands**

The following Forest Plan standards related to riparian areas, WIZ, and wetlands are applicable to the Project:

• 1301. In the WIZ next to perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands, allow only those actions that maintain or improve long-term stream health and riparian ecosystem condition. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 3; reference (3).
• 1302. Maintain long-term ground cover, soil structure, water budgets, and flow patterns in wetlands to sustain their ecological function, per 404 regulations. Also included as Regional WCP Handbook Management Measure 6; reference (3).

**General - Related to Reclamation**

The following Forest Plan standards related to reclamation are applicable to the Project:

• 1501. A Plan of Operations shall contain proposed reclamation objectives and practices to maintain water quality and soil stability during mining and exploration activities, including post mining and exploration, and any temporary shutdowns. Reclamation objectives should include the planned uses of the management area or reasons why these uses can no longer be achieved.
• 1502. Reclamation will be considered satisfactory when the disturbed area has been reclaimed in accordance with the operating plan.

**General - Related to Riparian Protection**

The following Forest Plan standard related to riparian protection is applicable to the Project:

• 1505. Utilize existing regulations and policies to minimize effects of mineral extractions in riparian areas. If reclamation is not done concurrently, reclamation of mined areas will begin immediately following mining activity. Reclamation will follow existing landform and vegetative characteristics as much as feasible, unless management objectives require otherwise.

The following Forest Plan guidelines related to riparian protection are applicable to the Project:
• 1506. Minimize disturbance to the riparian area by mineral activities. Initiate timely and effective rehabilitation of disturbed areas and restore riparian areas to a state of productivity comparable to that before disturbance.
• 1507. Confine heavy equipment use in riparian areas to areas necessary for mineral extraction.
• 1508. Require monitoring of mining mitigative measures in riparian areas to ensure that the measures are effective and in compliance with applicable water quality standards.

3.1.3 Study Methodology
Based on the information sources gathered, review of public scoping comments, and using professional experience and judgment, this analysis:

• identifies the activities that could affect surface water and groundwater, and
• discusses the likely effects of the three alternatives on surface water and groundwater.

Project scoping indicated concerns related to the potential for surface water and groundwater contamination that could result from the Project. Potential effects are assessed by evaluating the drilling processes, materials used, and the well sealing plan, as well as reclamation methods.

3.2 Affected Environment
3.2.1 Surface Water
The Project area is located within the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek watershed (HUC12 101201100110), with the northeast corner (approximately 3 acres) of the Project area located within the Jim Creek–Boxelder Creek watershed (HUC12 101201110305). No physical Project activities are proposed in the Jim Creek–Boxelder Creek watershed, as such this watershed is not discussed in this report.

Stream networks throughout the Black Hills, including the Project area, are characterized by geology, climate, and constructed reservoirs that influence stream permanence, volume, temperature, etc. The Black Hills region traditionally has some of the best surface water quality in the state, due in a large part to a cooler climate, higher precipitation, and less erosive bedrock than the surrounding plains (reference (16)).

The Black Hills experience variation in precipitation from year to year which contributes to variation in stream flow. Approximately 50% of the annual precipitation occurs during May, June, and July, and almost 75% during the 5-month period between April and August, in the form of rain associated with high-intensity, short-duration thunderstorms (reference (17)). The smallest amounts of precipitation typically occur during the winter months, November through February, as snow. Most of the total annual snow fall occurs in the late spring months of March and April.

3.2.1.1 Watershed Condition Class
The USFS has developed a National Forest Watershed Condition Framework that classifies watershed condition based on a 12-indicator model that considered both aquatic and terrestrial physical and biological indicators (reference (18)). Specific indicators include: water quality, water quantity, aquatic
habitat, aquatic biota, riparian/wetland vegetation, roads and trails, soils, fire regime, forest cover, rangeland vegetation, terrestrial invasive species and forest health. Indicators are individually rated, then summed based on a weighting factor to give a rating of Class 1 (functioning properly), Class 2 (functioning at risk) or Class 3 (impaired function) to each HUC (Hydrologic Unit Code) 12 or 6th level watersheds. According to the National Forest Watershed Condition Framework, the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek watershed falls under Class 2, which means it is “functioning at risk” and exhibits moderate geomorphic, hydrologic, and biotic integrity relative to their natural potential condition (reference (18)).

### 3.2.1.2 Municipal Watersheds and Public Water Supply Systems

The Rapid Creek watershed, which is located in the Project area and supplies water to Rapid City, is listed as a municipal watershed. According to the South Dakota DANR PWSS data, no regulated or unregulated wells are present within the Project area. The closest regulated well is located at Cousins Pub and Pizza, approximately 0.8 miles northeast of the Project area and the closest unregulated well is located at the Ponderosa Mountain Rustic Campground, approximately 4.4 miles southeast of the Project area. The entire Project area is located in a Zone B source water protection buffer. Zone B buffers include a 25-mile radius within a delineated watershed area extending from a PWSS intake (reference (19)). The very southern extent of the Project area is located in a Zone A source water protection buffer. Zone A buffers include the most sensitive area surrounding the PWSS intake (reference (19)).

### 3.2.1.3 Watercourses and Waterbodies

Approximately 22 miles of streams are present throughout the Project area, including perennial (3.7 miles), intermittent (3.2 miles), and ephemeral (15.1 miles) streams. All of the perennial streams and approximately 3.2 miles of the intermittent streams in the Project area are protected. Table 3-1, Figure 3-1, and Figure 3-2 identify the streams within the Project area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream Name</th>
<th>Stream Type</th>
<th>Protected Miles in Project Area</th>
<th>Total Miles in Project Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenney Gulch</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenney Gulch</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Draw</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Draw</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay Draw</td>
<td>Ephemeral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Gulch</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorman Gulch</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorman Gulch</td>
<td>Ephemeral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside Gulch</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyside Gulch</td>
<td>Ephemeral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Intermittent</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed</td>
<td>Ephemeral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The land adjacent to protected perennial and intermittent streams is referred to as the WIZ. The Watershed Conservation Practices Handbook (reference (3)) defines the WIZ as 100 feet minimum from each bank of perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands. Only actions that maintain or improve long-term stream health and riparian ecosystem conditions are allowed in the WIZ. As shown on Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2, designated WIZ areas are present adjacent to streams and wetlands throughout the Project area.

No natural lakes are present in the Project area; however, the Pactola Reservoir, the largest reservoir in the BHNF and a source of drinking water in downstream communities, is located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the Project area.

### 3.2.1.4 Beneficial Uses and Impaired Waters

The Clean Water Act requires states to adopt water quality standards to protect the nation's waters. These standards define how much of a pollutant can be in surface and/or groundwater, while still allowing it to meet its designated uses, such as for drinking water, fisheries, swimming, irrigation, or industrial purposes. Within the Project area, the only stream that has assigned beneficial uses is Jenny Gulch, with the following beneficial uses: coldwater permanent fish life propagation waters; limited-contact recreation waters; fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock watering waters; and irrigation waters (reference (20)). According to the South Dakota DANR 2020 Integrated Report for Surface Water Quality Assessment (reference (16)) and the South Dakota Surface Water Quality Webmap (reference (20)), no impaired streams or waterbodies are present within the Project area.

### 3.2.1.5 Water Yield

Water yield is a concern for communities in and around the Black Hills. The water provided by streams that flow from the Black Hills is an important resource utilized for drinking water supplies, irrigation, stock watering, fisheries, and recreation in the surrounding area.

As a result of evapotranspiration, forested landscapes, such as the Project area, can lower the quantity of water that reaches the ground surface. In the Black Hills, over 92% of the total annual precipitation is lost to evapotranspiration associated with the dense forests of the area (reference (17)). However, forests also help conserve moisture by providing shade and cooler temperatures which provide for less overall evaporation. The transpiration of moisture back to the atmosphere contributes to rain and snow development in the area. Thus, the annual water yield depends upon the density or coverage of the forest, the type of forest vegetation, as well as many other factors including climate, weather patterns, geology, slope, soils, stream channel conditions and riparian area conditions.

According to a USGS gage 06410500, which is located on Rapid Creek at Silver City, above the Pactola Reservoir and monitors a 293 square mile drainage area, mean daily flows between 1953 and 2021 ranged between 22 and 130 cubic feet per second (reference (21)). Flows are generally highest in the spring (May and June) and lowest during the winter months (November through February).
3.2.1.6 Floodplains, Riparian Areas, Wetlands, and Springs

Floodplains are natural inundation areas for floods that reduce flood stages and velocities. Floodplains store water, serve as natural sponges to moderate the release of high waters, and act as filters to trap sediment and pollutants. They are important because the loss of floodplain function can change the timing and peak of stream flows. According to the FEMA Flood Hazard map, the majority (1,493 acres) of the Project area is mapped Flood Zone X, area of minimal flood hazard, which occurs outside of the 500-year floodplain. The northern 244 acres is mapped as Flood Zone D, which indicates that the flood hazard has not been determined.

Riparian areas are those lands that interface between water and drier uplands. Riparian areas are some of the most ecologically diverse habitat types and provide bank stability, sediment filtering, streamside shading and nutrient input into streams and lakes. Riparian areas are generally present along perennial and intermittent streams, which are displayed on Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2.

Wetlands control runoff and water quality, recharge groundwater, and provide habitat. Actions that may alter their ground cover, soil structure, water budgets, drainage patterns, and long-term plant composition can impair functional values. Based on mapping by USFS personnel, there are approximately 13.2 acres of wetlands across the Project area, approximately 8.2 acres are classified as palustrine; the remaining wetlands (5.0 acres) are not classified (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4).

Springs are groundwater-dependent ecosystems in which groundwater flows naturally from a rock or the soil onto the land surface or into a body of surface water. Springs are managed as a subset of wetlands due to their unique characteristics. Watershed Conservation Practices Handbook states "avoid any loss of rare wetland such as fens and springs" (reference (3)). Fens are a subset of wetlands, which are groundwater dependent and accumulate peat or muck. There are 28 springs and three fens within the Project area (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4).

There are 16 impoundments within the Project area, including two ponds and a stock dam along the perennial portion of Jenny Gulch and several abandoned beaver dams throughout the Project area (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4).

3.2.2 Groundwater

3.2.2.1 Aquifers

The major bedrock aquifers in the Black Hills and surrounding area are the Deadwood, Madison, Minnelusa, Minnekahta, and Inyan Kara. None of these aquifers occur within the Project area; the edge of the nearest (Deadwood) is approximately five miles west of the Project. The major aquifers are contained in the later sedimentary units that ring the crystalline core in which the Project area is located (reference (22)) (Figure 2-3). The major source of recharge to the sedimentary aquifers is precipitation. These sedimentary units once covered the crystalline core but have eroded away over millions of years, exposing the central part of the uplifted core. The crystalline core generally has low permeability and, beyond the central exposed section, forms the lower confining unit for the sedimentary aquifers. The crystalline core and sedimentary aquifers are not hydraulically connected (reference (22)). Localized, non-
continuous aquifers occur within weathered and fractured rocks in the crystalline core. The extent and distribution of these aquifers are difficult to determine without drilling. These aquifers are generally unconfined and are recharged from precipitation and infiltration, though most of the precipitation that falls is lost to evapotranspiration and runoff (overland and stream flow). Domestic water supply wells have been drilled into crystalline aquifer(s) in the Project area (Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4).

Additional localized aquifers are present in unconsolidated alluvial and colluvial deposits along streams and hillsides. The unconsolidated deposits are considered aquifers when saturated and are much smaller than other regional aquifers. Similar to the bedrock aquifers, precipitation is the major source of recharge to these aquifers. Some of these aquifers host springs that feed surface water features.

Springs in the Project area are within localized (discontinuous) aquifers present in unconsolidated alluvial and colluvial deposits along streams and hillsides. The unconsolidated deposits are considered aquifers when saturated and are much smaller than other regional aquifers. These aquifers are recharged by precipitation. Because they are present in small, discontinuous, unconsolidated (high porosity) surface aquifers overlying low-porosity crystalline rock, they are unlikely to be connected hydrologically to groundwater or other springs but are likely connected to nearby streams where they exist (reference (22)).

There are springs outside the Project area that provide a lot of the recharge for surface water bodies in the region, but they are located within the sedimentary aquifers that are not hydraulically connected to the crystalline core that underlies the project area (reference (22)).

3.2.2.2 Water Quality

The aquifers of the Black Hills crystalline core generally have low concentrations of dissolved solids (<500 mg/L) (reference (23)). The pH values are lower than other regional aquifers due to the absence of significant carbonate minerals in the igneous and metamorphic rocks that comprise the crystalline core; however, calcium bicarbonate is generally the dominant water type. Concentrations of most groundwater constituents are generally within drinking water standards, though local exceedances have been documented, particularly for iron and manganese.

The South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (SDSMT) compiled data from over 250 wells in the crystalline core aquifers of Pennington County. Based on the data, they evaluated aquifer vulnerability (reference (24)) and areas of concern for groundwater constituents (reference (25)). Aquifer vulnerability is the potential or likelihood that any contaminant could reach the ground-water supply, based on the presence of on-site wastewater disposal systems and roads over the crystalline aquifer.

The SDSMT aquifer vulnerability data does not cover the northernmost portion of the Project area. Most of the assessed Project area is rated as low to medium risk due to wastewater disposal systems, but an area around the southern exclusion zone is rated as medium to high risk. The study rates trails and a 100-foot buffer on either side of the trail as low risk and dirt roads and a 100-foot buffer on either side of the road as low to medium risk.
The Project area is partially included in areas of concern for arsenic, iron, and total (but not fecal) coliform (reference (25)). Arsenic is regulated in drinking water with a maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 µg/L due to its effects on skin and the circulatory system and as a potential carcinogen. The arsenic in water samples is most likely from weathering of arsenopyrite (either natural or accelerated by historical mining activities), particularly within faulted and mineralized zones. Iron in drinking water is considered a nuisance due to its effects on taste and potential for staining and scaling, but it is not a health hazard and has a secondary (non-mandatory) MCL of 300 µg/L. High iron is widespread in groundwater in the Black Hills crystalline core, though there appears to be a relationship between high values and mineralized zones. Total coliform bacteria are naturally present in the environment and are not considered a health threat by themselves, but they indicate that other potentially harmful bacteria might be present. Total coliform tests are often used to assess drinking water treatment efficacy (reference (25)). Manganese has also been reported as being elevated in the crystalline core aquifers, including exceedances of the secondary MCL of 50 µg/L (reference (23)).

It is important to note that subsurface conditions in the crystalline aquifers are highly heterogeneous and that concentrations may vary even over relatively short distances. The SDSMT study notes that although high values occur more frequently in certain areas, not every well in an area will have elevated values, and the only way to know if a well has a problem is to test it (reference (25)).

Water quality within the smaller, localized unconsolidated aquifers can be influenced by the underlying geology, with concentrations generally increasing away from the crystalline core (i.e., towards sedimentary aquifers). Groundwater from these aquifers has relatively high dissolved solids, particularly calcium, bicarbonate, and sulfate. High iron and manganese have also been observed in alluvial wells in the region (reference (23)). In populated locations, alluvial aquifers can be contaminated by septic systems (reference (26)).

### 3.2.2.3 Water Quantity

The crystalline core contains groundwater only within rock fractures (reference (22)). As a result, depths to water and production rates may vary widely, even over relatively short distances. The aquifers are not continuous, and the connectivity between wells can be difficult to characterize. The aquifers in the crystalline core are much less productive than the surrounding sedimentary aquifers. Recorded wells in the Project area generally range in depth from 80-140 feet below the surface, with reported static water levels of around 20-50 feet below the surface. Well test data report yields of approximately 10-60 gallons per minute (reference (19)).

Unconsolidated sedimentary aquifers are generally shallow but have appreciable primary porosity such that they contain abundant, accessible groundwater (reference (26); reference (27)). In locations where springs discharge from these aquifers or where these aquifers are otherwise feeding surface water, depth to water is low. No documented wells appear to exist in this unit within the Project area (reference (19)).
FIGURE 3-4

ALTERNATIVE C
HYDROLOGY, WETLANDS
AND OTHER FEATURES

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Soil, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

Inset maps are not to scale.

Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Alternate Drill Pad (Alternative C)
Staging Area (Alternative C)
Project Area
Project Exclusion Area/Private Property
Existing USFS Roads Used

Proposed Access Routes (Alternative C)
New Access Route
Alternate New Access Route
Overland/Trail Access Route

Hydrology Data
Domestic Water Well
Water Impoundment
Spring
Peatlands
Wetlands

Imagery: USDA-FSA NAIP (2020)

Notes:
Hydrology data provided by the U.S. Forest Service, unless noted otherwise.
South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources

South Dakota Deptartment of Environment and Natural Resources

Notes:
Hydrology data provided by the U.S. Forest Service, unless noted otherwise.

Inset maps are not to scale.
3.3 Environmental Consequences

The analysis of effects for hydrology (surface water and groundwater) assumes that applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 3.1.2), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 3.1.2), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 3.1.2) would be implemented during all Project activities. This analysis discusses the expected disturbance resulting from the implementation of the no action alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and the modified proposed action (Alternative C).

3.3.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A - No Action

Alternative A (No Action Alternative) provides a baseline to evaluate the effects of the proposed action (Alternative B) and the modified proposed action (Alternative C) as described in Section 2 of the EA.

3.3.1.1 Surface Water

Alternative A would not result in direct or indirect effects to surface water resources. Alternative A would not result in changes to streams, floodplains, riparian areas, wetland or springs.

3.3.1.2 Groundwater

Alternative A would not result in direct or indirect effects to groundwater resources from the Project. Alternative A would not result in changes to groundwater quantity or quality.

3.3.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B - Proposed Action

Under Alternative B, the Project would occur as described in Section 2 of the EA.

3.3.2.1 Surface Water

Under Alternative B, water supply needed for the Project would not be extracted from local surface waters; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source and brought to the site via water trucks. Under Alternative B, three drilling sites (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) are located within designated WIZ areas (Figure 3-1); as such, there is a potential for direct effects on surface water resources associated with these WIZ areas. As discussed above, these WIZ areas are meant to buffer perennial and intermittent streams, lakes, and wetlands and only actions that maintain or improve long-term stream health and riparian ecosystem condition are permitted in WIZ areas. One drill site (SCP-018) is located in the edge of a Zone A source water protection buffer; as such, there is a potential for direct effects on source water associated with this buffer.

The remaining 38 drill sites and two staging areas are not located within perennial or intermittent streams, springs, wetlands, fens, impoundments, WIZ areas, FEMA mapped 100-year floodplain, or Zone A source water protection buffers (Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-3); as such, direct impacts to surface water resources are not anticipated from these Project activities.

Potential short-term indirect effects on surface water resources could occur from Project activities, including run-off and subsequent sedimentation of nearby surface waters. The new temporary overland
trails would cross a wetland, several WIZ areas, two protected perennial streams (Jenny Gulch and an unnamed stream), one protected intermittent stream (Gorman Gulch), and several ephemeral streams (Figure 3-1). Existing access roads would cross perennial and ephemeral streams, wetlands, and WIZ areas (Figure 3-1); however, new environmental effects associated with these existing access roads are not anticipated. As mentioned above, existing access roads and temporary overland trails would only be improved if needed to gain access to the site.

Project activities are not anticipated to affect watershed condition classes, water yield, or the assigned beneficial uses or impairment statuses of any streams in the Project area. As stated above, any water used for drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced directly from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters. In addition, at the end of the drilling operations, excess water would be disposed of at a municipal wastewater disposal location, in agreement with the municipality.

The Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 3.1.2), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 3.1.2), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 3.1.2) to address the potential for effects on surface water. This could include installation of silt fencing to minimize sedimentation; storage of all fuels and oils associated with Project activities in appropriate containers/tanks and in a secondary containment to mitigate or minimize any spill hazards; and ensuring crossing of ephemeral streams occurs in a manner that maintains stream integrity. Ongoing visual inspection of water used during the drilling operations would be conducted to ensure proper capture and flow into the holding and settling tank circuit. Drill pads, staging areas and temporary overland trails would be reclaimed upon completion of all Project activities.

### 3.3.2.2 Groundwater

Under Alternative B, direct effects on groundwater resources are anticipated to be minor. The drilling would be completed under the supervision of a licensed driller. The downhole activity (drilling, drilling fluid, abandonment, etc.) is essentially the same as if a residential well were being constructed or abandoned. The only difference is that a core would be extracted from the hole for analysis. The exploratory drill holes would be cased through unconsolidated overburden for stability and to minimize mixing with any surface water.

Water would not be extracted from local groundwater; any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source and brought to the site via water trucks. To the extent possible, water will be recirculated and captured in holding tanks. The drilling water will initially meet any water quality standards applicable to its original source. However, it may be different in composition from any groundwater encountered within the Project area. Water sourced from the more productive sedimentary aquifers may result in limited dissolution and precipitation reactions, but these would be minor, localized, and short-term due to the limited quantity of drilling water. The introduction of oxygenated water into mineralized zones could lead to mobilization of acidity and/or metals, including arsenic, iron, and manganese, as occurs with drilling and installation of residential water wells. The reaction between the oxygen and sulfide minerals that leads to transport of the reacted materials by
groundwater can occur over short time scales (reference (28); (29); (30)). Subsequent reactions may limit the ability of the metals to travel long distances in the groundwater, although additional reactions can remobilize the metals, depending on aquifer conditions (reference (28); (31)). Given that the majority of the drilling will be completed in rock with no notable amounts of mineralization, the risk of these reactions causing a measurable impact to groundwater quality is very low. Without further changes in the amount of oxygen present, the aquifer will eventually restabilize (reference (28); (29)) There is no available documentation of this process resulting in aquifer contamination in the region.

Similarly, extracted mineralized cuttings could undergo these reactions and release acidity and/or metals to runoff or infiltration water. For cuttings to pose water quality concerns, the sulfides in the cuttings would need to be oxidized by air or water. As noted in Section 2.3.2.2, drill cuttings, a small percent of which may contain mineralized rock, will be buried on site (i.e., isolated from oxygen) or disposed of off-site to mitigate this risk. In addition, the bentonite clays and muds used in drilling (contained in the drill mud) helps to isolate potential mineralized rock from the environment and tends to absorb and immobilize metal ions that may be released. This further minimizes the risk of groundwater contamination.

Potential short-term indirect effects on groundwater resources could occur from Project activities, including changes in water levels in any fracture-flow aquifers and wells encountered during drilling. If there are enough exploration holes that happen to intersect enough of the right fracture(s), it could reduce the yield for other wells including domestic wells, though this risk is low due to the discontinuous nature of the aquifer (reference (27)), multiple fractures supplying wells, and low number of wells in close proximity to planned borehole locations. Given the deep extent of crystalline rock, it is unlikely that any high-yield aquifers would be encountered and mix with water in the existing fracture-flow aquifer.

During the borehole abandonment process, grout will be injected into the holes to seal them so that surface water cannot enter the aquifer. The injected grout does not expand far beyond the hole within the overburden. The effect of the grout in the overburden is very local; however, the injected grout can spread into the fractures of the aquifer if they intersect the borehole, although grout is unlikely to migrate more than a few feet from the borehole within the narrow width of the fractures.

The Project would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 3.1.2), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 3.1.2), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 3.1.2) to address the potential for groundwater impacts and will follow the guidelines set forth by the DANR that pertain to monitoring groundwater and wells; this could include storage of all fuels and oils associated with Project activities in appropriate containers/tanks and in a secondary containment to mitigate or minimize any spill hazards that may enter shallow aquifers, and monitoring water levels and quality. The Project will be required to follow South Dakota Rules Chapter 74-11-08, Capping, Sealing, and Plugging Exploration Test Holes. In addition, the USFS will require that plugging reports are submitted as part of the reclamation plan and borehole plugging will be subject to inspection by the State.
3.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

Under Alternative C, the Project would occur as described in Section 2 of the EA.

3.3.3.1 Surface Water

Under Alternative C, the potential effects on surface water resources would be generally similar to those described for Alternative B with some exceptions. Alternative C would relocate the placement of three drill sites (SCP-004, SCP-028, and SCP-033) outside of WIZ areas (Figure 3-2), thereby removing the potential for direct effects to and maintaining the purpose and integrity of the WIZ. As discussed in Section 2.3 of the EA, existing USFS administrative roads would be used to access sites to the extent practicable; in some cases, this may include travel through the WIZ on these existing roads. Locations accessed through the WIZ would be planned for winter construction to the extent practicable; however, should site conditions at the time of construction warrant these administrative roads unusable (i.e., flooding in the WIZ or another reason), three drilling pads (SCP-045, SCP-046, and SCP-047) would be shifted to alternate locations to avoid traversing the WIZ. In addition, drill site SCP-018, which is located in the edge of a Zone A source water protection buffer under Alternative B, would not be used as a drill site location for Alternative C.

None of the drill sites or two staging areas under Alternative C are located within perennial or intermittent streams, springs, wetlands, fens, impoundments, WIZ areas, FEMA mapped 100-year floodplain, or Zone A source water protection buffers (Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-4); as such, direct impacts to surface water resources are not anticipated from these Project activities.

Potential short-term indirect effects on surface water resources could occur from Project activities, including run-off and subsequent sedimentation of nearby surface waters. The new temporary overland trails would cross several WIZ areas; these crossings primarily occur along the edges of the WIZ (Figure 3-2). One exception to this is the overland trail crossing of an intermittent and protected section of Jenny Gulch and the WIZ associated with it (Figure 3-2). The new temporary overland trails would also cross several ephemeral streams (Figure 3-2). Existing access roads would cross WIZ areas (as described above) and perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams (Figure 3-2); however, new environmental effects associated with these existing access roads are not anticipated. As mentioned above, existing access roads and temporary overland trails would only be improved if needed to gain access to the site.

Project activities are not anticipated to affect watershed condition classes, public water supply systems, water yield, or the assigned beneficial uses or impairment statuses of any streams in the Project area. As stated above, any water used for drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced directly from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters.

Alternative C would include implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 3.1.2), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 3.1.2), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 3.1.2) to address the potential for effects on surface water. In addition, under Alternative C each drill pad and temporary overland trail would be reclaimed immediately upon completion of use, rather than upon completion of all drilling activities, as is the case.
under Alternative B. This change would stabilize the soil immediately and therefore further minimize the potential for runoff and subsequent sedimentation of nearby surface waters.

3.3.3.2 Groundwater
Under Alternative C, the potential effects on groundwater resources would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

3.4 Cumulative Effects
The following section provides an assessment of the potential cumulative effects on surface and groundwater resources resulting from implementation of the Project and the potential interaction with the effects on these resources from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Because the potential effects to soil and geologic resources are comparable for Alternative B and Alternative C, they are discussed together with regard for their potential for cumulative effects.

3.4.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions
Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area’s existing landscape. Present and foreseeable future activities may contribute to effects on surface and groundwater resources. The effects of these present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B and/or C could potentially result in cumulative effects on surface and groundwater resources. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New cell tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses

3.4.2 Cumulative Effects to Surface Water and Groundwater
Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), and implementation of applicable applicant-proposed minimization measures (see Table 2-1 in the EA), National BMPs (see Section 3.1.2), Region 2 WCPs (see Section 3.1.2), and Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines (see Section 3.1.2), the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on surface and groundwater resources.
4 Monitoring

F3 will be required to conduct monitoring activities per applicable USFS National BMPs, USFS Region 2 WCPs, Forest Plan direction standards and guidelines, and permit conditions.
5 References


Appendix F

Public Health and Safety Technical Report
Public Health and Safety Technical Report

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project

Prepared for
United States Forest Service

May 2022
Public Health and Safety Technical Report
May 2022

Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1

2 Public Health and Safety ................................................................................................................................................... 2

2.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................................................................... 2

2.1.1 Information Sources ................................................................................................................................................. 2

2.1.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction ............................................................ 2

2.1.2.1 Black Hills National Forest Plan Direction .............................................................................................. 2

2.1.3 Study Methodology .................................................................................................................................................. 3

2.2 Affected Environment ................................................................................................................................................... 3

2.2.1 Air Quality ..................................................................................................................................................................... 3

2.2.2 Light Pollution ............................................................................................................................................................. 3

2.2.3 Noise ............................................................................................................................................................................... 3

2.2.4 Hazardous Waste and Contamination .............................................................................................................. 5

2.2.5 Other Public Health and Safety Considerations ............................................................................................ 5

2.3 Environmental Consequences ................................................................................................................................... 5

2.3.1 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A – No Action ........................................................................... 5

2.3.2 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B – Proposed Action .............................................................. 5

2.3.2.1 Air Quality ........................................................................................................................................................... 5

2.3.2.2 Light Pollution ................................................................................................................................................... 6

2.3.2.3 Noise ..................................................................................................................................................................... 6

2.3.2.4 Hazardous Waste and Contamination .................................................................................................... 6

2.3.2.5 Other Potential Public Health and Safety Concerns .......................................................................... 7

2.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C – Modified Proposed Action........................................... 7

2.3.3.1 Air Quality ........................................................................................................................................................... 7

2.3.3.2 Light Pollution ................................................................................................................................................... 7

2.3.3.3 Noise ..................................................................................................................................................................... 7

2.3.3.4 Hazardous Waste and Contamination .................................................................................................... 7

2.3.3.5 Other Potential Public Health and Safety Concerns .......................................................................... 9

2.4 Cumulative Effects .......................................................................................................................................................... 9

2.4.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions ..................................................................................... 9
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATV</td>
<td>all-terrain vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHNF</td>
<td>Black Hills National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dB(A)</td>
<td>decibel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD DANR</td>
<td>South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMT</td>
<td>emergency medical treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAAQS</td>
<td>National Ambient Air Quality Standards</td>
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<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act</td>
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1 Introduction

This technical report summarizes the public health and safety resources within the vicinity of F3 Gold, LLC (F3) Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project in Pennington County, South Dakota (Project; Figure 1-1 of the Environmental Assessment (EA)) and the Project's potential effects on public health and safety. This technical report is intended to supplement the assessment of environmental effects related to public health and safety found in the accompanying EA.

The purpose and need of the Project is discussed in Section 1.2 of the EA. This technical report analyzes environmental effects for three alternatives: Alternative A (No Action), Alternative B (Proposed Action), and Alternative C (Modified Proposed Action). Each of these alternatives is described in detail in Section 2 of the EA.
2 Public Health and Safety

2.1 Introduction
This section addresses the public health and safety hazards in the Project area and its immediate surroundings, and the Project’s potential impacts on public health and safety. The only issues relevant to the analysis, as identified by comments received during scoping, was concern about the Project generating noise and light pollution and the potential for hazardous waste spills and subsequent contamination.

2.1.1 Information Sources
There are several existing documents and data sources containing baseline information on public health and safety in the Project area. The following document and data sources were reviewed:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Hazardous Waste);
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Environmental Health, Noise Section;
- National Park Service (Science of Light); and
- South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SD DANR; Hazardous Waste).

2.1.2 Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policy, and Forest Plan Direction

2.1.2.1 Black Hills National Forest Plan Direction
The Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) Forest Plan identifies standards and guidelines to inform management related to various resources. As summarized in the Forest Plan, a standard is defined as a limitation on management activities within the authority and ability of the agency to meet or enforce. Standards are used to determine if individual projects are in compliance with the Forest Plan. Deviation from the requirement requires a Forest Plan amendment. A guideline is a preferred or advisable course of action. Deviation from a guideline is permissible if the responsible official documents the reasons for the deviation.

There are no Forest Plan standards or guidelines specific to public health and safety. However, the Forest Plan does contain objectives and standards related to air quality and contamination, which could also serve to maintain public health and safety, including:

- Objective 101. Maintain air quality standards in accordance with state implementation plans.
- Standard 1107. Where there is potential for toxic contamination of soil from ground disturbing activities (e.g., oil or gas drilling or mineral exploration), a contingency plan to prevent or rehabilitate soil contamination shall be developed.

In addition, F3 would be required to comply with a number of other programs as part of project permitting that have a correlation to public health and safety.
2.1.3 Study Methodology

Based on the information sources gathered, review of public scoping comments, and using professional experience and judgment, this analysis:

- Identifies the activities that could affect public health and safety; and
- Discusses the likely effects of the three alternatives on public health and safety.

Project scoping indicated concerns related to the potential for Project-related noise and light pollution and hazardous waste and subsequent contamination. Potential impacts are assessed by evaluating the nature and extent of noise and light from Project construction vehicles and infrastructure, as well as the nature and extent of materials used for the Project and potential for spills.

2.2 Affected Environment

2.2.1 Air Quality

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SD DANR) monitors air quality in South Dakota for compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The NAAQS include maximum allowable pollution levels for particulate matter (PM), ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, lead, and carbon monoxide. The closest air quality monitoring location is located in Black Hawk at Back Hawk Elementary. At this monitoring location PM, did not exceed the 24-hour standard in the past five-year review period. In addition, concentrations of ozone did not exceed the 8-hour daily maximum concentration in the five-year review period (reference (1)). Generally, air quality at this location is considered satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk to human health or safety.

2.2.2 Light Pollution

Light pollution is defined as excessive or obtrusive artificial light that interferes with and washes out the night sky (reference (2)). Light pollution can disrupt animals with nocturnal instincts, confuse species on migratory flights, and excessive light pollution for extended periods of time can lead to disruptions in human circadian rhythms (reference (2)). Glare and sky glow are the two main types of light pollution (reference (2)). Glare is the result of un-shielding lights that could cause a public health hazard. Glare in the eye can cause light contrast and may cause unsafe driving conditions if lighting is not properly shielded. Sky glow is the glow that can be seen when driving towards larger cities that blocks out the starry night sky.

Existing sources of light pollution in the Project area are residential lighting (both homes and outbuildings), as well as headlights from existing vehicular and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) traffic traveling through the Project area.

2.2.3 Noise

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Noise is measured in units of decibel (dB(A)) on a logarithmic scale. Table 2-1 shows dB(A) values for some typical sources (reference (3); reference (4)). Sounds less than 60 dB(A) typically do not cause hearing damage or annoyance, while prolonged sounds
of 70 dB(A) or more typically begin to cause annoyance. Sounds in excess of 100 dB(A) can cause hearing loss within 15 minutes or less if proper hearing protection is not in place (reference (3)). Noise can be attenuated (i.e. lessened) by topography, vegetation, structures, and other landscape features. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development has established guidelines for noise standards that define acceptable and unacceptable noise levels for sustained environmental and community noise exposure (reference(5)):

- Noise levels below 65 dB(A) are acceptable
- Noise levels between 65 to 75 dB(A) are normally unacceptable
- Noise levels over 75 dB(A) are unacceptable

### Table 2-1 Noise Levels from Common Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Sound Level (dB(A))</th>
<th>Common Indoor and Outdoor Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Threshold of hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Normal breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Ticking watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet, rural nighttime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Soft whisper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet, rural nighttime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Refrigerator hum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet, urban or suburban nighttime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Normal conversation, air conditioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Washing machine, dishwasher</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>Pickup Truck¹</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>Drill rig truck¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Excavator¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>Gas powered lawnmower or leaf blower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Sporting events (hockey playoffs or football games)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Rock band at approximately 15 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Standing beside or near sirens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140-150</td>
<td>Firecrackers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Federal Highway Administration Construction Noise Handbook, noise levels are measured 50 feet of the noise source (reference (6)).

Existing noise in the Project area is consistent with that of a rural setting and includes residential noise sources (lawn mowing, barking dogs, vehicular traffic, etc.). The Project area experiences regular noise from recreational ATV use on existing roadways and motorized vehicle trails, and there is also snowmobile noise during winter months. In addition, there are temporary increases in motorcycle-generated noise during the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally.
2.2.4 **Hazardous Waste and Contamination**

The Project is located in a rural setting that has historically been used for mining, though there are currently few residential or industrial uses. According to review of the SD DANR tanks and spills database (reference (7)), no hazardous waste sites, spills, or tank facilities are known to occur within the Project area. The SD DANR database is limited to reportable quantities for petroleum products greater than 25 gallons. Smaller spills/releases are often not reported and may have occurred within the Project area.

2.2.5 **Other Public Health and Safety Considerations**

The Project area is positioned in a rural setting with limited direct access to emergency services. The nearest hospital clinic and emergency medical facilities are located in Rapid City, approximately 15.5 miles from the Project area at its nearest point via the existing roadway network. The Project is located in the service area of the Silver City Volunteer Fire Department, which provides entirely volunteer-based fire suppression and emergency medical treatment (EMT) services. The department has wildland-, structure-, and EMT-certified firefighters on its roster and is located approximately 0.6 miles from the Project area at its nearest point via the existing roadway network. In addition, the BHNF Mystic Ranger District maintains a fire crew in its Rapid City location, which primarily responds to fires on forest system lands within the district.

2.3 **Environmental Consequences**

The analysis of effects for public health and safety assumes that applicant-proposed impact minimization measures would be implemented during all Project activities. This analysis discusses the expected disturbance resulting from the implementation of Alternative A, Alternative B, and Alternative C.

2.3.1 **Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative A - No Action**

Alternative A provides a baseline to evaluate the effects of Alternative B and Alternative C as described in Section 2 of the EA.

Alternative A would not result in direct or indirect effects to public health and safety; because a Project would not be implemented, there would be no changes to the current public health and safety conditions in the Project area.

2.3.2 **Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative B - Proposed Action**

Direct and indirect effects associated with Alternative B are described in the following subsections.

2.3.2.1 **Air Quality**

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct and indirect effects on air quality could occur. Use of construction equipment would generate carbon dioxide. Site access and earth work would also temporarily generate dust within the immediate project vicinity; however, dust could be minimized with water. It is not anticipated that the generated carbon dioxide and dust would reduce air quality standards
below the NAAQS. These effects would be limited to the immediate construction area and only last for the duration of construction activities.

### 2.3.2.2 Light Pollution

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct and indirect effects from light pollution could occur. Additionally, nighttime drilling activities may generate short-term, localized light pollution from drilling equipment that may be visible within and adjacent to the Project area. Light pollution from drilling could temporarily affect residences or recreationists that are within close proximity of the drill pads, causing temporary irritation to residents or causing recreationists to use other areas of the BHNF. These short-term light pollution impacts would be minimized by the steep terrain and forested areas surrounding drill pads. Overall, light impacts are anticipated to be localized, short-term, and are not expected to be significant. Residences in close proximity to Project activities would be notified prior to initiation.

### 2.3.2.3 Noise

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized (i.e. not sustained) direct and indirect effects from noise could occur. Short-term, localized noise from heavy equipment and increased vehicle traffic is expected to occur in the Project area during the day and night. Noise, associated with drilling, could temporarily affect residences or recreationists that are close to the drill pads, causing temporary irritation to residents or causing recreationists to use other areas of the BHNF. Noise may also be either lessened or exacerbated depending on wind direction. Based on the equipment F3 proposes to use, noise levels within 400 feet of the drilling equipment are anticipated to be 38.2 dB(A), approximately the equivalent noise levels experienced in suburban areas at night or a refrigerator hum and align with current ambient noise levels. Overall, noise impacts are anticipated to be localized, short-term, and are not expected to be significant. Once drilling is complete at a specific location, noise would once again match ambient conditions. Although all residences are more than 500 feet from Alternative B drilling locations, residences in closer proximity to Project activities would be notified prior to initiation.

### 2.3.2.4 Hazardous Waste and Contamination

Under Alternative B, potential short-term, localized direct and indirect effects related to hazardous waste and contamination could occur through inadvertent spills or leaks of fuel or oils from access/site prep, drilling equipment, and/or lighting equipment. Project drilling would use water; no chemical-based solutions or fluids would be used. As such, drilling activities would not directly generate hazardous waste. Fluid leaks and spills from construction equipment would be promptly cleaned up, and any contaminated soil would be removed and disposed of off-site. As part of standard USFS permit conditions, F3 would be required to report all spills and leaks to the USFS and would also be required to comply with SD DANR spill reporting requirements, as well as all associated cleanup of spills and leaks. In addition, F3 may be required to prepare a spill prevention, control, and countermeasure plan as dictated by the size of any storage tanks that may be used on-site and in accordance with applicable regulations and permit conditions. F3 may also coordinate with USFS regarding any additional spill control measures requested by the agency as part of project review and approval.
2.3.2.5 Other Potential Public Health and Safety Concerns

As with any project involving machinery, the potential for fire ignition exists if vehicles are left idling for an extended period of time in areas of taller vegetation. This potential would be mitigated by confining construction equipment to the drill pad and/or staging area.

An emergency response plan would be developed for the Project and would be provided to local first responders in advance of Project initiation. This plan would address a multitude of emergency situations (fire, injury, etc.) and would be developed in conjunction with local first responders. In addition to routine inspections, thorough safety checks would be completed daily on vehicles, drill rigs, and other equipment. Each vehicle would be equipped with at least one fire extinguisher and all equipment would contain a shovel for fire suppression. A site security plan would be developed to maintain site safety and limit risk of public interference.

2.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action

Direct and indirect effects associated with Alternative C are described in the following subsections.

2.3.3.1 Air Quality

Under Alternative C, the potential effects to Air Quality would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

2.3.3.2 Light Pollution

Under Alternative C, the potential effects of light pollution would be the same as those described for Alternative B except drilling would be limited to one, 12-hour daytime shift (7:00am to 7:00pm) for drill pads within 500 feet of a residence to mitigate potential nighttime light pollution via use of floodlights and other equipment lighting. This applies to drill pads SCP-12, SCP-020, and SCP-033, shown in Figure 2-1.

2.3.3.3 Noise

Under Alternative C, the potential effects of noise would be the same as those described for Alternative B, except drilling would limited to one, 12-hour daytime shift (7:00am – 7:00pm) for drill pads within 500 feet of a residence to mitigate potential nighttime equipment and drilling noise. This applies to drill pads SCP-12, SCP-020, and SCP-033, shown in Figure 2-1.

2.3.3.4 Hazardous Waste and Contamination

Under Alternative C, the potential effects to hazardous waste and subsequent contamination would be the same as those described for Alternative B.
FIGURE 2-1

ALTERNATIVE C DRILL PADS WITHIN 500-FEET OF RESIDENCES
Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project
Public Health and Safety Technical Report
Pennington County, SD

Barr Footer: ArcGIS 10.7.1, 2021-03-17 08:27 File: I:\Projects\41\51\1007\Maps\Reports\Tech_Reports\Public_Health_and_Safety_Mar2021\Figure 2-1 Alternative C Drill Pads within 500-feet of Residences.mxd User: MRQ
2.3.3.5 Other Potential Public Health and Safety Concerns

Under Alternative C, the potential for additional public health and safety concerns would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

2.4 Cumulative Effects

The following section provides an assessment of the potential cumulative effects on public health and safety from implementation of the Project and the potential interaction with the effects on these resources from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects. Because the potential effects to public health and safety are comparable for Alternative B and Alternative C, they are discussed together with regard for their potential for cumulative effects.

2.4.1 Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

Various activities have occurred in the past, are presently occurring, or are planned to occur in the foreseeable future within or near the Project area. Past and on-going forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area's existing landscape. Present and foreseeable future activities may contribute to effects on public health and safety. The effects of these present and foreseeable future projects combined with the effects of Alternative B and/or C could potentially result in cumulative effects on public health and safety. The foreseeable future projects that could potentially contribute to cumulative effects are listed below and are further described in the Environmental Assessment.

- South Dakota Network Fiberoptic Cable – 15 miles northwest of Project area
- New radio tower near Silver City Community Hall – 0.2 miles south of Project area
- Upper Jenny, Kelly, and Lower Jenny grazing allotment pastures
- Timber sales located within the Project vicinity and approved to occur within the next 5 years
- Prescribed burns – eastern two-thirds of Project area
- Recreational event permits for intermittent recreational outfitter and guide uses

2.4.2 Cumulative Effects to Public Health and Safety

Due to the temporary nature of the Project, minimal disturbance area (up to 3.8 acres for Alternative B and up to 6.1 acres for Alternative C), and F3’s adherence to Forest Plan standards and guidelines, the Project is not likely to interact with other present and foreseeable future projects to contribute to cumulative effects on public health and safety.
3 References


Appendix G

Public Involvement Plan
Public Involvement Plan

Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project

Prepared for
United States Forest Service

July 2022
Public Involvement Plan

July 2022

Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1
2 Stakeholders .......................................................................................................................................................................... 2
3 Public and Agency Outreach Plan ........................................................................................................................................ 3
  3.1 Mailings .............................................................................................................................................................................. 3
  3.2 Public Scoping Comment Period ........................................................................................................................................ 3
  3.3 Public Information Meeting ........................................................................................................................................ 4
  3.4 Interagency Scoping Meeting ........................................................................................................................................ 4
  3.5 Tribal Government to Government Consultation ........................................................................................................ 4
  3.6 Additional Meetings ...................................................................................................................................................... 5
  3.7 Media Engagement ........................................................................................................................................................ 5
  3.8 USFS Project Website .................................................................................................................................................... 5
  3.9 Draft EA Public Review and Comment Period ..................................................................................................... 6
  3.10 Final EA and Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact ................................................................. 6
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FONSI</td>
<td>Finding of No Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THPO</td>
<td>Tribal Historic Preservation Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>United States Forest Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

This document serves as the public involvement plan for the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project (Project) proposed by F3 Gold LLC. This plan was drafted by Barr Engineering Co. (Prime Consultant for the Project) in coordination with the United States Forest Service (USFS). This plan is subject to future edits and adaptations as the Project progresses. The Project will be conducted under the 36 CFR Part 218 objection process.

The Project involves exploratory drilling at up to 47 locations (depending on selected alternative) north of Silver City, Pennington County, South Dakota in Sections 19, 30, 31, T2N R5E and Sections 13, 14, 24, 25, T2N R4E. The USFS determined that an Environmental Assessment (EA) must be prepared to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement is required or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is possible.

Public participation and interagency coordination are integral elements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and are intended to promote open communication between USFS, federal and state regulatory agencies, local governments, American Indian tribes, potential stakeholder organizations, and the public. Information gathered during the public involvement processes outlined within this plan supported development of the EA.

The objectives for involving the public in the NEPA process include:

- clarifying public involvement methods,
- refining issues,
- selecting an interdisciplinary team,
- establishing analysis criteria, and
- exploring possible alternatives and their probable environmental effects.
2 Stakeholders

Individuals and organizations with an interest in the Project were encouraged to participate in the public involvement process to express concerns and identify issues related to the Project.

A list of interested parties, or “stakeholders” is maintained within the Project mailing list (Section 3.1). Stakeholders were identified by the USFS, the Project proposer, via review of stakeholder lists from projects in similar geographies, or were self-identified or assumed (e.g., non-governmental organizations or nearby landowners with an assumed interested in the Project). Stakeholders also include governmental organizations such as adjacent other federal, state, and local agencies with overlapping permitting authority or information pertaining to local resource conditions.
3 Public and Agency Outreach Plan

The following strategies were used to reach stakeholders and interested parties:

- Mailings
- Public scoping comment period
- Public information scoping meeting
- Interagency scoping meeting
- Tribal government to government consultation
- Media engagement
- USFS Project website

Additional details regarding each strategy are provided in the following subsections.

3.1 Mailings

A stakeholder and adjacent landowner list, including mailing addresses for each person or entity identified, is maintained for the Project. This stakeholder list was used to distribute the Project scoping letter and statement.

The scoping letter and statement is the only mailing that was distributed to all identified stakeholders. The scoping statement was mailed within two weeks prior to the public information meeting (Section 3.3). The scoping statement included instructions on how to submit comments related to the Project, as well as the date, time, and location of the public information meeting.

A notification of availability of the Draft EA will be distributed to all parties who submitted a scoping comment, as well as Tribal and government partners from the Project scoping mailing list.

Although Project documents are available on the USFS website (https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428), hard copy documents or CDs/DVDs of the Draft EA and Final EA/FONSI and the Decision Document will be distributed to parties that have specifically requested copies in this format.

3.2 Public Scoping Comment Period

Written comments were formally received by the USFS during a 30-day public scoping period. This public scoping period began on January 6, 2020 with the mailing of the scoping statement. Comments were accepted via mail (8221 Mount Rushmore Rd., Rapid City, SD 57702), email (Comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-mystic@usda.gov), “F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project” as the subject or by facsimile (605-343-7134). Comments were requested within 30-days of the date of the public scoping mailing; however all comments received after this date were also accepted by the USFS. Comments submitted, including names and addresses of commenters, are public information.

A total of 339 scoping comment letters were submitted. One comment letter consisted of a form letter that was submitted by 196 people. Comments were reviewed and cataloged based on resource issues.
Issues identified in the comment letters were used to help inform the development of the EA. Responses to scoping comments were developed and are included as an appendix to the EA.

### 3.3 Public Information Meeting

A public information meeting was held January 16, 2020 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the USFS Mystic Ranger District Office to provide information on the Project and to serve as a means of allowing the public to bring forward Project questions or comments. Barr and USFS staff members attended this meeting in person and were available to answer questions throughout the meeting. The public information meeting was an open-house format for the majority of meeting with a short, planned presentation toward the middle of the meeting.

The following materials were prepared to help facilitate the meeting and to provide means of documenting public comments received during the meeting:

- Sign-in sheet,
- Project map(s),
- Project overview presentation slides,
- A scoping statement handout,
- Comment form for those wishing to provide written comment during the meeting, and
- A log for Barr or USFS staff to note comments received during discussions.

Meeting notes and written comments were provided to USFS after the meeting. A total of 101 people attended the meeting.

### 3.4 Interagency Scoping Meeting

The USFS extended an invitation to potentially interested federal, state, county, city, and tribal agencies to participate in an interagency scoping meeting on January 16, 2020 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. MST at the USFS Mystic Ranger District Office. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Project, discuss data needs, and solicit input regarding possible issues and concerns. A total of 20 people attended the meeting, including representatives from the following entities: USFS, Oglala Lakota Nation, South Dakota Game Fish and Parks, South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources – Mining and Minerals Program, Pennington County, City of Rapid City, and Barr Engineering Co.

Following this meeting, a report was generated documenting participants and agencies represented, along with a summary of the meeting discussions.

### 3.5 Tribal Government to Government Consultation

The USFS solicited government to government consultation interest in a mailing distributed to 16 Tribal entities on January 6, 2020, including the following tribes; Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux

Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 17, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in-person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 13, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021.

On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Cultural Resources Inventory was provided to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) as identified per 36 CFR 800.3, to provide comment on the Agency’s (USFS) determination of the proposed undertaking’s effect to cultural resources on July 2, 2021.

A communication was distributed to Tribal entities that commented on the Draft EA on November 8, 2021, acknowledging receipt of their written comments and notifying them that the USFS Tribal Relations Specialist would be reaching out to schedule formal government to government consultation.

USFS distributed an additional mailing to Tribal entities on December 1, 2021, inviting the recipients to engage in formal government to government consultation. Consultation efforts resumed in early 2022. Government to government consultation was held with the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe on January 27, 2022, the Oglala Lakota Sioux Tribe on January 28, 2022, and with the Three Affiliated Tribes (MHA Nation) on February 22, 2022 and April 11, 2022. In addition, pre-consultation meetings occurred with the Yankton Sioux Tribe on February 2 and February 23, 2022.

3.6 Additional Meetings

The USFS participated in the following additional stakeholder outreach meetings:

- Rapid City and Ellsworth Air Force Base - March 11, 2020
- National Forest Advisory Board – April 15, 2020

3.7 Media Engagement

A press release was prepared announcing the public scoping in the local newspaper(s). Media engagement at a large scale did not occur for this Project. The USFS will publish the Decision Notice in the newspaper of record. No other USFS-lead media engagement is planned.

3.8 USFS Project Website

The USFS has established a Project website on which relevant Project documents are posted. The Project website is publicly available at [https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428](https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428).
3.9 Draft EA Public Review and Comment Period

A legal notice was published on September 22, 2021, in the Rapid City Journal, newspaper of record, announcing availability of and an opportunity to comment on the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Draft EA. In addition, all parties who submitted a scoping comment or requested to be added to the Project mailing list received a postcard notifying them of the availability of the Draft EA and opportunity to comment on it. In situations where a mailing address was not provided, an email notification was sent.

All Project materials were made available on the Black Hills National Forest website at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428. The Draft EA was made available for a 30-day agency and public review period. During this time, comments on the Draft EA were accepted via US Mail (8221 Mount Rushmore Rd, Rapid City, SD 57702), via email (Comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-mystic@usda.gov) with “F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project” as the subject, hand-delivered, or by facsimile (605-343-7134). Comments were requested within 30 days of the date of the legal notice. Comments submitted, including names and addresses of commenters, are public information.

Approximately 416 comment letters, including 6 form letters, were received; however, 20 of these comment letters were received after the 30-day comment period. All comments that were received were reviewed and cataloged based on resource issue and USFS provided responses to each comment. However, comments received after the 30-day comment period will not have standing to file an objection per the 36 CFR 218 regulations.

3.10 Final EA and Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact

A legal notice was published on July 8, 2022, in the Rapid City Journal, newspaper of record, announcing availability of the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Final EA and Draft Decision Notice (DN)/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). All parties who submitted a scoping comment or Draft EA comment, or otherwise requested to be added to the Project mailing list, received a postcard notifying them of the availability of the Final EA and Draft DN/FONSI. In situations where a mailing address was not provided, an email notification was sent.

All Project materials will be made available on the Black Hills National Forest website at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428. This Project is subject to the 36 CFR 218 objection process. To file an objection, a specific written comment must have been submitted during the specified scoping and/or Draft EA public comment periods. The Final EA and Draft DN/FONSI will be made available for the 45-day objection period, starting from the date of the legal notice (July 8, 2022). Electronic objections must be submitted to the Objection Reviewing Officer online at https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public//CommentInput?Project=57428, with “Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project Objection” in the subject line. Objections may also be submitted via US Mail, private carrier, or hand delivered to: Black Hills National Forest Supervisor’s Office, Attn: Objection Reviewing Officer at 1019 North 5th St., Custer, SD 57730; or by facsimile (605) 673-9350. Objections are due 45 days following the publication of the legal notice in the Rapid City Journal on July 8, 2022. Submitted objections are public information.
Appendix H

Scoping Comments and Responses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dudley</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>This is an area we all use for our recreation and a big part of why we all enjoy living in the area of the Black Hills. I can think of no idea worse than this.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudley</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>There is no doubt in my mind that this would result in a considerable change in the appearance of the area and may also affect water quality.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Count us among those who are opposed to this project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>As a long term Black Hills resident, I have been concerned by the repeated miscalculations of environmental detriment associated with local mining operations. I find it inexcusable that government leaders have allowed our state to become host to Superfund sites as a result of such mining ventures. Even exploration permits should be viewed with utmost skepticism in view of past events.</td>
<td>This project will comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>No mining exploitation! Water is precious and MUST be protected! The Black Hills are precious and do not need this destruction.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>You all know, once contaminated, the land and water are never restored...no matter how the ‘clean up’ is done!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>No to mining above Pactola!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The Scoping Letter indicates that road 141 28 will be used to access drill holes. This Forest Service Road is in bad shape due to seasonal rains. Moving large equipment over the road may create some additional damage to the road. I would encourage the Forest Service or the contractors doing this project to improve FSR 141.28 before or after they do the drilling work.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We do not want to have Rapid Creek or Pactola compromised for gold mining.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>They also want traffic into the proposed area to come off the Redford Road.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>do not want the added traffic and noise of drilling operations and we all know that if gold is found that F3 Gold LLC or some other business will want to mine that gold.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation and noise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Gold mines have historically polluted water in the surrounding areas as evidenced by the Northern Hills sites and even exploratory drilling has great potential for polluting ground water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We do not want to have Rapid Creek or Pactola compromised for gold mining.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The above text is a combination of comments from various individuals regarding project-related effects, primarily focused on the potential impact on water quality, transportation, and mining activities. The responses reflect the evaluation by the Environmental Assessment (EA) process, considering the General Mining Law of 1872 and other relevant laws and regulations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>11 1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>It’s ridiculous to let companies come in and destroy our land, land that belongs to all of us.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td>Comment noted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>11 2 Incorporate</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>With Tourism is a huge part of our state and by letting them drill which will destroy beauty of this area and noise and extra traffic will definitely take away from people enjoying the beauty and quiet</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>11 3 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The people of this state are not benefiting from this at all.</td>
<td>Comment noted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>11 4 Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Vegetation &amp; Timber Resources</td>
<td>They will come in and destroy the forest and I can bet that they will not put it back the way it was!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and timber resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Forest Service will approve a reclamation plan as a part of the Final Plan of Operations. The Forest Service will monitor the implementation of the reclamation plan and will not release the bond until the agency’s reclamation requirements have been met.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td>11 5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>They say they won’t take water from Rapid Creek - who’s going to monitor that and make sure they don’t?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>11 5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Further exploration would in my opinion destroy the aesthetics of our community.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Jane</td>
<td>Belz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am completely against this drilling project!</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>Breen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The public lands feeding this water source should not be allowed for exploration, and under current laws the incentive for exploration can, and must, be removed.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (BPL) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>Breen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process EA vs EIS</td>
<td>It is not enough to only have an environmental assessment study.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick</td>
<td>Breen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process EA vs EIS</td>
<td>I expect you to use all of your influences to move/push aggressively forward with a full environmental impact study and make sure we / you protect our valuable resources/water from mining in the Pactola watershed.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darcey</td>
<td>Baker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Drill baby drill!</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Elbeck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am strongly opposed to any exploratory drilling and most definitely any mining whatsoever!</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Elbeck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>To risk damaging the beauty and environment (see waarf mine!) and most certainly the water quality, especially the watershed/headwaters of Pactola Reservoir for the sake of gold (money) is not worth the risk in any shape or form.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Elbeck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am now and forever will be opposed to exploratory drilling and any mining now or in the future</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Tjader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>My comment is that the risk to drinking and other water resource use is too great for any gold mine so that even drilling for exploratory purposes should be rejected outright for the safety of our children, our communities, our recreation &amp; tourism resources, agricultural interests, and our economy.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (BPL) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Tjader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>The company must release its plan of operations for public review.</td>
<td>F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Tjader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The public should be presented hydrological transport models, prevention and emergency measures for spills in the drill/exploratory phase, evidence of hazard mitigation bonds &amp; amounts, assessment of road conditions, especially new roads, plans for protection of cultural resources, &amp; restoration/capping of drill site areas.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources. In addition, F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Tjader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>Pactola Reservoir is an 800 acre, 5,300 acre-foot water resource that cannot be replaced. Tax payers have a critical interest in its water security. Studies have shown 14% of operating gold mines polluted surface and/or groundwater, including drinking water. Often taxpayers are left with legacy of water pollution &amp; cleanup costs.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie McCoy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Fish &amp; Wildlife Access &amp; Transportation Mining</td>
<td>I am greatly concerned about the safety of the habitat for native birds and animals which would be disturbed by the traffic, machinery, and pollution involved with the exploratory drilling and subsequent mining.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie McCoy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Having watched the major increase in traffic of trucks on Highway 18 following a mining operation, I question the amount and effect of increased traffic on the Silver City Rd and the back roads in the mining area which are winding and rough.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie McCoy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Would like to see an environmental impact study. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie McCoy</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>Looking at previous mining &amp; drilling operations in South Dakota historically, companies have consistently polluted ground water and underground water in sensitive areas. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Olson</td>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>As property owners in Silver City and Rapid City, we are very concerned about the F3 Gold mining project. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Olson</td>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>We do not feel that the drill holes will be plugged and capped. How can a hole a several thousand feet deep be effectively plugged? These drill holes will introduce new avenues for pollutants to enter our water supplies.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. F3 will be required to follow South Dakota Rules Chapter 74:11:08, Capping, Sealing, and Plugging Exploration Test Holes. (Source: 34 S.D. 313, effective July 2, 2008. General Authority: SDCL 45-6C-29, 45-6D-34. Law Implemented: SDCL 45-6C-29, 45-6D-34). In addition, the Forest Service will require that plugging reports are submitted as part of the reclamation plan and borehole plugging will be subject to inspection by the State.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Olson</td>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are concerned with noise, dust pollution and the removal of trees and tearing up the Black Hills for “overland trails”.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Larry Olson</td>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>We’re told that the drill holes will be plugged and capped. How can a hole a several thousand feet deep be effectively plugged? These drill holes will introduce new avenues for pollutants to enter our water supplies.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. F3 will be required to follow South Dakota Rules Chapter 74:11:08, Capping, Sealing, and Plugging Exploration Test Holes. (Source: 34 S.D. 313, effective July 2, 2008. General Authority: SDCL 45-6C-29, 45-6D-34. Law Implemented: SDCL 45-6C-29, 45-6D-34). In addition, the Forest Service will require that plugging reports are submitted as part of the reclamation plan and borehole plugging will be subject to inspection by the State.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shawn Wood</td>
<td>Brenda Wood</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>We implore you to hold F3 Gold to the highest standards possible as well as hold them legally responsible for any subsequent problems as a result of this operation. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shawn Wood</td>
<td>Brenda Wood</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>We do not desire land or wildlife disruption near our residence. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Bartels</td>
<td>Glynn Bartels</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>As homeowners in Silver City, we are adamantly opposed to any and all mining activity in the National Forest near Silver City or frankly at any other location in the Black Hills. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Bartels</td>
<td>Glynn Bartels</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>We feel that the USFS should not allow this exploration drilling project as we value the nature that surrounds us &amp; the peacefulness that we are so grateful for that we have enjoyed for generations. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeanie Bush</td>
<td>Robert Bush</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are requesting date of drills by our home. We will have our well water tested prior to this date, in addition to its water level. F3 will be required to follow South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources guidelines for groundwater and wells.</td>
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<td>Jeanie Bush</td>
<td>Robert Bush</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are concerned that this activity will disrupt the elk herd in our area. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeanie Bush</td>
<td>Robert Bush</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are concerned for the noise of all the activity based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Tribe requests formal government-to-government consultation with the Forest Service under the U.S. Department of Agriculture concerning the proposed mineral exploration and development in the Black Hills National Forest. The Tribe asserts that such consultation is required by Executive Order No. 13007 on Indian Sacred Sites and Executive Order No. 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>The Tribe has legitimate concerns that the proposed mineral exploration would interfere with our use of our sacred Pe’ Sla lands in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>These and other activities could create substantial and unreasonable noise and disturbance for surrounding lands, including Pe’ Sla. These issues should be addressed through government-to-government consultation between the Forest Service and the Tribe.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA. The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>The Tribe also has legitimate concerns that the proposed exploration would cause irreparable harm to archaeological, historical, cultural, and sacred sites and areas present in and around the proposed Project area. These issues should be addressed through government-to-government consultation and full compliance with Federal Law, including Section 106 of NEPA.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources. Section 106 coordination and concurrence is included as part of the NEPA process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The Tribe has legitimate concerns that the proposed exploration may cause environmental harms to the land, natural resources, and fish and wildlife in the Black Hills, including surface lands, subsurface structures, water, threatened and endangered species, and other natural resources. These issues should be addressed through government-to-government consultation and detailed environment analysis under NEPA, including a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (&quot;EIS&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Tribe is opposed to any exploration or development of minerals in the Black Hills that would harm our sacred Paha Sapa, including our sacred Pe’ Sla, and our traditional cultural and religious use of those lands.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven Gunn</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Harold Frazier</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Tribe is opposed to any exploration or development of minerals in the Black Hills that would harm archaeological, historical, cultural, and sacred sites in the Black Hills or that would harm the land, natural resources, and fish and wildlife in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has issued a solicitation (F3 Gold, LLC Jerry Gulch Exploration Drilling Project in the Black Hills National Forest) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture concerning the proposed F3 Gold, LLC Jerry Gulch Exploration Drilling Project in the Black Hills National Forest. Such consultation is required by Executive Order No. 13007 on Indian Sacred Sites and Executive Order No. 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.

The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.

This comment was removed due to threatening nature.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources. Section 106 coordination and concurrence is included as part of the NEPA process.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oglala Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Oglala Sioux Tribe Julian R. Bear Runner</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribe engagement)</td>
<td>The Oglala Sioux Tribe hereby requests formal government-to-government consultation with the Forest Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture concerning the proposed F3 Gold, LLC Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project in the Black Hills National Forest. Such consultation is required by Executive Order N. 13087 on Indian Sacred Sites and Executive Order No. 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Swank</td>
<td></td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>As a frequent recreational user of the public land that comprises the Paradise Reservoir area, I am opposed to the exploratory drilling project both for environmental reasons as well as for possible disruptions to an already narrow and hard-to-maintain section of road that could be disrupted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Swank</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The activity associated with this project could be highly disruptive to the wildlife and could have long-term implications for the habitat.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Swank</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Additionally, my home draws it’s water from Rapid Creek. If there is even a remote possibility of any type of contamination that could impact my family, I am adamantly opposed to the drilling project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>Simonds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration leads to mining. Gold mining has a long history of polluting Black Hills water. Minning is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing in opposition to gold exploration in sensitive areas of the Black Hills, specifically the proposed exploration in the Rapid Creek watershed.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This water resource is far too necessary and far too vital to future life and the future of the Black Hills to risk polluting by mining or exploration.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As the retired managing editor of South Dakota Magazine, and as a long-time resident of South Dakota who frequently recreates in the Black Hills, I implore you to block the latest effort to exploit our most precious resources for the private gain of out-of-state investors.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (golds) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold</td>
<td>OneFeather</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>There has not been any mention of the preventing aquifer contamination through catastrophic exploratory well casing failure, causing cross-aquifer contamination, threatening downstream drinking water contamination and causing undue health issues that are not covered under this project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold</td>
<td>OneFeather</td>
<td></td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>The Black Hills are stolen land, illegally taken by corrupt government thievey as is the current case. No more fair accompl…this is our land, all the Lakota own it.</td>
<td>As, an agency the Forest Service is responsible for administration and management of all Federally owned lands within the national forest system, including the Black Hills National Forest, in accordance with the statutory direction provided by the Congress of the United States. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or even address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire for the return of the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of this project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold</td>
<td>OneFeather</td>
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<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>The Black Hills must be returned to the Great Sioux Nation.</td>
<td>As, an agency the Forest Service is responsible for administration and management of all Federally owned lands within the national forest system, including the Black Hills National Forest, in accordance with the statutory direction provided by the Congress of the United States. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or even address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire for the return of the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of this project.</td>
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<td>Harold</td>
<td>OneFeather</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>There are rock carving and petroglyphs that will be threatening and destroyed by exploratory activities.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold</td>
<td>OneFeather</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>There must be qualified NAGPRA/ historic preservation and ARPA Lakota experts on scene through the duration of the project, any inadvertent discoveries of human remains and objects of cultural heritage must be protected.</td>
<td>The Forest Service is consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold OneFeather</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to</td>
<td>The Exploration company must come to all the South Dakota Reservations to discuss these</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate</td>
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<td>Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>invasions and thefts from our land, while tribal governments are essentially</td>
<td>formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The</td>
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<td>federal agencies, they do not have treaty rights authority to make any decisions regarding the</td>
<td>Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be</td>
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<td>Black Hills, too many this thriving model was followed and impoverishing the Lakota in the midst</td>
<td>consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act</td>
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<td>of such wealth that diminishes our Lakota spirituality.</td>
<td>as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold OneFeather</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>I hereby oppose granting any exploratory drilling as it always causes issues that the mining</td>
<td>F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the</td>
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<td>Opinion</td>
<td>companies will just abandoned to the State and Federal governments to mitigate and recover from such contamination.</td>
<td>exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be</td>
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<td>based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
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<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry: F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22-54).</td>
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<td>Erik Heikes</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Consider this my fervent letter of opposition to proposed exploration at Jenny Gulch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Heikes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental</td>
<td>Here are many reasons for opposing exploration; as follows and negative: 1. Impact to water sources</td>
<td>This project will comply with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>2. Impact to groundwater. 3. Impact to fishing. 4. Impact to recreation and tourism.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Jacobs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>I strongly urge all parts of the government, including the US Forest Service, to end this</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>scoping project before it starts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audrey Jacobs</td>
<td></td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to</td>
<td>Tribal consultation should always be the basis, before all other steps, of these processes and</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate</td>
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<td>Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>i understand that it did not happen early enough in this case.</td>
<td>formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Jacobs</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>I am anxious that this review process must not taken into account the risk to drinking water</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Water Quality/Water</td>
<td>that a mining operation would have merely because this stage is about exploration.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future</td>
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<td>Supply</td>
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<td>would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Jacobs</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The impacts of mining must be factored into this stage. Plus, the economic benefits to a local</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>population never outweigh the economic/environmental harms in mining operations.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audrey Jacobs</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I stand opposed to every stage of this mining operation because of its inherent injustices,</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>negative environmental and drinking water outcomes, and uselessness as an unsustainable economic driver</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Kellar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>I am concerned about the impact the exploratory drilling will have on their habitat, especially for nesting.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fishers and wildlife.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>This project will comply with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Kellar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>I have attended gatherings at the Silver City Community Center, a unique and historic structure that sits on the edge of the proposed drilling sites. I am concerned that the increased traffic will impact the Silver City community from using this facility and the adverse impact the drilling may have on the well at this facility, as well as other wells in the area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Water Quality/Water</td>
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<td>Supply</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Kellar</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel</td>
<td>I am concerned that the increased traffic, road building and construction of the drilling pads will adversely affect the ability of people to enjoy the recreational opportunities here.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Kellar</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel</td>
<td>Additionally, increased traffic to haul equipment, work crews and water for drilling may have an adverse effect on tourist traffic in the area which is vital to the economy.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Kellar</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>My greatest concern is the adverse impact drainage from the drilling sites could have on water quality in the Pactola Reservoir, which is a valuable resource for recreation as well as drinking water for downstream communities such as Rapid City and Ellsworth Air Force Base.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Kellar</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>am concerned that mining operations in the Black Hills and South Dakota have a dismal record of providing adequate funding to restore the environment to its original state and to remediate any damage caused by their operations.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Jacobs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Tribal consultation should always be the basis, before all other steps, of these processes and I understand that it did not happen early enough in this case.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 27 Tribal governments to relitigate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Jacobs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Though on the face of it, this is an exploratory phase, the impacts of mining must be factored into this now. The economic benefits to a local populace never outweigh the economic/environmental harms in mining operations.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Jacobs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I support all who stand opposed to this and any and all stages of any possible mining operations because of its inherent injustice, negative environmental and drinking water outcomes, and uselessness as an unstable economic driver.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Emerson</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The proposed exploratory drilling project would increase traffic and noise, disrupting the use of this recreational area for everyone.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Emerson</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The potential harm to the water quality of Pactola Lake and Rapid Creek is not worth the risk.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Dyler</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This can't happen! There is no amount of gold that can justify the risk of harming the most pristine lake in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddy Semer</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>For all that is good, F3 Gold Jenny Guth Exploration Drilling Project can not, should not happen.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lucas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a stakeholder in this area I am strongly opposed to any exploration drilling!</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lucas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>There is high potential for disruption, damage, &amp;/or contamination of our well.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lucas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3 Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>In addition, there is high potential for the additional activity on a section of road that is narrow, steep, and expensive to maintain. The impact of transporting equipment as well as shifts change and other staffing activities will cause increased traffic on these roads.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lucas</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4 Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>There is also a pair of nesting osprey in Silver City. These are a threatened species.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Nisper</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We don't want the beauty! and value desecrated or the mining history of water pollution repeated.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Diagnone</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to this drilling proposal.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil Haanen</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The risk of serious degradation of the mountains and stream are not worth it.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil Haanen</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Do not approve this project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrna Bremick</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>With these facts in mind I must convey to you my serious objections to any exploratory drilling projects you are considering in Pennington County.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and transportation.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR (1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pam Sutto</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Whether by equipment failure, by human error or greedy misconduct, Pactola Lake and the water supply in Rapid City could become unusable.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Sutto</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please vote &quot;no&quot;.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>No is unbelievable that anyone would think that a mine by pactola is smart this feeds into rapid creek which is a reliable fresh water source.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trammell-</td>
<td>Janene</td>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Water/well systems in Pennington County are could be affected as well as our wildlife, recreation at various areas, including but not limited to Pactola Lake, Jenny Gulch, Streams, creeks, and animals which enjoy the areas with their owners.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trammell-</td>
<td>Janene</td>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I'm against any exploration and especially in this area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame</td>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>Happe</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>At the VERY LEAST, and EIS should have been required.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Drea</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I oppose the proposed exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch, Broad Gulch, and Sunnyside region directly adjacent to Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Drea</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>A full EIS for this watershed should be instituted rather than the short EA process being proposed.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Drea</td>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>No amount of gold or natural resources is worth risking the life and health of our community. I strongly urge you to put a stop to the proposed drilling.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 21-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunum</td>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a short Environmental Assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunum</td>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration leads to mining, and the environmental review process should cover all potential impacts of the project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dunum</td>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>We need healthy economic development and value our current tourism and agriculture, which would be negatively impacted by this project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Recreation activities could be impacted</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The area along Highway 385 and Pactola Lake is one of our most scenic areas, and gold exploration would not fit with this use.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Durum</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>People live in the immediate area where drilling could happen, and 24-hour noise and traffic would destroy the use of their property.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Hook</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Reared to reach out and let you know I am strongly opposed to this project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Hook</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>One of the best things about our area is the beautiful hills and our clear water. This project jeopardizes both.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vickie</td>
<td>Hauge</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please don't think this won't have an impact on the water that people need to live here. The amount of water needed in the mining industries is immense. Where does the water go when it has gone through the processes?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Howe</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The runoff from this area influences the water quality for Lake Pactola and Rapid Creek.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Howe</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This needs to be stopped before the inevitable destruction begins.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>As a citizen with strong ties to the Central Black Hills Area I insist that a full environmental impact study be completed before any road building or surface preparation on the drill sites is started.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §506.5). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>This environmental impact study must cover the following areas and show how each will be impacted: climate and air quality, fisheries and wildlife, botanical resources, rangeland/non-native invasive species, vegetation and timber resources, cultural resources, geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, soils, hydrology, access and transportation, recreation/travel management, socioeconomic.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The risk of contamination of the Pactola reservoir and Rapid Creek drainage area is considerable.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am completely against drilling in Pactola Lake, especially Jenny Gultch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The exploration drilling will only bring destruction and despair to those who live in this area and use taxpayers' money in areas that we do not approve of.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signatures</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Spring</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>L5TEN TO THE CITIZENS FOR ONCE AND DO NOT DRILL IN JENNY GLICKTCH OR ANY OTHER AREA THAT IS ADOERED BY THE PEOPLE.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Jeni Gultch, I am writing to express my disapproval of the F3 Gold Exploration proposal.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>This project will subject us to nuisance noise and traffic from machinery and workers, devalue our property by compromising our water supply and agitate our poultry and cattle. It will be even more of a nuisance and danger to free range cattle on USFS land and is certain to disturb and interefere with wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>It will degrade the recreational value and attraction of our public trail systems currently greatly enjoyed by locals and tourists alike.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Socioeconomics</td>
<td>It will devastate property values and bring about outright confiscation of the private residences of those who do not hold mineral rights to their homes and properties.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>There is also fire danger to consider. In recent years we have had an over-abundance of water, but such is not typical of our climate. Many fires have been started by the mere spark of a rock against a piece of metal equipment, but that does not even take into consideration the careless match dropped by a worker enjoying a cigarette on his break. This constant drilling is a credible threat. No matter how careful the operators, accidents do happen and the consequences of such accidents can be impossible to mitigate.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I disagree for two reasons: first, the drilling will put deep strata not currently in communication with one another, potentially allowing toxic metals to leach into water supplies not currently affected by those metals. One such hole in an unfortunately chosen location could destroy the safety of many residential wells or even compromise perennial or seasonal water supplies including springs developed by ranchers for the hydration of their free range cattle.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Second, the drilling of risky exploratory holes presupposes the possibility of mining operations in the future.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>It is my understanding that F3 Gold was allowed to retain and pay for the services of an engineering firm to assess the risks to the environment of their proposed drilling. This looks very good to me, and I'm not alone in my perceptions.</td>
<td>Third party NEPA is allowed under 40 CFR 1506.5. The Forest Service and F3 also have a signed MDU (19-MU-1102030-028) that addresses low, regulation, policy adherence for third party NEPA for this project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>F3 Gold must submit to a full environmental impact study, not only of the initial exploration, but also of the impact of any proposed mining operations that may result from their hoped-for gold deposits.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Reponsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Skillman</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>In conclusion, I feel that there are no positives and many, many negatives to the approval of this risky project. Please reconsider and deny the proposed drilling permits.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Yahne</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am very concerned about the impact of mining of our sacred Black Hills. Exploration is being discussed, and after any successful exploration, mining will follow.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Yahne</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I am tired of mining messes left behind by those who come and extract our resources and I am VERY concerned about the quality of our water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greg Yahne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64 3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>I also want local tribes to have EARLY input to the process.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Yahne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64 4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>SAY ‘NO!’ TO GOLD EXPLORATION AND MINING IN THE RAPID CREEK WATERSHED.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65 1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not allow the drilling to test for gold.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry: F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore and locateable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 20-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65 2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This could have a direct effect on drinking water and could affect the aquifers that supply precious water to Rapid City and the area in general.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>65 3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>It could lead to full scale mining operations in the area and adversely affect wildlife and the well-established fisheries.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Holman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66 1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>As a resident of Rapid City who benefits from the local watershed and occasionally accesses Pactola Reservoir directly, I am deeply concerned by issuing an exploratory permit for gold. It is unclear why we would issue a permit to drill holes, however small and quiet the process, when it is sensible to assume that the purpose is to initiate gold mining at some point.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Holman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66 2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>It is within the best interests of our country and state to preserve and protect our water source, protect recreational use for the economic benefits of tourism, and act cooperatively with tribal request to not drill.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry: F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore and locateable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 20-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Holman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66 3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Skillman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67 1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing to oppose ANY drilling or mining activity by F3 Gold in the Jenny Gulch/Oliver City area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Skillman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67 2</td>
<td>Incorporate Public Health and Safety Socioeconomics</td>
<td></td>
<td>I am concerned about the environmental impact and how this might affect my quality of life and property value.</td>
<td>F3’s proposal is for exploratory drilling. Design criteria will be developed as part of the EA to help mitigate and reduce associated impacts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Skillman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67 3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I am very concerned that any drilling could impact negatively my water well situation as my well is a very near some of the proposed drill sites. I am also concerned for the Pactola area watershed that may be affected by this proposed drilling.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Skillman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67 4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Incorporate Access &amp; Transportation Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>I am concerned about the increased traffic and noise due to equipment movement and operation in the area near my home.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>An outright denial of any permit to drill would be appropriate in my opinion.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Short of that, the Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement before any approval of test drilling core samples or any mining activity. An Environmental Assessment alone is not adequate.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>Skovo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I would like to add my voice to the many who are against the mining exploration near Pectola and Castle Creek, and really anywhere on the planet. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>Skovo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Put the brakes on these proposed projects now! It’s not worth the risk Comment noted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Warren</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a concerned local resident, and a big fan of the BNFR, I’m submitting this comment in opposition to the proposed exploratory drilling by F3 Mining in the Jenny Gulch region in the Mystic Ranger District in the Black Hills National Forest. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>Downey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a resident of Rapid City, born and raised here, I strongly oppose this proposed resource exploration by F3 without first evaluating fully the potential impact on the natural resources at stake. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>Downey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>No risk of contamination or degradation should be allowed. Comment noted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitney</td>
<td>Larish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We do not support drilling in this area. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whitney</td>
<td>Larish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We do not support the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling project! Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>Ulrich</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>Drilling would effect our land, water, and resources. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbey</td>
<td>Ulrich</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This is a cherished area and it is disgusting to see it being thought of for gold. Stay away from it! Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Maza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We do not want our land drilled or water contaminated. We do not support this. Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Christensen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fish &amp; Wildlife Water Quality/Water supply</td>
<td>Drilling would not only take away the beauty of the Black Hills but it will also disturb the natural habitat for animals &amp; it could end up polluting our drinking water. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Tenney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>By inessively exploring Jenny Gulch, drillers would be violating and tarnish the area full of beauty enjoyed by locals and tourists. The Black Hills has a very unique culture that should not be destroyed. Not to mention the detriment it could cause to those in the area, people and animals alike. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>Burgoin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Do not support this drilling project. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maggie</td>
<td>Burgoin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please listen to the people and say NO to exploratory drilling and mining.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cory</td>
<td>Tomovick</td>
<td></td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>Such a mine would pollute the clean drinking water for Rapid City. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Cory Tomovick 77 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion Stop all gold exploration and mining in the Central Black Hills. The F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project must be stopped now.
The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 U.S.C. 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 US.C 21-54).

Jenny Gultch 78 1 Other General Environmental Concern would like to learn more about the scope of their drilling, environmental impacts, and how it could potentially affect me down stream as well as my hiking.
F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website. Additional project documents, including the EA, will be posted to this site once available. https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428

Jenny Gultch 78 2 Other Water Quality/Water supply My dogs drink out of the streams and I worry about the fasing tainting the water.
The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Leanne Olson 78 3 Other Water Quality/Water supply As an additional concern, my barnyard is right on the creek and during times of drought, I use Rapid Creek for a water source for my horse and two goats. Lead that is in Rapid Creek has already damaged my horse and arsene is even worse to a horse. I want to prevent that from happening.
The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Leanne Olson 78 4 Other Water Quality/Water supply How would this potentially impact my well? I'm sure there is an aqua-fr or leaching happening from the creek to my well.
The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Silver City Volunteer Fire Department Philip Schief 79 1 Mitigation/Design Criteria Public Health and Safety I have some concerns about the proposed exploratory drilling by F3 Gold. We are a small self-supported Volunteer Fire Department and do not have specific training for industrial type emergencies or the equipment that may be necessary.
Based on public comments, a public health and safety section has been incorporated into the EA.

Silver City Volunteer Fire Department Philip Schief 79 2 Other Access & Transportation I also have some concerns with added traffic on our narrow winding roads, especially large truck traffic along with the increased traffic during the warmer months to Jenny Gulch.
The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.

Leanne Olson 80 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I would like to object to the exploration drilling in this area because I feel it would endanger the water quality coming through Pactola and down through Rapid City and Box Elder where I live, and there is nothing more important than clean safe water- except air.
Comment noted.
The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Leanne Olson 80 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion My humble opinion is that this type of exploration drilling should not be allowed in the Black Hills anymore and that outdated laws revised.
Comment noted.

Daniel Belz 81 1 Incorporate Public Health and Safety And what about the noise?
Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.

Daniel Belz 81 2 Incorporate Public Health and Safety What will the noise footprint be?
Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.

Daniel Belz 81 3 Other Fisheries & Wildlife And apart from my personal annoyance, what would the effects be on wildlife?
The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Daniel Belz 81 4 Mitigation/Design Criteria Access & Transportation Heavy truck traffic could damage the road and require repair. This work may delay residents and visitors from accessing Silver City, aide from the obvious cost of repair.
The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.

Daniel Belz 81 5 Other Water Quality/Water supply They state they will not use Rapid Creek for water, but how much water will the project actually use, and where will that runoff flow?
F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website. https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428. The Plan of Operations addresses water source and is incorporated into the EA.

Jerry Herbert 82 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I am writing to express my stringent opposition to the proposal by F3 Gold LLC to conduct exploratory drilling at various locations in the Black Hills, expressly the Jenny Gulch area.
Comment noted.
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Comment</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Hiebert</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We are concerned about heavy vehicles using the developed and undeveloped roads in the area, the creation of new heavy vehicle roads, and the related potential negative impacts to both surface water quality and subsurface water quality that would result from both exploration and possible mining in the future.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Hiebert</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>These are public lands, and exploration for private benefit is contrary to the public use and enjoyment of these public lands.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals [gold] as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Hiebert</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The environmental assessment should be discontinued and no permits for this type of activity should be considered or issued.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals [gold] as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicki Aughenbaugh</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please, reconsider and do not drill in the Jenny Gulch area!</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals [gold] as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky Aughenbaugh</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please, do not let drilling happen in this beautiful area!</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals [gold] as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diancy Hoffman</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We absolutely don’t need mining, which would be the result if they found minerals, oil, gold, etc.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarra Stacker</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to drilling at Jenny Gulch for many reasons. Foremost, I support protection and conservation of our natural resources and National Forest lands. Drilling selfishly for gold has no benefit to our Forest land, lakes, local population, or local economy.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals [gold] as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny Billen</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Gold is not a viable reason to destroy a beautiful location with pollution, compromise the integrity of the landscape, and take it out of use as a place to enjoy. I would also like to mention the detriment to wildlife.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals [gold] as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cesca Andes-Mitchell</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I do not support this because of water contamination and the possible endangerment to wildlife and the ecosystem.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Minter</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>There is no need for mining as the area is not valuable for mining.</td>
<td>Thank you for your interest in the proposed project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Gordon</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Gordon</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassie Moneke</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lacey Farley</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaylee Gibson</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Zawber</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Opinion</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Garnett</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nadine Siford</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Opinion</td>
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<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nadine Siford</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
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<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katrina Mullens</td>
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<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
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<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Cortes Suarez</td>
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<td>Opinion</td>
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<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Jan Humphrey</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan Humphrey</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Opinion</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cumulative Assessment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

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The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

This project will affect the wildlife in the area as well as the hiking trails enjoyed by the locals as well as visitors who come to our beautiful area to enjoy trails such as those in this area.

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But beyond the current proposed exploratory drilling project lies the prospect of long-term mining development. As you are well aware, only an EIS requires the comprehensive assessment of the cumulative effects of both the current project, and reasonable foreseeable developments in the project area. If the reasonable outreach of the current proposed project were to be an actual major mining operation, it would have an extensive impact on the surrounding area, well beyond the possibility of long-term well contamination and water availability.

As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.

In the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

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In the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

The NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.

Because of the possible long-term future impact, should this project lead to actual mining, we believe that a full Environmental Impact Statement is necessary because of the possibility that this exploration project could lead to full-scale mining, and the long-term effects that would result.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The transport of heavy equipment, as well as traffic resulting from shift changes and other staffing activities required for a subsequent mining project, would likely increase traffic considerably on the winding backloop Silver City Road, as well as fire trails in the area, affecting road safety and recreational use of the forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining the trails in the region, which our family enjoys for wildflower and wildlife photography, could be interrupted or more dangerous.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Surface water could also be affected, impacting not only the immediate area of the drilling or mining, but also Lake Potsdo and downstream residents and irrigators.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>We have concerns of what happens after mining terminates and whether the sites will be safe and/or restored to their natural condition for the benefit of forest users.</td>
<td>F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>We also have concerns about the potential long-term impact on the overall quality of life of people who live in the watershed or vacation there, both property-owners and other visitors.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Marek</td>
<td>Charlotte Marek</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Because of the possible sweep mining, this project merits a holistic, comprehensive EIS, addressing the reasonable future cumulative impact of potential mining development, as opposed to a substantially more limited Environmental Assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hanna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Another reason I'm not in favor of this exploration. Rapid City relies on all of its drinking water from Rapid Creek and the Madison Aquifer, both sources are largely impacted by what happens in the Rapid Creek watershed. This watershed should be completely off limits to any mining whatsoever.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hanna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do NOT let any more mining exploration happen in the Rapid Creek watershed.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Moreover, can there be any explanation about how potential mining operations around these Black Hill towns will affect local residents?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>How long could mining operations last, depending on the size of the mine?</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Can they expect long-term cleanup efforts to be ongoing even after the mine closes?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>How will a mine affect the local economy, will it be large enough to affect local commodity prices or things like property values? for local residents (i.e. to maintain roads or clean up polluted groundwater, etc.)?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Will there be procedures in place for residents to note complaints of any operations AND a transparent mechanism for addressing these complaints?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The last thing people want is a corporation to come in and operate with impunity while local residents' concerns and interests are silenced or ignored. It is the government's responsibility to protect people from these potential hazards.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Mevisen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Committing the exploratory company (F3 Gold) to undertaking an Environmental Impact Statement would certainly reveal the extent to which these activities will affect the local populace and environment and give us a sharper picture about whether this is something that should proceed or not.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gary Abe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you for your interest in the proposed project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Turk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Gold mining in the Black Hills is always and inevitably lead to water contamination - and that contamination has been shown to be incredibly costly for taxpayers and nearly impossible to clean up. Contamination of Rapid City's water supply would devastate one of our fastest growing communities, as well as South Dakota's premier tourism &amp; recreation economy. While this comment period is specifically about the exploration phase, the plain fact is that exploration leads to mining, and mining leads to contamination.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Turk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Exploration near Pactola's inlet will disrupt those tourism and recreation opportunities, and undermine the area's economy as a result.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Turk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>No matter what FJ hopes to find in our precious Black Hills, it's clear that their operations will negatively impact one of the region's premiere tourism and recreation areas.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Turk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>And, as stated previously, exploration leads to mining, and mining leads to contamination—an outcome that seriously threatens communities and the economy of the Black Hills, potentially for generations.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Turk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Given the potential for such grave impacts, the Forest Service should order a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), rather than a cursory Environmental Assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a neighboring resident of Badel Gulch, I strongly oppose the proposed exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch, Badel Gulch, and Sunnyside region directly adjacent to Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This watershed is vital to the citizens of Rapid City, Box Elder, and Ellsworth AFB. Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential impacts to our communities.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>A full EIS for this watershed should be instituted rather than the short EA process being proposed.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td>105</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I vehemently oppose the exploratory drilling by FJ Gold LLC in the Jenny Gulch region of the White River District.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>As a frequent hiker and hunter in this region I am very concerned about the impacts of this project to recreational activities in the area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>At a frequent hiker and hunter in this region I am very concerned about the impacts of this project to recreational activities in the area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawn</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td>105</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining in this region should not be permitted due to the significant water-quality concerns for neighboring land owners, and downstream users in Rapid City, Box Elder, and Ellsworth AFB.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Wildlife in the Sunnyside Gulch vicinity that will be affected by the proposed drilling:</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>Access: The cabins and homes are charged $150.00 each year for access across Forest Service land. Each of the drilling sites have to be accessed by crossing Forest Service and. Are they going to be charged $150.00 for each of their accesses or are our annual charges going away. This is especially true of the drilling on and near the Sunnyside Gulch road.</td>
<td>The Forest Service mining rules (26 CFR 228 Part A) do not authorize the collection of fees for road use, etc. The mining law entails an operator to reasonable access to conduct mineral operations on National Forest Service lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Road maintenance: Is the company doing the drilling going to maintain Sunnyside Gulch road? The $20,000 deposit they had to make will in no way cover all of the damage they will be doing.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Forest Service will approve a reclamation plan as a part of the final Plan of Operation. The Plan of Operations will have a condition that discusses maintenance of National Forest System Roads.
Tom Strand 106 4 Mitigation/Design Criteria Access & Transportation Also, are they going to be allowed through the private land on the Sunnyvale Gulch road without permission of the landowners? They seem to think they can move equipment from Silver City to the north end of SGI road. It passes through the private land of three landowners.

F3 will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions (including access permissions) prior to initiation of project activities. If private access is not granted, F3 will need to use an alternate route.

Tom Strand 106 5 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The planned drilling on Sunnyvale Gulch and vicinity will probably drain at least two wells that provide water to three homes (22749, 22759 and 22761). For their 22761 home there is no alternate drilling site. Two other proposed drilling sites in the same area will, in all likely hood, drain the only other possible well site for the 22749 & 22759 addresses.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Tom Strand 106 6 Other Fisheries & Wildlife One of the drilling sites just off Sunnyvale Gulch is a prime site and is planned to run 24/7, for the entire 6,000 feet. This is extremely close to occupied homes and cabins. This area has recently been logged and cleared in an attempt to bring Fk back to this area. We have found some evidence that they do pass through here. How can this be allowed?

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Based on public comments, a public health and safety section has been incorporated into the EA.

Tom Strand 106 7 Mitigation/Design Criteria Access & Transportation Also, where they plan coming in is an old road that has almost disappeared. It is extremely steep for the first 30 to 40 yards and the large vehicles coming in that way will cause extreme erosion and the spring run-off could easily flood the Sunnyvale Gulch Road plus a spring that is above ground at the base of this hill.

The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.

James Huff 107 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Strongly oppose the F3 Sunny Gulch Exploration Project for the following reasons: Comment noted.

James Huff 107 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply There is an unacceptable potential for the polluting of the Rapid Creek watershed which is the primary source of drinking water for Rapid City.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

James Huff 107 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion F3 Gold is an unproven and inexperienced drilling company. Comment noted.

James Huff 107 4 Outside of Scope Water Supply/Water Quality (Heritage Resources) Water supply permits have been issued by 20-DE & SD to mineral Mountain Resources drilling without public input. Comment noted.

James Huff 107 5 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS A comprehensive environmental impact study has not been done.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Julie Anderson 108 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Subject to this project based on protecting our water sources. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Aaron Ellison 109 1 Outside of Scope Mining With any exploration, the intent is discovery. The result of discovery is mining. That is why, while considering the exploration, we must also consider discovery of gold and the eventuality of a full mine (or several mines) being created.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Aaron Ellison 109 2 Other Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) Here needs to be consideration of how these exploration sites and eventual mines will impact Native American Cultural sites and on going activities. I think a study is needed to identify and preserve Native cultural sites, graves, ceremony locations, and other areas of historical significance. If this is not done, the concern is these will be destroyed during preliminary exploration.

This project will comply with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Archaeological Resources Protection Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and all other laws associated with cultural resources.

Aaron Ellison 109 3 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Have concerns about the waste and possible pollution of the water in Pasteola Lake which is very near if not directly adjacent to where I understand the exploration would be.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Aaron Ellison 109 4 Mitigation/Design Criteria Financial Assurance Have concerns about the waste when finished. When an exploration site is only successful, unsuccessful, or, when a gold mine is depleted there is a reclamation effort. These reclamation efforts have historically been quite disastrous.

A reclamation plan will be part of the final Plan of Operations.

F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Aaron Ellison 109 5 Regulatory Process Financial Assurance The ongoing costs to the local community is another concern. Aside from health risks to miners, eventually there will be costs for removal of waste. Accident insurance, fines and fees are often inadequate to cover the full costs of clean up or damages in the event of an accident. These costs are passed onto the local communities to deal with either financially or environmentally or both.

F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Aaron Ellison 109 6 Regulatory Process Financial Assurance Before any exploration can be considered, a full in-depth environmental and cultural impact report is needed.

An environmental assessment, which evaluated potential project-related effects to environmental and cultural resources, has been prepared for the proposed project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Gibson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Further, any consideration after the reports are compiled should be discussed in a public forum to review and debate the consequences of such exploration and eventual mines existing so close to vital public resources; Pactola Lake, Rapid Creek and Rapid City.</td>
<td>Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available. <a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Gibson</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Keeping clean drinking water and the keeping the Black Hills pristine is of greater importance to the public than private gold mine exploration which threatens both.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latoya Phillip</td>
<td></td>
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<td>110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I wish to not see this drilling in the Jenny Gulch area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latoya Phillip</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>My rationale for this is due to the disruption to the Black Hills land, wildlife, + vegetation.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latoya Phillip</td>
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<td>110</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The drilling around the gulch will cause too much disruption and possible risks to the habitat surrounding the drill site.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
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<td>111</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>What about our wildlife we have in the area - we have seen elk which we have just started seeing a couple years ago and our Osprey (George and Sarah) who have a nest in Silver City. If they have been returning every year for the past 5 years. If this drilling cause them to leave it will be a sad day for us!!!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water supply</td>
<td>But more important - our water and the possibility of contamination - please don't let them do!!!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicki Schlief</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>One last thing - they should have to do a environmental impact statement and not and environmental assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; [40 CFR 1508.9]. The Reasponible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Hayes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre Scoping 1</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>What do you say Silver City, Rapid Creek, Pactola, and eventually Rapid City?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Laran</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre Scoping 2</td>
<td>Pre Scoping 2</td>
<td>Thank you for your interest in the proposed project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
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<td>Pre Scoping 3</td>
<td>Pre Scoping 3</td>
<td>These homes all have private wells that stand to be compromised as does the water in Silver City, Rapid Creek, Pactola, and eventually Rapid City.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
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<td>Pre Scoping 3</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>There is no possible way for F3 Gold to completely seal 500 ft. holes, as they say they will, due to soil, underground caves, water pockets and fissures in rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
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<td>Pre Scoping 3</td>
<td>Incorporate Other</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety Access &amp; Transportation General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>Another concern by area residents is noise, truck traffic, dust and damage to the Forest Service roads as well as the damage to this beautiful, sensitive area of the Black Hills. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
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<td>Pre Scoping 3</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Many areas are remote and better suited for an operation such as this. Why the Sunnyside Gulch/Silver City area?</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USG 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 25-54).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
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<td>Pre-Scoping 3</td>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We have not been given formal notice from the BNPF and the Rosedale Sioux Tribe for this proposed action to date.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Rhodd</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre-Scoping 4b</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation [Tribal engagement]</td>
<td>The Rosedale Sioux Tribe seeks to be kept informed of the process and the finding of whether an EIS is warranted or the determination of a FONSI is proposed. While is it understood that the determination of an NOD is purely a BNPF Administrative decision on the one hand, the effects of the decision will have procedural and process effects on the cultural and historical ties of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota to the Black Hills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Rhodd</td>
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<td>Pre-Scoping 4b</td>
<td>2 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation [Tribal engagement]</td>
<td>We have not been given formal notice from the BNPF and the Rosedale Sioux Tribe for this proposed action to date.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avery Olson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Given this is a process of policy and procedure, we petition to be kept informed of any decision that will affect the cultural significance of the Black Hills, its land, air quality, waters, plant and animal communities, and associated resources under the charge of the Forest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avery Olson</td>
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<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The proposed exploration area is only 15 miles away from residents that depend on that section of Rapid Creek for their water source. Rapid Creek as a whole gets ALL of its drinking water from Rapid Creek and Madison Aquifer. Both of these are affected by what happens in the Rapid Creek watershed. If this water were to be contaminated, it is speculated that we would have to get our water from the Missouri River, about 75+ miles away.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Rhodd</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Where this exploration project is located brings me great concern. it brings me concern for my livelihood as not only an angler, but as a person born and raised in South Dakota.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avry Olson</td>
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<td>112 1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avry Olson</td>
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<td>112 2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avry Olson</td>
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<td>112 3 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I understand that this mining exploration is just exploration, but I ask, what does exploration lead to? Exploration occurs with hopes of leading to something to be mined. I am in favor of many kinds of commerce, but commerce that can lead to contamination of a resource that provides the livelihood of my whole community I cannot support.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Eilbeck</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>112 4 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do NOT list any more mining exploration happen in the Rapid Creek watershed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Eilbeck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>113 1 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Eilbeck</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>113 2 Other</td>
<td>Incorporate Regulatory Process</td>
<td>We are very concerned that the current environmental assessment study will not be sufficient in determining if this exploratory drilling should take place, especially considering the potential impact any scale of mining would have. Such as a decrease in water quality, disturbance of the natural ecosystem, noise, the construction of the supporting infrastructure and overall a decrease in quality of life that would be experienced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response:**

The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 U.S.C. 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F 3 Gold, L 3 has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, amended (30 U.S.C 21-54).

Thank you for your interest in this project.

The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F 3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.

Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available. https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428

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Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available. https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428

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Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available. https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of the decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Elbeck</td>
<td>Kevin Elbeck and Joe Elbeck</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>We believe because of the very large impact this project would have on the environment, Silver City residents, water quality, recreation, traffic, wildlife and general quality of life for those who live in and love the Black Hills and the scenic beauty it holds. For these reasons, we think nothing short of a comprehensive EIS is merited and necessary.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project will not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Bell</td>
<td>Carol Bell</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to the Forest Service allowing this proposed F3 Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project to proceed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Comment noted. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 2 | Outside of Scope | Mining | This is only logical that a gold exploration project will ultimately lead to actual mining. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 3 | Outside of Scope | Mining | However, allowing gold mining in this area surrounding Pactola Lake is absolutely unfathomable for a variety of reasons. First, we all know that gold mining wrecks the environment. It takes tons of rock to yield a little gold. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 4 | Outside of Scope | Mining | How much damage to our precious Black Hills will result? | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 5 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Where are all those waste piles going to be placed? | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 6 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Gold mining operations have always caused severe damage to the environment from such things as acid tailings with acid mine drainage - why do we think this will be any different? | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 7 | Outside of Scope | Mining | We know that toxic chemicals such as cyanide are used to extract the gold, so it is not a case of if, but when spills of such chemicals would occur creating hazards to our Lake and our water supply downstream. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 8 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Rapid City is dependent on this Rapid Creek and Pactola Reservoir to provide pure drinking water to its residents. The greatest threat of a gold mine in this location is contamination of our water supply and so it should not be allowed for this reason alone. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 9 | Outside of Scope | Mining | But furthermore, it would negatively impact the recreation in this area. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 10 | Other | Recreation & Travel Management | Not only am I a boater and fisherman who utilizes Pactola extensively, but it is a vital part of our local tourism economy and provides a great deal of value to this part of western South Dakota. | | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation. |
| Rick Bell | Carol Bell | 114 | 11 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | For all these reasons and many more, Please do not approve this proposed F3 Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project. | | The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 U.S.C. 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 U.S.C. 21-54). |
| Sonja Swift | | 115 | 1 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Mining is notoriously dangerous, wasteful, destructive. The examples abound in all corners of the world - we don't need to dig up any more metal all for some outside corporation to two-off with the profits and have us pay for it. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Sonja Swift | | 115 | 2 | Regulatory Process | EA vs EIS | DO A FULL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, not just an assessment. | | The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project will not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document. |
| Connie Ryan | Mike Ryan | Scott Ryan | Nicole Ryan | 116 | 1 | Outside of Scope | Mining | We and our children are very much opposed to any mining done in the hills and especially anywhere near Pactola and Jenny Gulch. | | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Mike Ray | | | | 117 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | This comment is in opposition to exploratory drilling for mining in the Rapid Creek drainage above Pactola. | | Comment noted. |
| Mike Ray | | | | 117 | 2 | Other | Water Quality/Water Supply | Believe the best use for this land is compromised by this action. I believe drillings could contain amounts of selenium and other minerals that could harm long term water quality. | | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. |
Mike Ray 117 3 Regulatory Process | EA vs EIS | The NEPA process should be followed. I support a full EIS on this proposal. | The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Anthony Turner 118 1 Other | Statement of Project Opinion | As a resident of the Black Hills, as an active user of our beautiful land, and as a HUMAN BEING I am concerned with the proposal of the potential mining in the Jenny Gulch area. | Comment noted.

Anthony Turner 118 2 Other | Water Quality/Water Supply | Please hear the people. We do not want our water to become contaminated! Water is life. It is our right to have access to clean water. I do not want to see the beautiful Rapid Creek end up like the Whitewood Creek. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Anthony Turner 118 3 Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Please do not allow this exploration of mining continue. | Comment noted.

Anthony Turner 118 4 Other | Statement of Project Opinion | It is not worth ruining the lives of all the people who live around here, nor ruining the precious and fragile ecosystems of OUR HOME. | Comment noted.

Justin Herreman 119 1 Other | Statement of Project Opinion | The proposed gold exploration in Jenny Gulch is of great concern to me and the following are significant and substantial reasons I oppose this proposed exploration. | Comment noted.

Justin Herreman 119 2 Other | Incorporate | Water Quality/Water Supply | Access & Transportation | Public Health and Safety | I am significantly concerned about the water quality impacts as well as noise and traffic concerns that might impact access to this area. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.

Justin Herreman 119 3 Other | Recreation & Travel Management | There is a single ingress/egress road and adding large water trucks to remove drilling fluids will create significant impacts to recreational users in this area. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

Justin Herreman 119 4 Other | Recreation & Travel Management | Hike and hunt in this area which will be very negatively impacted by the proposed exploration. The additional people and traffic will take away from the unique and special atmosphere in this region as well as harm the solitude and quiet of the region. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

Justin Herreman 119 5 Incorporate | Public Health and Safety | Rapid City gets 100% of its drinking water from this watershed either via directly drawing from Rapid Creek or from the aquifers that are recharged in this watershed. The potential impact of this activity is significant from a water quality issue and the risk does not justify the reward. | Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.

Justin Herreman 119 6 Other | Water Quality/Water Supply | Rapid City gets 100% of its drinking water from this watershed either via directly drawing from Rapid Creek or from the aquifers that are recharged in this watershed. The potential impact of this activity is significant from a water quality issue and the risk does not justify the reward. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Justin Herreman 119 7 Other | Fisheries & Wildlife | The last potential impact is wildlife. I know of nesting bald eagles, osprey and long-nosed bats in this watershed that have a significant potential for impact from these activities. All are species of concern regionally. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Sue Jorgensen 120 1 Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Please protect this area from exploratory drilling and mining. | The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. FS Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).

Doug Straight 121 1 Other | Statement of Project Opinion | My grandma was Bernice (No Suggestion) so派对 has been a very important part of my life so I say no drilling leave the greed out of this area and protect the great resource that is派对. | Comment noted.

Laura Woten 122 1 Outside of Scope | Mining | Tish, hike, bike and camp and would hate to see mining done in this beautiful area. | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional; project-specific NEPA review.

Laura Woten 122 2 Other | Fisheries & Wildlife | Please protect these fisheries, [some of the best in the Midwest]. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy</td>
<td>Keirner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please protect Pactola. Do not allow any mining or drilling or anything that would endanger the wildlife or the water that is in the lake.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Zacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>This is our most pristine and pure reservoir in our Black Hills, please do not destroy it with gold mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Zacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please restore the things that our local environment, hunting, fishing, swimming, water supply. Please do not destroy this for us.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Felderman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>This proposal is crazy, don't even think about destroying this beautiful environment. Mining will do that.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Felderman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please leave this area pristine and as it is, many people use this for recreation and the additional traffic from out of state mining interests will destroy this area.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Felderman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Do not allow this company to drill in this area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayle</td>
<td>Simons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I oppose the exploratory drilling in Jenny Gulch, Broad Gulch and Sunnyvale region directly adjacent to Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayle</td>
<td>Simons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>This watershed is so important to the people of the Rapid City and surrounding areas. My family frequently hikes, bikes and boat in this area and we are very concerned about the impacts on the environment and wildlife as well.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am deeply opposed to any drilling in and around Pactola and Jenny Gulch Area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>We do not want our water compromised, and do not want in and around that area defaced with new roads, people, and motorized vehicles.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>We want the forest and lands to remain in the pristine conditions that they are.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Pond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am against any type of drilling in this area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Roberts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I think we have enough evidence that mining jeopardizes our environment &amp; potential can contaminate our drinking water.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Roberts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please cease considering any further mining activities in these sacred black hills.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>Skovoo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Exploratory Drilling? Absolutely not! Not one Gold Mining, not one! Gold is not necessary, you can’t drink gold when the water is gone.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amée</td>
<td>Laun</td>
<td>Donald Laun</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please care more about our only planet and humanity than greed and gold! We bike, fish, swim and enjoy the Jenny Gulch area. And this kind of recreation is why we live in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amée</td>
<td>Laun</td>
<td>Donald Laun</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not let greedy corporations destroy our sacred Black Hills.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inellia</td>
<td>Ford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not allow drilling in Jenny Gulch! You will destroy our beautiful serene forest for money and Gold? No!</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie</td>
<td>Severson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply Fisheries &amp; Wildlife Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Am very concerned about water pollution. Save our fish and no new roads into the Hills.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayle</td>
<td>Halstead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>STOP destroying our natural resources &amp; tourist attractions NOW.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Halstead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>134</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The mining will end up polluting the ground water as well as the creeks &amp; lakes. Black Hills water is used across the state. Do not allow it to be polluted.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signatures</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Moloney</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>20 (the Black Hills) already has 2 SUPER fund sites as a result of gold mining. No more. Gold mining is water-intensive. This is a semi-arid region. Gold mining is NOT a good usage of our water. We need clean water for our communities, for tourists, for recreation. We do NOT need to send profits out of state, much less out of the country, derived from our natural resources. Protect our water.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>Traub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Therefore I would propose that we must be suspect about any drilling or mining activity that occurs in the Rapid Creek drainage above Pactola Dam, due to unexpected results or accidents.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>Traub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Although the slide show presentation attempts to placate us by stating no mining or mining will occur with F3 activities, who will be responsible for a drilling accident such as happened out near the Cheyenne River several years ago?</td>
<td>F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>Traub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Unless F3 is held completely responsible for accidents that might occur and for cleanup of potential contamination that would threaten Rapid City’s water supply, the proposal should be a non starter. If our out dated mining laws cannot hold F3 responsible for accidents, then the only way to “regulate” F3 is to stop these activities before they start.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the mining exploration and future possibility of mining on any scale above Pactola Reservoir at Silver City. This is far too sensitive an area for mining. The dangers of erosion, toxic spills, and disturbance of the watershed so close to Pactola Reservoir are far too great to justify permitting mining activity.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to hydrolgy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hans</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The risk for mining activity at Silver City contaminating this vital water supply should be reason enough to halt the proposed exploration.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>I also believe that the recreational value of the reservoir and Rapid Creek is worth considering. The recreational use and value of Pactola Lake and Rapid Creek are far too great to put at risk.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Tally</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Due to the mixture of impacts and the variety of what is impacted, i.e.: wide variety and disparity of human recreation, wildlife diversity, hydrology uncertainty, and vegetation abundance, I urge the Black Hills National Forest to prohibit the project or, at the minimum, conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that addresses the cumulative impacts that drilling may have.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<td>Rita</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Tally</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>There are over 80 homes less than 1/2 mile from any one of the proposed drill sites, none of these homes show up on the overview map published by Barr Engineering.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Tally</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The seasonal and full-time springs are also not shown on the map, nor are many of the trails used by ATV's and ATVs or motorcycles. I do not see the historical sites either.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Rita</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Tally</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Why isn’t the elk habitat shown or the location of bat habitat or the osprey nesting sites or bald and golden eagle fall and winter habitat areas?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>Rita</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>Tally</td>
<td>Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Hydrology</td>
<td>It is common knowledge that the spring that feeds the cistern feeds the community well in Silver City with water, that many residents of Silver City use, is located 3/4 of a mile up Sunnyside Gulch and that it is a surface spring and falls within 1/4 mile of a proposed drilling pad?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to hydrolgy.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Does Barr Engineering or the Mystic Ranger District know that there is a restored historic cabin, that falls under the Antiquity ACT of 1906, located at the base of Gorman Gulch and that project traffic will travel within feet of it? In addition, one proposed drill pad is within 1/4 mile of this historic site?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Is there a decibel level deemed as excessive by the Black Hills National Forest? What is it? Who will be monitoring and enforcing the standards. Do the enforcing entities have the personnel and monetary resources?</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>What if the stirred dust from Barr Engineering as a sound mitigator do not work?</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>What resources do we have when the sound becomes unbearable?</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporate into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Will operations be shut down due to inclement weather and or road conditions?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Who is monitoring and enforcing weight restrictions during sensitive times i.e.: spring ground heave, heavy rain or snow events, strong winds? Do the enforcing entities have the personnel and monetary resources?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Will the Black Hills National Forest put a speed restriction on the known project traffic and will the personnel follow those restrictions? Who would be responsible for the monitoring?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Will the Gold repair damage incurred by their 24/7 use by the heavy water trucks and drill rigs in a timely manner?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<td>Rita Chapman</td>
<td>Tallie Chapman</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Will they minimize damage by following a 20 MPH recommendation for the safety of residents, tourists, cattle? Who will monitor and make sure it happens?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane O’Leary</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
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<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane O’Leary</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>June O’Leary</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Rhudy</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Modern mining technologies, techniques and regulations enable us to develop the minerals and metals we so critically need, while preserving the environmental values. Just like we need to be oil independent it is also critical for minerals like gold. This would be an enormous economic opportunity for not only Rapid City but the entire region.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I join with thousands of citizens of Rapid City, the Black Hills, and the State of South Dakota in opposing this first step in granting to a Minnesota based exploratory firm (F3 Gold) the right to disturb our beautiful Black Hills with a scheme that has every possibility to poison the domestic waters within Rapid Creek and endangering the health, safety, and economic base for Rapid City and all of our Black Hills and many areas in western South Dakota. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2 Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>Before issuing any permit for even beginning preliminary discussions or procedures for drilling at this and other locations, the Federal Government and the State of South Dakota must require every applicant to post a $50 million environmental-mitigation bond (possibly larger) with the state and federal authorities. This economic protection for the citizens of South Dakota must be in place to clean up the mess(es) and return the site(s) to their present pristine conditions. All mining firms that apply for permitting within the Black Hills must be financially strong and have the capability to file such a bond for many reasons: 3 F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3 Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>The testing may reveal negative results and also define their most economical and valid path to future gold production. In this case, the firm must be required to repair the site and eliminate any possible long term negative damage to South Dakota. These applicants may scream and protest that they do not have adequate funds to restore and repair the site. Each out-of-state (or out-of-country) mining firm may have the corporate intent to leave or abandon the sites and leave the burden to repair the sites with local, state, and federal agencies. This simply means the taxpayers of South Dakota and the taxpayers of the USA may be forced to pay 100% of the clean-up expense. These bonds must be the first step in the permitting process. 3 F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>4 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>State and Federal regulatory agencies must force the applicant to scientifically prove that mining at this site will not endanger the domestic and industrial (short-term and long-term) water supplies for short-term and long-term usage within the Rapid Creek drainage area, the Cheyenne River Basin, and downstream to the Gulf of Mexico. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>These potential sites may very well pollute the water drawn from residential wells and used by cabin owners and homeowners along Rapid Creek between Pactola Lake and City of Rapid City. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>6 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The applicants must prove that this drilling and the use of dangerous chemicals within this process will not endanger a major source of Rapid City’s water supply; namely the Jackson Springs water source at the mouth of Cleghorn Canyon at the immediate upstream area near Canyon Lake within the City Limits of Rapid City. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
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<td>7 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The prime question for the US Forest Service and related federal and state regulatory agencies is this: How will the mining corporation fix (mediate to the 100% level) the damages to the Black Hills if the science for which they are advocating today is wrong and not based on established fact? This mining may result in totally unacceptable environmental issues throughout the Black Hills. In more clear terms, the question is this: “Who profits from the Gold Mine? Who gets that Shaft?” Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>8 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The State must impose very high severance taxation on the values of any gold or related minerals to be extracted from public or private lands within SD. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>9 Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Before exploratory or production drilling occurs, the Corporation holding the permit must complete an economic impact analysis on the potential danger to state-wide tourism if new mineral mining happens in SD. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation. Conducting an economic analysis of exploratory drilling is not a federal requirement. However, all conditions that may be required by the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources will apply. In addition, mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review; an economic impact analysis would be a part of that process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>10 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Before the US Forest Service even begins these proceedings, it is legally certain that our Native Americans and their tribal governments should be given the opportunity to present their points of view about these radical and environmentally dangerous mining efforts that will eventually lead to the potential destruction, forever, of portions of our wonderful Black Hills of South Dakota. These Native Americans must be the first in line to voice their positions and certainly not be the last to be considered. The tribes were wonderful stewards of these lands before the 1880s, they should be first in line to express their cohesive and brilliant opposition to new gold and mineral mining within the Black Hills. The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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</table>
Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 11 Other
Financial Assurance
The state legislature must educate itself about the benefits in requiring these corporations to file environmental (or clean-up) bonds before the first road the mining site is dredged over portions of the Black Hills and before the first boring or drilling is permitted to begin.

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 12 Other
Water Quality/ Water Supply
KC has a legal responsibility to provide water for Elkhorn. This fact must be a continuing issue as it relates to possible mining operations near the headwaters of Rapid Creek.

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 13 Regulatory Process
EA vs EIS
Any U.S. Forest Service ("USFS") review of the exploration plan must comply with federal law as detailed herein. At a minimum, if the agency proceeds with its review, an Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") should be prepared due to the potential for significant impacts from the Project—especially when viewed with its cumulative impacts from other and/or related activities.

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 14 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
Further, because the USFS has withheld the Plan of Operations from any public review, the agency should either 1) extend the public comment period until the Plan is made available; or 2) ensure full public information and an opportunity for additional comment on a Draft NEPA document once all relevant information has been disclosed.

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 15 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
Plan of Operations Has Been Wrongfully Withheld From Public Review

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 16 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
The scoping notice for the Project demonstrates that information needed for the public to understand and evaluate the scope and the potential impacts of the proposed Project has been withheld from the public. Specifically, the notice states that "[additional details regarding the proposed project are provided in FJ's proposed Plan of Operations submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (FS) on November 30, 2018."
However, the USFS has refused to allow the public to review any portion of the Plan of Operations. This is contrary to law.

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 17 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
Under USFS mining regulations, "all information and data submitted by an operator pursuant to these regulations in this part shall be available for examination by the public." 36 C.F.R. § 228.6. This regulation specifically refers to plans of operation and the information contained therein as subject to this requirement. The only exemption from this broad rule is in favor of disclosure is for "specifically identified information and data" that the operator identifies as "trade secrets or privileged commercial or financial information." This information is available.

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 18 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
Here, there is no evidence that either the USFS nor the Project proponent have "specifically identified" any information in the Plan subject to this narrow exemption - or any basis for considering this information privileged. The agency simply withheld the entirety of the Plan.
It is hard to imagine that every page of the Plan qualifies under the narrow exemption. Under that rationale, the mandate for disclosure in § 228.6 becomes meaningless, as every operator could claim that its entire Plan was "confidential".

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 19 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
The withholding of this information from the Plan of Operations violates NEPA's mandate to make relevant information available to the public before decisions are made, 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1(b), to encourage and facilitate public involvement, id. § 1500.2(6), to involve the public in the project, and make diligent efforts to involve the public in implementing NEPA procedures, id. § 1506.6(a) (requiring public notice and comment on USFS NEPA documents).

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 20 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
The agency's refusal to provide underlying records during the NEPA process significantly prejudices the public's ability to weigh in with its views and inform the agency decision-making process. "This pattern of behavior is not acceptable under NEPA," and is grounds for "invalidating any resulting final decision that the Agencies might issue."

Don Barnett
Lisa Jones Jarding
141 21 Regulatory Process
Public and Agency Engagement
Because of this lack of information, the public is left without complete information upon which to base scoping comments. As a result, the USFS should extend the comment period until this relevant information is disclosed. At minimum, the agency should make available Draft NEPA document for additional public comment to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act's (NEPA) purpose of effectively involving the public can be fulfilled.
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The Agency Must Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The scoping notice for this Project indicates that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared. However, when considered along with the cumulative impacts from all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the region, including other exploration, mining, grazing, recreation, energy development, roads, etc., the impacts are significant and require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The agency must conduct its NEPA review and subject that review to public comment in an EIS, including impacts to air quality, ground and surface water quantity and quality, recreation, cultural/religious resources, wildlife, transportation/traffic, scenic and visual resources.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>In this case, because of the location of the drilling - in close proximity to areas used extensively by the public as described herein and in public comments submitted relating to this Project - &quot;substantial questions&quot; exist as to whether the impacts from the Project will be significant. In addition, when viewed in combination with other mineral exploration and development proposals in the area, the impacts rise to the level of significance. As such, the agency must prepare an EIS.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cumulative Impact Analysis</td>
<td>The Agency Must Fully Analyze All Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Impacts</td>
<td>As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cumulative Assessment</td>
<td>The Forest Service must fully review the impacts from all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. These are the “cumulative effect/impacts” under NEPA. To comply with NEPA, the Forest Service must consider all direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed action.</td>
<td>As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>An EA that is prepared must fully review all reasonable alternatives, provide for mitigation and an analysis of the effectiveness of all mitigation measures, review all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, and fully analyze all baseline conditions of the potentially affected environment, among other NEPA requirements.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The immediate area of the Project includes Packtula Reservoir and Rapid Creek, which supply water for domestic use, municipal, and agricultural use. These waters are also sources for wildlife and provide the setting for extensive recreation activities. The Project area also includes other National Forest lands and resources used extensively by the public for myriad purposes, including hiking, biking, water-based recreation, fishing and other pursuits. Immediately upstream, there is exploratory drilling occurring, as well as at least one former mine site. The agency must disclose and analyze all potential impacts to these water supplies and these uses. The scoping notice indicates that the proponent has only provided broad range of the depth of each of its proposed drill holes. Without more specific information, neither the agency nor the public are able to effectively predict and analyze the impacts. The agency must disclose with more precision the details of the proposal in order to allow the public a meaningful opportunity to provide effective comments.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates project-related effects to water quality/supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilas Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cumulative Assessment</td>
<td>As referred to herein and as the Forest Service is aware, several other mineral exploration projects have been proposed in the area that will contribute to cumulative impacts. For instance, the Mineral Mountain Resources Project must be addressed in addition to the four other projects/companies the Forest Service has confirmed at a recent National Forest Advisory Board meeting are seeking to apply for exploration permits.</td>
<td>As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signatures</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
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<td>Resource</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Importantly, the agency must disclose and provide a detailed review of the impacts to cultural and historic resources in the area. There is no indication that the Project area has been surveyed for cultural resources by a competent and trained surveyor with a complex understanding of the Indigenous peoples of the area. As the agency is no doubt aware, the Black Hills— including the Project area — are subject to treaties and have been occupied since time immemorial by the Lakota and others. These parties must be involved in a cultural resources survey in order to effectively identify and evaluate cultural and historic resources.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Additionally, impacts to Pe’Sk’a (Reynolds Prairie), which contains significant sacred, anomalous, and historic qualities and resources, must be assessed. The character and use of this site could be significantly impacted by the proposed operation, even if indirectly. Operations proposed during the Project may have significant adverse effects on the use and character of the cultural, spiritual and religious area. The USFS must consider the obvious adverse impacts to the cultural resource, the certain adverse impacts to the cultural and religious uses of the area, including Pe’Sk’a, along with impacts to the users of this religious area from the noise, visual intrusions, and other direct adverse effects must be addressed.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The USFS Must Fully Analyze All Baseline Conditions</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects against current site conditions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Given the lack of public information from the Plan of Operations, there is insufficient detail to satisfy NEPA's requirements for public review of the baseline.</td>
<td>F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Here, at minimum, prior to considering or approving any exploration, the Forest Service must first obtain additional information and subject the information and analysis to public review and comment. This includes the methods of drilling, the depth and extent of the drilling, the process for abandonment/waking of oil holes, and all mitigation or other measures proposed to ensure protection of ground water and other resources.</td>
<td>F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428</a>.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The baseline requirement applies not only to ground and surface waters, but any potentially affected resource such as air quality, recreation, cultural/religious/historical, soils, and wildlife.</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>The Agency Must Include an Adequate Mitigation Plan Under NEPA</td>
<td>The EA incorporates mitigation and design criteria to minimize project effects.</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Under NEPA, the agency must have an adequate mitigation plan to minimize or eliminate all potential project impacts.</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>In this case, no mitigation has been detailed in the scoping notice and the agency has refused to release the Plan of Operations for public review. As such, the public must be given an opportunity to provide additional comment on a draft NEPA document prepared by the agency and including all relevant information.</td>
<td>F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428</a>.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>The Agency Must Fully Review All Reasonable Alternatives</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>NEPA requires the agency to &quot;study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The Forest Service Must Minimize All Adverse Impacts from the Project</td>
<td>The EA considers measures to minimize potential project-related effects.</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>On the National Forests, the Organic Act requires the Forest Service &quot;to regulate their occupancy and use and to preserve the forests thereon from destruction.&quot;</td>
<td>Comments noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Thus, in this case, in order to minimize all adverse impacts, the agency must consider, among other restrictions to protect wildlife and the environment, limit project activities to existing roads and upgrade these roads. Exploration-related traffic would present an undue risk on Silver City Road, given how narrow and winding the road is. Further, in the summer, the road receives a high level of traffic. Similarly, Richford Road presents serious transportation risks, evidenced by the Mineral Mountain Resources vehicle that recently slid off the road into Rapid Creek. Transportation of fuels and any other drilling or other chemicals must be tightly controlled to prevent contamination.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<td>Dan Barnett</td>
<td>Lilias Jones Jarding</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Additionally, to reduce cumulative impacts to wildlife species that are sensitive to light, noise, and other human activities incident to mineral exploration, the USFS should consider the timing of the project in relation to other adjacent or nearby mining projects and consider imposing timing restrictions so that these multiple projects in the same general area occur sequentially rather than at the same time.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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</table>
Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 40 Other General Environmental Concern The same is true for other affected resources such as ground water, surface water, and air quality. Comment noted.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 46 Regulatory Process Botanical Resources Fisheries & Wildlife USFS Must Fully Analyze The Project's Impacts to Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, and Indicator Species Under NEPA, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) And Related Laws And Regulations. Section 7 coordination and concurrence is included as part of the NEPA process.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 47 Regulatory Process Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) The Agency Must Comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Other Requirements to Protect Cultural, Historic, and Native American Interests and Resources. Section 106 coordination and concurrence is included as part of the NEPA process.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 48 Regulatory Process Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) The USFS must comply with the NHPA and requirements regarding cultural, historic, and Native American interests and resources. Due to the likelihood that cultural and religious sites and resources will be adversely affected, it would be a violation of the NHPA and other laws (and NEPA as noted above) to approve the projects without the required review of, and protection of, cultural/historical resources. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources. Section 106 coordination and concurrence is included as part of the NEPA process.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 49 Regulatory Process Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) In this case, it is not evident that USFS has initiated any of the required NHPA consultations with the public or with the relevant Tribes. The Project area must be subject to a culturally-relevant and competent cultural resources survey, and the public and Tribes must be given an opportunity to participate and comment on the identification, evaluation, and protection of the cultural resources at the site. The agency should have initiated these reviews before seeking public comment, as the information produced from these surveys are necessary for the public and the Tribes to have the legally-required opportunity to participate in the agency's analysis and decision. This fact again necessitates that a draft NEPA document be produced and circulated for public review and comment once all relevant information has been disclosed. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources. The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 50 Regulatory Process In Compliance with the Forest Plan and NEPA is Required. Comment noted.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 51 Outside of Scope Mining The Black Hills National Forest Plan lists the area around Pactola Reservoir as in management area 8.2, where the Plan states no new mining operations will be allowed. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 52 Other Hydrology Water Quality/Water Supply Please see the attached research paper regarding the connections between Rapid Creek and the Madison and Minnehua Aquifers. Whatever spills into Rapid Creek could contaminate all three of Rapid City's water sources at approximately the same time. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

Don Barnett Lilias Jones Jarding 141 53 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS Also, Rapid City's water department provides water for Ellsworth Air Force Base just to the west of town. If there was a spill into Rapid City's water supply, it would also shut down EAFB's operations. That makes this a potential national security issue, necessitating a full EIS. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore livable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).

Linda Antolic 142 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion No one in our communities is supportive of this proposal. Comment noted.

Linda Antolic 142 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion However, do we not also have environmental protection laws to prevent such blatant irresponsibility and disregard of our lands for their profit. Comment noted.

Linda Antolic 142 3 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS Do we need an Environmental Impact Statement any more powerful than the fact that the Black Hills already has two Superfund Toxic Waste Sites due to mining? The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Linda Antolic 142 4 Outside of Scope Mining I am appealing to the US Forest Service to deny this exploratory mining proposal and demand further investigations into the impact of mining to our communities and our vital water source. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore livable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).

Jane Besniner 143 1 Outside of Scope Mining Please protect Pactola Lake and our drinking water! No gold mining! The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.
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<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</table>
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 1              | Other   | Water Quality/Water Supply     | There are many reasons to turn this project down, water security being the main concern.       | The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public
|              |                |              |                       |               |                |         |                                |                                               | Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C, 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (golds) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54). |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 2              | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Statement of Project Opinion | am writing you this letter in order to voice my strong opposition the F3 Gold, Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project. | Comment noted.                                                                                   |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 3              | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Access & Transportation | The map also misrepresents existing USFS roads. The map show roads where there are currently only narrow ATV/motorcycle trails and closed/non-motorized logging trails. Some of these so-called "roads" that F3 will be using were reclaimed by nature years ago. These areas aren't appropriate for the kind of heavy vehicular traffic that the F3 project will create. F3's proposed use of these trails will destroy or permanently alter these areas. | The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 4              | Other   | Water Quality/Water Supply     | Many of the drilling sites are within a few hundred feet of ponds/springs. Some of the drill sites appear to be right in the middle of seasonal creek beds. This water all feeds into the water sources of our shallow drinking water wells, and eventually into Pactola Reservoir. Why risk potential contamination? We all need water much more than we need more gold. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 5              | Incorporate | Public Health and Safety | All of us around here have heard the noise from these types of exploration operations in our area. The actual drill may be "as quiet as a refrigerator" (per your PowerPoint presentation), but the overall operations are extremely noisy. The hammering sounds, the vibrations and clanking of the machinery, the hum of the motors that run the drills and the heavy equipment traveling on the roads, are all far from quiet. | Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 6              | Other   | Fisheries & Wildlife          | We have incredibly diverse wildlife in this area that will be disturbed and displaced for these exploratory operations. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 7              | Other   | Vegetation & Timber Resources | Is the USFS going to allow indiscriminate destruction of trees for this exploration? The drilling rigs won't be able to get to the drill sites and set up without taking down many trees. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to vegetation and timber resources. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 8              | Other   | Recreation & Travel Management | Recreational activities will be disrupted including hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, etc. Javettack grasing operations will also be disrupted. Is it really acceptable that the public use of public lands is subjugated to the profit motives of private corporations? | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 9              | Incorporate | Public Health and Safety | Residences near or within the project area are surrounded by the "roads" that will see 24-7 use by heavy equipment used in this project. Are the quality of life and property values of these people acceptable collateral damage? | F3's proposal is for exploratory drilling. Design criteria will be developed as part of the EA to help mitigate and reduce associated impacts. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 10             | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Access & Transportation | Who will pay for the wear and tear on the public access roads, i.e. Jenny Gulch and Rochford road? Do these companies ever have to help maintain the infrastructure that they use and abuse? | The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 11             | Outside of Scope | Mining | If they do find gold, what will happen to our area then? Who is actually benefitting from all of this? The rights to exploit mineral resources should not automatically take precedence over the public's right to have their water, air, land, and wildlife protected. | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
| Chris McCurdy |                |              |                       | 145           | 12             | Mitigation/Design Criteria | General Environmental Concern | Who's going to monitor these operations to make sure F3 and any subsequent mining operations live up to their promises? The USFS and County can't even adequately address the damage caused by illegal ATV activity. The State of South Dakota certainly doesn't have a great track record in holding these companies accountable. | The Forest Service will administer the final approved Plan of Operations. Other government entities will be responsible for monitoring the permits they issue for this project. |

F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>McCurdy</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>At some point the Federal Government and the State will need to decide what they want. Do they want the Black Hills to be a place where people recreate and live, and where wildlife can flourish? Or, do they want the Black Hills to be exploited to the fullest extent for its extractive resources? We can't have it both ways. The Black Hills aren't big enough, and the water resources and habitats are too vulnerable to be continually assaulted by mining activities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>april</td>
<td>Shannon</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water supply</td>
<td>live in the region of water from Pactola Lake and am concerned of the affects to the water potentially from drilling.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I use Jenny Gulch for recreating on a regular basis with my family and also get my water from Rapid Creek that comes from Pactola. Due to these circumstances I would like to join the fight to stop any mining/exploratory mining to that area.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water supply</td>
<td>Everyone in the Rapid City area depends on water from Rapid Creek for domestic use.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>In addition, Lake Pactola is a huge recreational asset to our tourism-based economy.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water supply</td>
<td>Accidental contamination of the surface water in the Rapid Creek watershed would be catastrophic.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>If multiple drilling holes are permitted, the drillers should be required to post a sufficient bond to cover this risk.</td>
<td>F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>An additional concern in this popular tourist area is the possibility of noise pollution, 24 hours a day, which disrupts camping and other recreational uses around Lake Pactola.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>Davis</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>am concerned that exploratory drilling is being rushed through without adequate consideration for the long-term consequences to our region.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Conner</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>Here are numerous studies that have been done and actual events that have occurred that support the devastating effects a proposal such as this can have on the environment, ecology and particularly the integrity of the surface and ground water at and near such activity.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Conner</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The footprint as set forth in this proposal is unrealistic considering the amount of heavy truck traffic to haul all the heavy equipment, heavy materials, personnel and the enormous amount of water and other drilling requirements.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Conner</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Additionally, there would be spillage and waste materials from the trucks, the drilling equipment and all other the activities involved which would turn the ground into a muddy mess.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>Conner</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please also see the attached excerpt of an article &quot;The General Mining Act of 1872 has left a legacy of riches and ruin&quot; By ROBERT MCCLURE AND ANDREW SCHNEIDER. I would encourage you to read the entire article - it mentions a $50 million dollar cleanup tab left for the taxpayers of South Dakota to pay. This one cleanup bill more than offsets any increase in jobs this type of activity might bring.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</table>
Jerry Munson 151 1 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Jerry Munson 151 2 Outside of Scope Mining The implications of exploration are that if gold is found, that a mine will follow. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Jerry Munson 151 3 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Stacy Smith 152 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please do not allow any drilling or mining near Rapid Creek or Pactola. Protect this beautiful lake and protect Rapid City’s water supply. Comment noted.

Stacy Smith 152 2 Other Fisheries & Wildlife Also concerned for the animals & birds that nest or drink from the lake - bald eagles, osprey, big horn sheep, etc. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Nick Lucas 153 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion We do not want the Rapid City area water supply to be threatened by drilling and mining. Comment noted.

Nick Lucas 153 2 Other Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) Neither do we want cultural and historical areas to be threatened. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources. Section 106 coordination and concurrence is included as part of the NEPA process.

Nick Lucas 153 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion These activities are promoted as job-producing, etc., but they have resulted in much harm and negative results when "explorers" and producers are finished with the Black Hills area they explore and then extract what they want. Comment noted.

Sandra Lashley 154 1 Outside of Scope Mining Feel the reclamation details should be very specific, and adequate money should be set aside in case the company does not comply or goes out of business. That money should be put aside by the company doing the drilling. 3 F Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Sandra Lashley 154 2 Outside of Scope Mining also concur with the comments made about a possible mine doing significant watershed damage. Why spend the money now if that is likely? Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Rodney Blue Patty Blue 155 1 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Are we concerned about the drilling affecting our water well. And if the drilling does affect the well what will be done about it? The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. 3 F Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Jury Redfield 156 1 Outside of Scope Mining am very concerned about what a mining operation will do to the aesthetics of the Pactola/Silver Lake area. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Jury Redfield 156 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply but I'm most concerned about the drinking water in Rapid City. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. 3 F Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Dan Sims Renee Sims 157 1 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Location: 22765 US Highway 385, Rapid City, SD. Aquifer water, our well is 65 feet and very good water. Where & distance from boundary or is it in the drilling area? The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. 3 F Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Dan Sims Renee Sims 157 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Possible changes from our water quality, loss of water? Will I recover if something changes? How long? The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. 3 F Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.

Dan Sims Renee Sims 157 3 Other Plan to start? Project - start to finish. How long? 1 months six months longer The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. 3 F Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what the amount can be.
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dan Sims</td>
<td>Renee Sims</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Commercial traffic?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<td>Deborah Wagman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deborah Wagman</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>if &quot;exploration&quot; yields high-quality ore, full-scale mining will quickly follow.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deborah Wagman</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Exploration and full-scale mining will disrupt a fragile eco-system, damaging trees, natural water sources, and beauty.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deborah Wagman</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Allowing this project to further ship away at our beautiful Hills will make them a less desirable place to live, work, and vacation.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Carol Merwin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carol Merwin</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The F3 Gold company already has more than 2,000 mining claims in the Black Hills. Another forty-two explorations that can ruin water resources seems dangerously foolish. Too many corporations leave messes for the community to clean up.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carol Merwin</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fishes &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The noise pollution from machines interrupts the mating calls of songbirds which contributes to their decline. There has been a decrease by half since the 1960s.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fishes and wildlife.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carol Merwin</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>The indigenous people here, for whom this is their spiritual home, should not be forced to suffer even more.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Carol Merwin</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please, just say &quot;no&quot; this time.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22-28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locateable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<td>Anna Ball</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anna Ball</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to this exploration project based upon the science and data regarding Rapid City's drinking water.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anna Ball</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Our communities (Rapid City, Box Elder, LAP) get 100% of their drinking water from this watershed by either directly drawing from the creek or via aquifer recharge activity.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anna Ball</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Accidents happen more than they should in the mining industry, margins are tight, and profit motivations do not always bear safety and best practices.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anna Ball</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>*I am opposed to this exploration project because the recreational use will be highly impacted. I hike, mountain bike, and bird here. I occasionally kayak here. My friends fish here.</td>
<td>Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Crystal Hocking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crystal Hocking</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am in support of the proposed exploration project by F3 Gold.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crystal Hocking</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Recommend that the EA consider impacts to surface water and groundwater quality from drilling sites down gradient to the intake for Rapid City water supplies and evaluate routes of potential contamination exposure.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Crystal Hocking</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The study should evaluate current or baseline water quality on Rapid Creek and nearby monitoring wells for TDS, conductivity, temperature, and any polymers (if any) that are proposed to be utilized in the drilling fluid.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Crystal Hocking</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Further, the EA and/or permit should stipulate the use of best management practices for reducing likelihood of drilling fluid spills and onsite containment of drilling fluids (berms, around tanks, etc.).</td>
<td>The Forest Service will administer the final approved Plan of Operations. Other government entities will be responsible for monitoring the permits they issue for this project.</td>
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<td>Crystal Hocking</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Botanical Resources</td>
<td>The EA study should also consider impacts to sensitive or endangered plant communities and include evaluation of noise and impacts to bats and raptors.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Ryen Carlow</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ryen Carlow</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am writing this email on behalf of protecting the Black Hills from radioactive and destructive mining. I would like to share my perspective of the proposed mining and start by saying that we must do all we can in our power to prevent this project from carrying through.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ryen Carlow</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We, the Ogala Lakota people, use the Black Hills as a sacred place for prayers and ceremonies, traditional herbs, and many more uses in our culture. Although the company may be coming into just look for gold and other profitable minerals, if it is found, some companies will be eager to come mine for it.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ryen Carlow</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Therefore, this proposed &quot;search&quot; must not be allowed to happen because whether there is gold in the hills or not, the Black Hills are a sacred area for the indigenous people who use it for their culture and spirituality.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Martley</td>
<td>Suzanne Martley</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>We are opposed to exploratory drilling in the proposed project area because it conflicts with recreational activities, and threatens the land and water that support them.</td>
<td>Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ed Martley</td>
<td>Suzanne</td>
<td>Martley</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>As you gather information to analyze the effects of the project on recreation, please consider that Jenny Gulch is one of the few lakes where seniors and families with kids can safely canoe, kayak and fish without fear of being swamped by power boat wakes or strafed by jet-skis. It is one of the most popular places in the Hills. It has shelter, quiet, and beauty. It is not buffered by winds like Deerfield and Angostura. It is not stirred up by power boats like Sheridan or Patches. It is large enough, unlike the lakes of the Southern Hills, that boaters and fishermen can find quiet spots. On any summer day the kayakers, packers, and swimmers fill up the small parking area near Silver City. Closed roads, road construction, heavy equipment, drift boat noise are in conflict with the peaceful recreation opportunities in this area. We urge you to spend the summer getting out there and talking to folks who use the area about how the exploration would affect their activities.</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Ed Martley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This is my response to the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project. I am a stakeholder that owns property that has a private water well which supplies drinking water to my cabin in the water shed of the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project. Because the private water well is in the watershed, the proposed drilling has the potential to interrupt or damage my water well. It also has potential to contaminate my water well that supplies drinking water to my residence.</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>The F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project drilling may cause man made earthquakes by awakening faults which have not moved for millions of years as has happened in states that have drilled for natural gas and oil. This has been documented in states like Texas, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Alabama, and Ohio. Man-made earthquakes has the potential to damage my cabin and water well.</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife Botanical Resources</td>
<td>The F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project is a threat to wildlife, native flowers and flora. There is a nesting pair of Osprey on private land close to my residence and property. The nesting and habitat may be damaged for Mountain Bluebirds, hummingbirds and Bald Eagles and other species. There is only a small area in the Black Hills that hummingbirds are found during the summer months.</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife Botanical Resources</td>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project will impact trail and road usage. The road provides access to my property. The road is gravel, very narrow with steep sides. It also provides access to Trail 40 trailhead that is used by people who hike, people who fish, and people who mountain bike. I use the road system to hike, mountain bike and for access to paddling. Every year in July there is a Volks walk that uses the road system to access Trail 40.</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>164</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>This is a recreation area and drilling such as F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project should not be allowed.</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td>164</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>In closing, my significant concern is that my private water well is in the water shed that the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project impacts. This private water well is used for drinking water, fishing, canoeing, and swimming. The F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Project has the potential for damage and water well contamination.</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
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<td>164</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Ask that an EIS process is completed before any drilling is allowed.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” 40 CFR 1508.9. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James McArthur</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>McArthur</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>We believe that drilling near our locations will undoubtedly affect our water supplies. Obviously we are not willing to endorse the proposed drilling project.</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>James McArthur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sarah Zabari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>That sounds really good. I didn’t know they were wanting to drill there. That is horrible!</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Sarah Zabari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joanne Dougold</td>
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<td>167</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing to oppose the proposal by F3 Gold, LLC to conduct exploratory drilling known as the F3 Jenny Gulch Drilling project on Black Hills National Forest lands and claim that any such drilling would have significant environmental impacts.</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Joanne Dougold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherie Skeesbe</td>
<td></td>
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<td>164</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Ask that an EIS process is completed before any drilling is allowed.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” 40 CFR 1508.9. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James McArthur</td>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>McArthur</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>We believe that drilling near our locations will undoubtedly affect our water supplies. Obviously we are not willing to endorse the proposed drilling project.</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>James McArthur</td>
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<td>Sarah Zabari</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing to oppose the proposal by F3 Gold, LLC to conduct exploratory drilling known as the F3 Jenny Gulch Drilling project on Black Hills National Forest lands and claim that any such drilling would have significant environmental impacts.</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Joanne Dougold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Comment noted.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signors</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duane Claypool</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>As a stakeholder, a recreational user of the Jenny Gulch access point, Silver City Trail 40 access, my use &amp; access as a hiker &amp; fisherman will be significantly, adversely impacted. In particular, the substantial increase in FS vehicle &amp; equipment activity &amp; usage of the section of the road that is very narrow, steep, and difficult to maintain will significantly restrict my use for hike and fish in this area. The impact of transporting equipment as well as shift changes &amp; other staffing activities will cause an unacceptable significant increase in traffic that will significantly, adversely affect my ability to access this area to recreate.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duane Claypool</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>I urge the Forest Service to recognize the significant environmental impacts that would occur due to the exploratory drilling &amp; to determine through the EA-process that a full EIS is required.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” [40 CFR §1508.9]. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosalie Cooperman</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am submitting this comment in opposition to the proposed exploratory drilling by FS mining in the Jenny Gulch region in the Mystic Ranger District in the Black Hills National Forest. Please take into consideration of the vast impacts this could have on a thriving community.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalie Cooperman</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This could have a big impact on our community’s drinking water and to hear that makes me uncomfortable. 80% of Pactola is designated for drinking water, usage by the City of Rapid City, Broadleaf and Ellsworth AFB for drinking water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalie Cooperman</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The gold exploration could lead to gold mining which involves the use of cyanide and other poisons and often leads to permanent acid mine drainage which could go into rapid City creek.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosalie Cooperman</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Is this a risk we are willing to take? Water is an absolute need for survival and I don’t want to risk destroying a precious essential source that keeps my fellow community member and I alive.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Ellison</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Even though concerned citizens have been told that FS will be required to trick in their water supply, that does not mean that the local water supply will not be affected. Underground water supplies are fractured mazes that intertwine and FF’s drilling could divert water that naturally flows to local residents’ wells to other locations underground, possible affecting availability of water in those wells. The drilling could also puncture natural flows and introduce elements not naturally occurring in the water supply affecting the residents’ water quality.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Ellison</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Botanical Resources Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Although FF3 will reportedly be required to reclaim the footprints of the land, they will clear to create their drilling areas, that does not diminish the fact that the area will likely be clearcut resulting in flora being destroyed and fauna being displaced. The animals who depend on the plant life (and visa versa) cannot wait N years for reclamation to occur. Their lives will be ended or severely disrupted / negatively impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Ellison</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Botanical Resources</td>
<td>FORTY TWO clear cut drilling pad locations is WAY too much. We would not allow FORTY TWO homes to be built in the area due to zoning laws, we should not allow FORTY TWO clearcut area to be created.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to botanical resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Ellison</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>This is just an exploration project but exploration is not done without the intent of future mining. Gold mining has a history of being an extremely dirty process. There are no new &quot;clean&quot; methods of mining gold. We should not allow pools of acidic heavy-metal laden water to be created for the gold mining process upstream from Lake Pactola. Pactola is more than a lake, it is a reservoir / water supply for all of Rapid City as well as Ellsworth Airforce Base, and is also a recreational mecca for the area.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. 39 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 20.54].</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Ellison</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Consultation with the Native American tribes must be done to their standards and approval on and on their timelines. They are a sovereign nation with ownership claims to the land that should supersede any mining claims and must be honored and respected. The land belongs to the Native American tribes, per the treaties of the US government signed with them.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Ellison</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>This project, and the projects it could potentially lead to, could impact tens of thousands of people - all the residents of Rapid City, Silver City, Ellsworth Air Force base and beyond, as well as countless amounts of wildlife and native vegetation. A full Environmental Impact Statement must be developed - an Environmental Assessment will not do.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Lambert</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>If F3 Gold, like all mining operations in the exploration stages, discovers gold in the Rapid Creek watershed, a mining company will most certainly and quickly move on to active mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Lambert</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Therefore, the Forest Service must first do a full Environmental Impact Statement that includes not only an assessment of the impacts of exploratory drilling, but also those of any future mining.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Lambert</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Vegetation &amp; Timber Resources</td>
<td>As a matter of course, the assessment should cover the likely effects on agriculture, tourism and cultural resources.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Lambert</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>But above all, it should focus on concerns for Rapid Creek and the Pactola impoundment as the primary sources of water for Rapid City and Ellsworth Air Force Base.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Lambert</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>To insure that the children and grandchildren of all of us, including Forest Service employees, have safe, clean and ample water supplies, please defer action on F3Gold’s drilling application until a thorough and serious full impact assessment is conducted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Emerson</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>I believe the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project will have significant environmental impacts and warrants an Environmental Impact Statement.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Richard Emerson</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>My reasoning is multi-faceted - though potential impact on water quality is of most concern.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Emerson</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Botanical Resources</td>
<td>I would think the Jenny Gulch area also has botanical, archeological, and recreational issues that need to be adequately addressed.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Emerson</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>As an active outdoor recreationalist, I am concerned about the impacts related to the exploratory drilling in an area that has been returning to a more natural state.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Emerson</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>If Gold tests the project as a 3-acre footprint, but the actual impact would much larger. Heavy equipment traffic on existing Forest Service roads, along with new tracks to drilling sites, indicate a more expansive footprint and should also be included.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Emerson</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Please consider the full impacts on the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project by requiring a EIS. The risks associated with the project warrant more than just an EA.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a resident of Rapid City, I am writing to comment on the proposal by F3 Gold LLC’s request to drill test holes for mining in the Jenny Gulch area. I am opposed to this request for several reasons.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This area is in the Rapid Creek drainage which provides the inflow for Pactola Reservoir. 80% of the water in that reservoir is utilized as drinking water for Rapid City, the city of Box Elder, and Ellsworth AFB. The drilling does risk contaminating this water supply. No matter how small the risk, it exists and could be irreversible in a worst case scenario.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>On an environmental level, this is a rare osprey nesting area and the 24 hour activity associated with drilling would disturb these shy raptores who only recently returned to the Black Hills in the last 50 years. Other federal and state agencies have expanded substantial resources to establish the reintroduction of this bird which had historically lived in the Hills. Additionally, the upper Pactola reservoir is choice spawning beds for brook and brown trout. Pactola Lake is also one of the few lakes in the state with a population of lake trout. The spawning beds and the lake trout would all be at risk if the drilling company had a spill or mishap and could, potentially, have long-term or irreversible effects.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>For these living in the area, the existing roads are minimal with very little travel. The proposed operation would entail additional roads into wild forest areas and increased travel on the existing roads by large vehicles and equipment. A 24 hour/day operation would result in round-the-clock travel. The noise, dust, and travel inconvenience would affect residents who have lived here for years and have chose to, often, because of the quiet and solitude. This would be no more.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>F3 Gold, LLC has a less than stellar track record when it comes to environmental concerns. Their past spills and discharges have violated various environmental laws and regulations involved in several of their prior operations in other states. These violations threatened the health of local wetlands and watersheds.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest is public land and is to be managed for all, as is best possible. This means that the interests of a small company should not trump the concerns of a greater population with a direct interest in preserving the integrity of this watershed.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Dieken</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>If precious minerals are found, there will be future proposals to mine in this area. Some areas are not suitable for mining and the associated environmental risks. Jenny Gulch area is one of those areas not suitable for mineral extraction.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Bickett</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>#1 exploration (drilling) will lead to full scale mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Bickett</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Skills</td>
<td>#2 Exploration means drilling through all kinds of rock and likely through underground aquifers.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Bickett</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>#3 Drilling rigs and equipment will be driven through our hills causing damage i.e. erosion to our hill sides etc. Most holes are not going to be drilled next to existing roads requiring more to be made to accommodate equipment.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Bickett</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>#4 mining does not have a great clean-up record (i.e. Gill-Edge Mine see example)</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Bickett</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>I am asking at the very least you ask for a Environmental Impact Statement!</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>City of Rapid City</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>Sakos</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>WHEREAS, gold exploration could lead to gold mining, which involves the use of cyanide and other toxins and often leads to permanent acid mine drainage, which could go into Rapid Creek; and</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>City of Rapid City</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>Sakos</td>
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<td>174</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>WHEREAS, the Rapid Creek watershed and its connected aquifers are the sources for Rapid City's water supply; and</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Rapid City</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>Sakos</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>WHEREAS, the Rapid Creek watershed, including Pactola Reservoir, is a major recreation and tourism area, supporting Rapid City's economy; and</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation.</td>
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<td>City of Rapid City</td>
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<td>Sakos</td>
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<td>174</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>WHEREAS, maintaining the quality and quantity of the water supply is of utmost importance to the City and to Ellsworth Air Force Base; and</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>City of Rapid City</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>Sakos</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Rapid City believes that gold exploration in the Rapid Creek watershed poses an unacceptable risk to the source of Rapid City's drinking water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>City of Rapid City</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>Sakos</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City of Rapid City that due to the potential risk to the Rapid Creek watershed, the City's water supply, and the local economy the City expresses opposition to gold exploration and potential gold mining in the Rapid Creek watershed.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>City of Rapid City</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
<td>Sakos</td>
<td></td>
<td>174</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This comment is Resolution No. 2020-011 Resolution Expressing Opposition to gold exploration in the Rapid Creek Watershed.]</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SaraBeth Donovan</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>My understanding is that F3 is proposing to truck in water to use with the operation of its drilling machinery. As that water is utilized, it will become contaminated with whatever other solvents, metal, etc. are used in the drilling. That mixture will then seep into the surrounding earth, only to eventually be washed downstream.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SaraBeth Donovan</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>We are opposed to the exploratory drilling because, despite their best intentions, F3 Gold cannot ensure that the drilling itself will not compromise the water supply in Silver City, the integrity of Rapid Creek, and the surround forest and fauna. The water utilized by Silver City residents comes from the individual wells located downstream in the watershed of German and Sunnypal Gulches. Once Rapid Creek and those wells are contaminated, there is no turning back. Further, contamination of Rapid Creek leads to contamination of Pactola Lake, which in turn draws into question the water supply of Rapid City.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>SaraBeth Donovan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>We are opposed to the exploratory drilling because, despite their best intentions, F3 Gold cannot ensure that the drilling itself will not compromise the water supply in Silver City, the integrity of Rapid Creek, and the surround forest and fauna. The water utilized by Silver City residents comes from the individual wells located downstream in the watershed of German and Sunnypal Gulches. Once Rapid Creek and those wells are contaminated, there is no turning back. Further, contamination of Rapid Creek leads to contamination of Pactola Lake, which in turn draws into question the water supply of Rapid City.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>SaraBeth Donovan</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The environmental impacts of that contamination must be thoroughly examined by Barr Engineering and the United States Forest Service (Forest Service) environmental experts. In order to fully assess the situation, the Forest Service needs to require the creation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) so that the cumulative impacts of this project will be considered. This project cannot, and should not, be reviewed in isolation.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” [40 CFR 1508.9]. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Consideration of the project must include taking into account development that preceded it, as well as future developments such as the actual mining should gold be discovered.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SaraBeth Donovan</td>
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<td>175</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Environmental Alternatives</td>
<td>Reasonable alternatives must be analyzed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SaraBeth Donovan</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The impact on the water supply, environment, and those residence living nearby are critical in the overall evaluation of the project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sara Beth Donovan</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Thank you for your expertise in and attention to this matter. I am hopeful that when the Forest Service and Barr Engineering critically analyse this project through an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an EIS, they will determine that the risk of negatively impacting the surrounding environment is too great, and they will deny the project.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locateable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 21-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemma Lockhart</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>As you review the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project I request the Forest Service conduct an Environmental Impact Statement on the project.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemma Lockhart</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Especially I request the most comprehensive review and scientific analysis possible of presence of the minnow rainbow or bronze colored fish, the Lake Chub in Pactola Lake.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemma Lockhart</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>We have a responsibility to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement for the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>341</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Finally, I ask you to consider U.S. District Court Judge B. Lynen Winmill ruled just two months ago, the U.S. Forest Service violated environmental laws by failing to adequately consider potential harm to Yellowstone cutthroat in a Canadian mining company's plans to expand its search for gold in eastern Idaho.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemma Lockhart</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geochemistry, Geohydrology, Soil, Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>I respectfully request the Forest Service conduct an Environmental Impact Statement for the F3 Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project. to examine how the proposed exploratory drilling could affect groundwater and possibly fish.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Fauna Lockhart</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am deeply concerned and interested stakeholder with regard to the proposal by F3 to do exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch area. I understand the company's exploratory efforts to find gold mean that the desired outcome is to find gold and either mine for gold or sell the mining rights to another company so it may be mined. With that understanding, I am going to address my concerns about the exploratory drilling as well as the potential eventuality of gold mining in this ecologically sensitive ecosystem and water supply. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td>Fauna Lockhart</td>
<td>177</td>
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<td>341</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>First, the exploratory drilling has the potential to impact wildlife, residents in the area, and key water sources. Including seasonal streams, drainage pathways and ultimately Pactola Lake. Pactola Lake is on of the sources for drinking water for South Dakota's second largest city, Rapid City.</td>
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Tauna Lockhart 177 3 Incorporate Other Public Health and Safety Climate & Air Quality Water Quality/Water Supply EXPLORE: drilling sites have been shown to contribute to noise pollution, air pollution, and damage to water quality. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects on the environment and public health and safety. A public comment is incorporated into the EA.

The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Tauna Lockhart 177 4 Outside of Scope Mining If the exploratory drilling leads to the creation of gold mines, we have no further to look than the Northern Black Hills for examples of destroyed habitats, ecosystems and waterways. The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Tauna Lockhart 177 5 Other General Environmental Concern We would like to see documentation that F3 has managed a project with similar specifications (near a reservoir that feeds a city downstream) and that they have had little or no impact on the wildlife, water, or ecosystems in which they have worked. The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Tara Flannery 178 1 Outside of Scope Mining I am extremely concerned about the impact this mine will have on visitors because of the countless ways in which it will impact our environment, recreation, and drinking water. The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Tara Flannery 178 2 Other Recreation & Travel Management We would be deeply jeopardizing our tourism industry if this exploration - ultimately a mine - moves forward. We take care of the Black Hills, tourism will always be here. It will not "go". The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Tara Flannery 178 3 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS As a stakeholder, I ask that the USFS require a complete, unbiased Environmental Impact Study for this project. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this project would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Ken Wrede 179 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I offer my comments in support of the proposed drilling program by F3 Gold in the area above Patches Reservoir. Comment noted.

Ken Wrede 179 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion As a degree mining engineer with more than 35 years in mining and related businesses I have first hand knowledge that development and extraction of our natural resources can be done in a manner that protects our water and wildlife. Comment noted.

Ken Wrede 179 3 Other Wetlands & Aquatic Resources Found that there were misleading statements about our water resources during public comment and would appreciate: scientific and fact-based information be brought to the conversation - not just emotion. The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Carla Marshall 180 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I am against this F3 Jimmy Soldt Exploration Project. This is not in our Best interest. Comment noted.

Carla Marshall 180 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply First and foremost: We must recognize that Clean Water is ALIVE and that she is a living entity. We need to put Clean Water: the aquifers, springs, creeks and rivers on the endangered Species List for infinity - To be protected at all cost, especially from destructive extraction industries that contaminate with toxic "Produced" wastewater. The Plan of Operations will be made available for public review before the project can proceed.

Carla Marshall 180 3 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement) Next, The Black Hills are Treaty Territory under the 1868 Ft. Laramie Treaty and Government to-Government Tribal Consultation should be first and foremost. I was glad to hear you say during the open house that Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation would be conducted under mandate laws, and policies and procedures. The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal Government-to-Government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.

Carla Marshall 180 4 Other Statement of Project Opinion We know that the Black Hills has unique and special ecosystems that are interconnected. We recognize that this natural world has life: the Water, the Earth, the four-legged, winged, aquatics and insects the Plant nations. The Black Hills tells of our creation, our traditional teachings, it holds spaces for our spiritual ceremonies, and it provides our natural foods, medicines and wildlife. This land is our Church and where we put our prayer altars. We need to protect this land not tear it up. Comment noted.

Carla Marshall 180 5 Outside of Scope Mining Let’s not be naive. Large-scale extraction industries produce toxic wastewater. And many times these companies (rather large or small) will abandon their operations. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States hosts up to 500,000 abandoned mines. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.
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<tr>
<td>Carla Marshall</td>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Right here in our area we have many old mines, many are historical mines, that need to be cleaned up. However, there is only one gold mine that is listed as a Federally recognized Superfund site at the Gilt Edge gold mine, which was listed 20 years ago, was abandoned and has toxic waste water ponds where nothing can grow there. And let's not ignore the fact that White Wood Creek was also a Superfund Site for many years, or don't ignore the relations that What's Gold mine has gotten away with. Leaving waterways contaminated by Produce Water, or leaving behind &quot;Dred Zones&quot; It is not the legacy we want to leave behind for our future generations.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Carla Marshall</td>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Under the United Nations it is a human right violations to deny access to clean water for human consumption. Based on past history of mining in the Black Hills, it’s not if a toxic dam or (mining mud holding pond) will break, BUT WHEN.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Marshall</td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Also, frequent audits on all Bureau of Land Management land descriptions should be done due to the erroneous location of mining claims that was found when this F3 Project was announced and their claims were erroneously located in the Black Elk Wilderness area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Carla Marshall</td>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply Mining</td>
<td>In closing, Water is more valuable than Gold. The Minikahan, or Rapid Creek, and the precious aquifers beneath, those underground lakes, provide us the water that sustains us. Without clean water there is no life. I drink this water and pay good money each month to having clean water coming out of the tap from the aquifers and Rapid Creek, and for that I am grateful. I also enjoy going to the creek and my dogs drinks water out of the creek. I had to. I would drink water directly out of the creek as my ancestors did for thousands of years. The EA evaluates potential project related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Karl Stephenson</td>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion Mining</td>
<td>We need to make a stand and not allow the Mining Exploration here in the Jenny Dutch area. I am totally against the idea mining here in the hills as a father and outdoors man.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Karl Stephenson</td>
<td>Karl</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>As a father my concern is that the proposed mining is all the headwaters of Rapid Creek which is the main water supply for our city. We use the city water daily and it would be a shame to contaminate this great resource that we currently have. Mining uses so many toxic chemicals that would run that very quickly mining companies do not have a great track record for keeping contaminates out of the water supply. We all drink the water that comes out of the taps we bath our children in this very same water! What would we do if His waters gets contaminated?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Karl</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
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<td>181</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>My other worry about the this mining comes from my live of the outdoors. I spend a lot of my time hiking and fishing here in the Black Hills. We are so lucky to have such amazing creeks and streams here in the hills that are full of great opportunities to catch wild fish in such a beautiful environments. Mining would greatly diminish this opportunities.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Karl</td>
<td>Stephenson</td>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion Mining</td>
<td>Hope that you listen to the people that use this resources the most and oppose the mining exploration here in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Gabert</td>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>Gabert</td>
<td></td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am writing to express my concern and opposition to the proposed mining in the Silver City area of Rapid Creek. The Silver City/Lower Rapid Creek area is a special place to myself and many others, and the proposed mining will have a very detrimental effect.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Ryan Gabert</td>
<td>Ryan</td>
<td>Gabert</td>
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<td>182</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply Mining</td>
<td>In addition, the water that will be contaminated and disturbed ends up in our kitchen sinks in Rapid City - which is a fact that many people seem oblivious to. The EA evaluates potential project related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Ryan Gabert</td>
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<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The short term gains and profit from a mine will be greatly outweighed by the contamination and long term reclamation of the effects created by mining, and the monetary bonds aren’t nearly enough to reclaim the area after the mining company cuts their losses and runs.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lyson</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Lyson</td>
<td></td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion Mining</td>
<td>Since our drinking water comes from the three sources that stand to be polluted by run off I am strongly opposed to Mineral Mountain Resources doing even exploratory drilling in the Silver City and Pactola Lake area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td></td>
<td>183</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not grant Mineral Mountain Resources the drilling rights to the public area.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands to open to mineral entry. F 3 Gold, 10 has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gs 40) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 21-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>Lauer</td>
<td></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>Please understand this letter is not to obstruct but to understand and seek a full understanding of what is at stake before permanent damage is done to the area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gerald</td>
<td>Lauer</td>
<td></td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs ES</td>
<td>Wet and all our neighbors depend on well water. This alone needs extensive understanding before putting any of those wells at risk. I hope that a full Environmental Impact Statement is part of the process. It is critical that all impacts are brought out to the community that lives, visits and recreates there and then and only then should there be a discussion on if the impact or the need for any potential benefits to exploratory drilling is worth the price.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” [40 CFR 1508.9]. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Richards</td>
<td></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Stop allowing companies and corrupt Republican leaders from taking what is for everyone in South Dakota.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Richards</td>
<td></td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We need to amend the general mining act of 1872, otherwise greedy immoral leaders will continue to line their pockets instead of protect citizens.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife 1. Bighorn sheep seasonally occupy areas in the Project Area in the spring and summer. Bighorn sheep are sensitive to disturbance during spring and summer and are especially vulnerable during parturition.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife 2. Dace (Dorosoma petenense) and Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis) nests are identified near proposed project access routes by the South Dakota Natural Heritage Program (NHP).</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife 3. Dakota Vertebrata (Vertebrata), a land snail, has NHP occurrence records in the Project Area. Records indicate the land snail inhabit north facing slopes at areas having moist and concentrated forest litter.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife 4. Smokey Green Shiner (Lexiplotos vesvalis) and the Black Hills Redbelly Snake (Storeria occipitomaculata pohosptum) are identified by the NHP in the Project Area. Both species have been recorded along roads that follow intermittent stream drainages.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife 5. GF&amp;P agrees with Forest Service that project area mine adits should be identified and designated as potential bat habitat.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management 6. Forest Plan, Management Area 8.2 (Developed Recreation) is included in the &quot;Project Boundary&quot;, and contains &quot;Drill Pad Locations&quot;. The &quot;Activities and Opportunities&quot; table in the Developed Recreation section of the Forest Plan indicates &quot;No New Mineral Development&quot;, in the Management Area. GF&amp;P requests the Forest Service determine if a conflict exists between the Forest Plan Directives for Developed Recreation and the proposed project.</td>
<td>The majority of Management Area 8.2 around Pactola Lake has been officially withdrawn from mineral entry. However, these withdrawal areas do not necessarily correspond with the Management Area boundary. The three proposed drilling locations in the northwest portion of the Management Area, do occur in an area that is currently not withdrawn. Therefore exploratory drilling is not prohibited and a site specific Forest Plan amendment may be required.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
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<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>2) Bighorn sheep: In South Dakota bighorn sheep are highly valued as a charismatic big game species, an iconic symbol of the western United States, its value as watchable wildlife, and as a regulated hunted species. The Forest Service recognizes bighorn sheep as a Region 2 Sensitive Species. Bighorn sheep have a narrow habitat niche and high fidelity to traditional birthing and rearing areas. They also tend to be more vulnerable to anthropogenic disturbances than habitat generalists such as mule deer. Studies also indicate pedestrian interactions cause bighorn sheep to abandon preferred lambing habitat. Project related activities near the bighorn sheep’s selected habitat must be curtailed during their use periods. Forest Service analysis review and design criteria formulation must consider the important bighorn sheep use areas displayed on the Forest Service biologist’s map and derived from GF&amp;P studies. All Project Area activities, including administrative, employee or contractor access on NFS 6711 (Surneyside Gulch Road), must be restricted during the critical season use periods on the bighorn sheep area. A spatial buffer must keep exploration activities beyond identified habitat to ensure full use by bighorns is not diminished by personnel, vehicles or noise. A seasonal buffer from April 15th to August 31st is implemented in conjunction with the spatial buffer as the period defining bighorn sheep use and restricted mineral development activity.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>2) Osprey is a state threatened species and the Northern Goshawk is a Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species. Both Osprey and Northern Goshawk are Species of Greatest Conservation Need in South Dakota’s Wildlife Action Plan. The NHP classifies both raptors as rare. The Forest Service analysis review and design criteria formulation should identify species specific spatial and temporal buffers for next sites of both species. Information on west buffers can be found on the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Mountain and Prairie Website.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>3) Dakota Vertigo is a species-NHP classified as rare. The snail’s preferred habitat is a forest dominated by white spruce or ponderosa pine; north-facing slopes; limestone or schist substrates. The Forest Service analysis should determine the potential occurrence of snail habitat to inform design criteria that minimize ground disturbing activities. GF&amp;P suggests incorporating on-site visits while planning for new roads, drill pads and staging areas, to identify and avoid snail’s preferred habitat.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>4) Both the Smooth Green Snake and the Black Hills Redbelly Snake are classified as rare by the NHP. The Black Hills Redbelly Snake is also a Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive Species and a Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Design criteria like those recommended for the Dakota Vertigo will also minimize impacts to both snake species. GF&amp;P also suggest including snake and turtle stops that can provide hibernacula.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
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<td>Michals</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>5) Loss and disturbance of habitat is a significant threat to bats, particularly those using caves and mines as hibernacula. Analysis should include the occurrence of Project Area features that host bats. Design criteria should require documentation and habitat searches, followed by spatial and seasonal buffers on identified features. Design criteria will also specify that exploration company employees and contractors are excluded from entering caves or adits during winter hibernation periods that begin in September and lasts through May. Aside from bat hibernation disturbance, seasonal buffers, minimize the threat of humans spreading fungus which causes white-nose syndrome to some bat species in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish, and Parks</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>Michals</td>
<td></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>6) The Forest Service should assess the inconsistency between the proposed project and the Forest Plan Management Directives for Developed Recreation. GF&amp;P Finds Guideline 1519 (Developed recreation areas are unavailable for mineral leasing) and Standard 1510 (Developed recreation areas should be withdrawn from locatable minerals) inhibits mineral development in Developed Recreation. GF&amp;P finds opportunities for plan amendments and administrative changes in 16 CFR § 219.13.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management. The majority of Management Area B.2 around Pactola Lake has been officially withdrawn from mineral entry. However, those withdrawal areas do not necessarily correspond with the Management Area boundary. The three proposed drilling locations in the Northwest portion of the Management Area, do occur in an area that is currently not withdrawn. Therefore exploration drilling is not prohibited and a site specific Forest Plan amendment may be required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Roeh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I am sureyone who cares about the economy of our region, but am also very concerned about the environmental impact, both immediate and long-reaching, that something like mining can affect. Viewed through a smaller scope, the weels of our friends living in Silver City can be affected by the mining process, whether through interruption of service at best, or contamination at worst; on larger scale, the reservoir of Pactola which feeds into Rapid Creek, risks contamination through the process and will affect not only the several thousand who inhabit the Rapid City metropolitan area, but those residents of surrounding areas as well.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Roeh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>I wrote today urging you to please consider the ramifications of this proposed drilling to our esteemed Black Hills. It is with no small amount of pride that I and my neighbors consider this modest but beautiful area the most cherished and special not only in the state of South Dakota but in the region as well. I urge you to please require F3 to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement before beginning any sort of significant exploration in the proposed area—it is the right thing to do. I ask you to please put Future before Finance.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dianne</td>
<td>Milke</td>
<td></td>
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<td>188</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>No to this project. Mining is not compatible with maintaining the natural beauty of the Black Hills and safety of our water resources. If the county won't allow me to install a traditional septic, how can we allow a mine? South Dakota has a history of allowing mines, the owners disappear, and South Dakota taxpayers are stuck with the clean-up. Especially in the current environment where we have a president scratching regulations put in place to protect us, we need to deny this project moving forward.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Utecht-</td>
<td>Whitlock</td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Rapid City South Dakota. We have been informed of the new project drilling near Jenny Gulch in the Black Hills. Although the proposed project is exploratory the repercussions that it could bring would last.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Utecht-</td>
<td>Whitlock</td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The most pressing issue however is to rise above the search for gold and money and greed and let clean water be enough. Please let clean water be enough.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn</td>
<td>Boss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do NOT give the shiny object more weight than our environment—we can replace shiny objects, but, once destroyed, safe water and nature are gone forever. Do not allow gold exploration in any part of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 U.S.C 22). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 462, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC, has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanya</td>
<td>Gomez</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>My comments are regarding the quantity and quality of water and air that may be caused by drilling holes that could reach depths of 6,000 feet. The private wells in our community draw from pockets of water at different depths which get replenished by water movement from long and unpredictable distances. The unique geology means that adjoining neighbors may tap different water sources. By drilling a deep column, the water movement will likely be affected leaving previous voids filled with water while diminishing the output of other wells. This may compromise the quantity of water that households rely upon. Similarly, heavy metals and other unwanted contaminants may travel through this water column and affect the quality of the water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Tanya</td>
<td>Gomez</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Incorporate Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Silver City and its surroundings have one of the highest concentrations of radon in the state and the country. Radon gets released from underground sources. As a gas, it can travel freely through the drill holes. The radon gas can move through rock fissures and travel through water/soil where it can enter homes. I suggest that the environmental assessment studies this problem to determine the risk factors involved with the drill holes.</td>
<td>Radon can be a concern if it enters basements, crawlspaces, or other confined spaces; however, environmental radon typically does not pose an issue. Exploratory drilling is not designed to create new fractures or enhance existing rock fractures such that new sources of environmental radon would be introduced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzan</td>
<td>Nolan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I urge you to stop this exploration which will lead to a full scale mining operation if gold is found. This is dangerous to our environment, to the people who love recreating here, to the animals and all things that are disturbed by probing and poking in the earth. I urge you to listen to the voices of those of us who live here and love this land and wait to be protected. So matter what engineers and miners say about how this is the safest process, we have visual reminders all over the Black Hills of the huge gouges and pits left in our area from gold mining that those who did it say were totally safe. This is not good for our health, our environment or our economy. Please deny the permits or whatever is being sought to further this.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana</td>
<td>Palmateer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am adamantly opposed to this being approved.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dana Palmateer 193 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion While I appreciate the efforts that are on-going to educate the public – and to ensure that there are no environmental concerns, I believe that some of that ‘education’ is mixed with one-sided information and doesn’t provide an objective case to all of those involved.

Dana Palmateer 193 3 Other Public and Agency Engagement The information we received was contained in an envelope with a return address of Barr Engineering. This is the company that has been selected to conduct the environmental assessment of the project. Why does the letter from the USDA/Forest Service/Mystic Ranger Station, to allegedly make all of us aware, come to us within the Barr Engineering envelope? It does not give the appearance of a separate and objective look at this proposal. Barr Engineering has been selected as the third party contractor responsible for preparing NEPA documentation (in this case, an Environmental Assessment) at the direction of the Forest Service.

Dana Palmateer 193 4 Other Statement of Project Opinion The map provided in documentation was terrible. I would think that something that has such an impact and involves so many stakeholders, would have been more specific and professional. The map lead to much confusion as to the exact location of all of the areas that are being targeted. While it may not have been the intention, it sure gives the appearance of not being totally transparent. That map required many of us to have to go to other mapping sources to understand what exactly was being described. This is who we are supposed to ‘trust’ and have confidence in that this project will be managed appropriately?

Dana Palmateer 193 5 Incorporate Public Health and Safety Per the informational meeting, it was reported that this would be a ‘round the clock’ operation. The drilling noise was compared to the sound of a ‘residential refrigerator’. This doesn’t pass the smell test. Per the reporting, there will be water trucks, 4X4 UTV’s, trucks, skid steer loaders, graders, and backhoes. Perhaps the drilling itself would be a low decibel noise, but it really should be calculated with the ENTIRE scope of this project. The entire project/project boundary lines are extremely close to many residences and housing areas. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.

Dana Palmateer 193 6 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The proposed project is in and around households that live in Pennington County. Pennington County has a ‘Scenic Ordinances’. Residents have to comply with having an operational and frequently inspected system. This is done to ensure that all of us have safe and clean water and that our soil is not contaminated. This is to keep all of us safe. Drilling up to 42 drilling sites, 300-6,000 feet in depth has the potential to be MUCH worse than a leaking or unpumped septic tank AND that potential impacts so many. Not just the people in and around this proposed project. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.

Dana Palmateer 193 7 Other Access & Transportation In addition approximately 4,700/linear feet of 8-foot wide temporary overlaid trails may be constructed for drill site access. These temporary overlaid trails would be obliterated and returned to natural conditions after project completed”. After things are OBLITERATED how in the world is something returned to natural conditions? When trees are removed, how are those returned? Ye, another thing that does not pass the smell test. It would take decades for things to ‘return to their natural condition’. I’ll be long gone by that time. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation, as well as measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects.

Dana Palmateer 193 8 Mitigation/Design Criteria Access & Transportation Pennington County road dept. is another of the many stakeholders that would be impacted by this project. Have they been consulted about the ‘wear and tear’ to Rockhill Road? And would F3 compensate them? Or ‘like usual’, will it be the taxpayers footing this bill? The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation. Pennington County is on the project mailing list and attended the project’s Interagency Scoping Meeting. No comments have been received from Pennington County as of May 20, 2020.

Dana Palmateer 193 9 Regulatory Process But, there will be oversight with this project? The proposed exploratory drilling project would be required to acquire all applicable federal, state, and local permits and approvals prior to initiation. The Forest Service will administer the final approved Plan of Operations. Other government entities will be responsible for monitoring the permits they issue for this project.

Dana Palmateer 193 10 Other Socioeconomics I pay high property taxes for this privilege. How am I any less important than an oil-drilling company who has paid zero taxes here and has no sweat equity in the living conditions here? The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 481, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).
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<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dana Kalmeyer</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I respectfully request denial of this project. &quot;Caring for the Land and Serving the People&quot;…. Indeed, I hope this is true and not just meaningless words on your letterhead. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (golds) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Cruse</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please do not allow more gold exploration in the Black Hills of South Dakota. We appreciate and take care of our land and water in South Dakota. Gold mining is toxic to the environment. If you allow gold exploration then mining will follow and gold mining is very destructive to the environment. Stop this potential environmental disaster now, let it go no further. Stop it in it’s tracks! The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (golds) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fenner</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please note that we are strongly opposed to any mining or gold exploration drilling in the Black Hills. Mining has a long history in our area and the environmental impacts have not been good. Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fenner</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>First, there is the visible disruption of the site and the problems that creates for the biodiversity of any given area. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fenner</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Second, these are spaces where wildlife thrive. We need to leave these areas unexploited, undamaged, and undeveloped. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fenner</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Third, mining would negatively impact areas where we go to enjoy hiking, fishing, boating, swimming, kayaking, etc. by not only disrupting the serene aesthetic but by building roads and adding heavy machinery and traffic. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fenner</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Lastly, and most importantly, we know from past experiences that mining can create preparable pollution to the water. The area proposed is too delicately connected to the watershed leading to Pactola and the Rapid Creek watershed where we all get our drinking water from. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Fenner</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Finally, clean water is worth more than all of the gold in the world. No more mining. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norma Wilson</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not permit F3’s Gulch Gold Exploration Project to drill for gold in the Rapid Creek watershed area. The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (golds) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norma Wilson</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This could pollute Rapid City’s water supply and negatively impact not only Rapid City citizens but the many visitors to our Black Hills. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koobberick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Oppose the proposed exploratory drilling in the Jersey Gulch, Broad Gulch, and Sunnyside region directly adjacent to Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koobberick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This watershed is vital to the citizens of Rapid City, Box Elder, and Ellsworth AFB. Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant impact to our communities. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koobberick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>A full EIS for this watershed should be instituted rather than the short EA process being proposed. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koobberick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>There has never been a major gold mining operation in the Black Hills that hasn’t harmed water quality. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koobberick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Even a small spill from a gold mining operation into Pactola would harm wildlife and fisheries. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koebernick</td>
<td>Vicki Koebernick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>A larger spill or a legacy of cleanup from an abandoned mine could threaten our water supply for generations to come.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would not be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki Koebernick</td>
<td>Vicki Koebernick</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I am not a blanket opponent mining. I oppose any steps to mine in this pristine watershed. Our water is a critical resource beyond gold.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Gunter</td>
<td>Amanda Gunter</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Truly and adamantly oppose the exploration mining in this area of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Gunter</td>
<td>Amanda Gunter</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Not only does it cause concern for our recreation, but Water is life! The water that sustains our lives comes from there! I am a seriously concerned citizen who trembles at the thought of potentially contaminated water coming into my home and the home of the people in this community. It is far too fragile to risk. I cannot imagine anything worse.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Arctic</td>
<td>Jack Arctic</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Last night, at the Rapid City council meeting, those of us supportive of further environmental impact evaluation into the proposed mining exploration in the Pactola Reservoir watershed area were characterized as an uninformed, uneducated, fear-mongering extremist minority. We are none of those things. If the citizens were allowed to vote on this issue, you would find that a very great majority would not want approval of this mining project for well documented reasons. However low the mining companies claim the impact and risk to be, there will be an impact and it is a risk we have to take! Can we not say “no”, the risk is too great? The risk to our vital water source is too great to accept. Please do not approve this mining proposal.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue D.</td>
<td>Sue D.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am a lifelong resident for 22 years and I am writing to state my objections to any mining exploration in the area I live in.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue D.</td>
<td>Sue D.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>First of all evidence shows possible mining does contaminate water, air, and soils. I am fearful since this area has many springs that are in the exploration area that will be disturbed and ruined. One supplies a spring fed reservoir that is used by many residents and visitors. These springs all feed into Pactola Reservoir.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Sue D.</td>
<td>Sue D.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The watershed from Rapid Creek is most of the water supply for Rapid City and others. We must protect this water source. Also there are many private wells in this area that are used by permanent residents of our area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to the exploration and drilling test holes for gold in the Jenny Gulch area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>I am prime habitat for bald eagles and ospreys and feel it will pose a threat to these animals, the recreation (that we pay for) and to the water supply itself for Rapid City (where I live), and surrounding areas.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>This drilling itself is harmful to the environment and if sufficient gold deposits are found, the force of greed may be unstoppable.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please note my opposition to this drilling in the Rapid City, Pactola and Jenny Gulch watershed.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Water is life, and it should not be subject to harm or potential destruction. The best way to prevent this destruction is not to allow the introduction of modern mining into this area at all. Thank you for supporting the residents of this area, including myself. We love our Black Hills and our clean water!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremy Boyd</td>
<td>Jeremy Boyd</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>As a resident of the Black Hills who enjoys recreation activities such as paddling, hiking/trail running, and mountain biking I oppose this company’s plans to explore for gold and rare earth minerals. We need to embrace outdoor tourism for the industry in the Black Hills and not allow anymore gold mining. That time has come and gone for mining. Look at the area/Terry Peak area for the blight they cause in the Black Hills. Do not allow them to drill an decontaminate the water that flows into Rapid City and Pactola that people enjoy in the summer. I enjoy paddling in Rapid Creek and do not want to lose out on this.</td>
<td>Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to exploratory drilling in the Upper Rapid Creek basin. I am a frequent user of our public lands and the BNHP: feel it is important to protect our resources.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The watershed is vital to the citizens of Rapid City, Box Elder and EABF. Drilling will surely lead to mining and surely no mining is safe close to a major water source.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>In addition, this area is a vital outdoor recreation opportunities and should not be compromised with mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>Michelle Thomson</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>A complete environmental impact statement seems imperative with the possibility of the proposed mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleen Ragan</td>
<td>Colleen Ragan</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I am very concerned at the potential for exploration for gold in our Black Hills region. This exploration will impact our water, in terms of pollution and potential reduction for our citizenry takes for granted. Clean, safe water is of paramount importance to me!</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleen</td>
<td>Ragan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>204</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not permit exploration for gold in our hills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen</td>
<td>Ragan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>204</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration, if successful results show potential, the next step will be drilling and removing gold, building more roads, and the increased possibility for damage to our watershed. We DO NOT NEED any more gold to be removed from the Black Hills.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleen</td>
<td>Ragan</td>
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<td>204</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please, protect the Black Hills from further damage. Please protect our water for the children, grandchildren and future generations. No amount of shiny metal is worth this environmental cost.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>We are very concerned about this project as it is in a high impact area that could impact thousands of people. The Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a short Environmental Assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact.&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Rapid City water and/or a well by Rapid Creek will be impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Recreation activities could be impacted especially in the Pactola Lake and Rapid Creek area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration leads to mining, and the environmental review process should cover all potential impacts of the project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td></td>
<td>205</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Vegetation &amp; Timber Resources</td>
<td>Yes, we need healthy economic development and we do value the current tourism and agriculture, but both will be negatively impacted by this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Lindvall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing in opposition to granting a permit for mineral exploration at Jenny Gulch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Lindvall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The exploration will disturb wildlife habitat, threaten municipal water supplies, and an important fishery.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Lindvall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>If and when an environmental assessment is prepared it should include the impacts of the mining should marketable minerals be found.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathryn</td>
<td>Grimwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to the exploration and drilling test holes for gold in the Jenny Gulch area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathryn</td>
<td>Grimwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>It is a prime habitat for bald eagles and ospreys and I feel it will pose a threat to these animals, the recreational area of Pactola and the surrounding acreage (that we pay for) and even more importantly to the water supply itself for Rapid City (where my extended family lives), and surrounding areas. The drilling itself is harmful to the environment.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cathryn</td>
<td>Grimwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>207</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Please note my opposition to this drilling in the Rapid City, Pactola and Jenny Gulch watershed. Water is life, and it should not be subject to harm or potential destruction. The best way to prevent this destruction is to not allow the introduction of modern mining into this area at all.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Saum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am writing to urge that the Forest Service do a full Environmental Impact Statement for the potential Jenny Gulch exploration project. Not only is this a high impact area where many people go for recreation near Pactola Lake and Rapid Creek, but these kinds of &quot;explorations&quot; lead to mining, so the environmental review process should look at all potential long-term impacts of approving this sort of project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment Response

James Rankin 201 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I support the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project that was discussed at the January 16, 2020, public meeting and on the USFS/BNFN website. Comment noted.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 1 Outside of Scope Mining As a policy matter, the Sierra Club Black Hills Group is opposed to gold mining in the Black Hills National Forest. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 2 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS Though we would prefer a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), we support the process of Environmental Assessment (EA) on which the Forest Service is embarking, and would prefer the EA when it is published later this year. Given the potentially significant impacts of the proposed project on the watershed for Rapid Creek, we question whether the environmental analysis and decision document can result in a Finding of No Significant Impact, and encourage the Forest Service to be open to proceeding with preparation of an EIS.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 3 Regulatory Process We urge you to consider the following: 1. Full consideration of a range of action alternatives, in addition to a no-action alternative and a preferred action alternative. Comment noted.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 4 Other Climate & Air Quality As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 5 Other Fisheries & Wildlife The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 6 Other Fisheries & Wildlife The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 7 Other Botanical Resources The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to botanical resources.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 8 Other Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources) The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 9 Other Recreation & Travel Management As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 10 Other Cumulative Assessment The Forest Service will administer the final approved Plan of Operations. Other government entities will be responsible for monitoring the permits they issue for this project.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 11 Regulatory Process Financial Assurance The EA considers measures to minimize potential project-related effects.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 12 Mitigation/Design Criteria General Environmental Concern The EA considers measures to minimize potential project-related effects.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 13 Mitigation/Design Criteria General Environmental Concern The EA considers measures to minimize potential project-related effects.

Sierra Club Suzanne Iudicello Sandra Seberger 210 14 Regulatory Process Public and Agency Engagement The EA is prepared in accordance with U.S. Forest Service NEPA guidelines.
Andy Thorstenson 211 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed exploratory gold drilling project in Jenny Gulch.

Comment: noted.

Andy Thorstenson 211 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The reasons for my opposition are numerous. The project would have negative impacts on water quality for the thousands of residents downstream.

Comment: noted.

Andy Thorstenson 211 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion If the United States Forest Service is committed to protecting and managing lands for the benefit of American citizens the agency would clearly reject this proposal.

Comment: noted.

Julie Ames-Curtis 212 1 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS This project is in a high impact area that could impact thousands of people. The Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a short Environmental Assessment.

Comment: noted.

Julie Ames-Curtis 212 2 Outside of Scope Mining Not only will it affect everyone who lives in the Black Hills it will also degrade the million dollar tourism economy that stabilizes the SD economy. Mining is a boom and bust industry. We’ve had enough of that in the Black Hills.

Comment: noted.

Eric Zimmer 213 1 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS I am writing to encourage your office to require a full Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed drilling and mining project north of Jenny Gulch.

Comment: noted.

Eric Zimmer 213 2 Other General Environmental Concern I am concerned about the impact this project would have on area wildlife, recreation, and drinking water for everyone who is supplied by the Rapid Creek watershed.

Comment: noted.

Donna Moore 214 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I just say I’m shocked that a mining permit is even being considered for this area. It will have a lasting impact on the entire watershed area. Please strongly oppose this.

Comment: noted.

Matthew Bauman 215 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I’m writing to voice my opposition to gold exploration in Jenny Gulch and anywhere near Rapid Creek waters.

Comment: noted.

Matthew Bauman 215 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The risk of contamination is too great to contaminate in any manner Pactola Reservoir and the groundwater serving Rapid City and area residents.

Comment: noted.

Matthew Bauman 215 3 Regulatory Process EA vs EIS I strongly encourage you to enforce a full Environmental Impact Statement, protect tourism and local pride, preserve the watershed that supplies the largest city in western South Dakota.

Comment: noted.

Robert Bickett Kelcy Bickett 216 1 Outside of Scope Mining My family would hate to see mining so near Silver City. The traffic and spoiling of the beautiful Black Hills near our home due to mining would detract immensely from the value of our home and spoil the quiet and heavenly atmosphere of the Black Hills near Silver City.

Comment: noted.

Robert Bickett Kelcy Bickett 216 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Another more serious concern is the potential harm to the surface and underground water in the area proposed for exploration. It would seem prudent to require that the risk to the water shed be absolutely zero. The water from the proposed exploration area drains into Lake Pactola which as everyone knows is a critical water supply for Rapid City. I would have doubts about any study saying that there is no risk to the this water supply. Please do not be satisfied with only one study of the water supplying Pactola. It seems that at least 2 independent studies should be completed by competent professionals.

Comment: noted.

Claudia Welland-Randal 217 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I am against any disturbance in or near the Pactola / Jenny Gulch area.

Comment: noted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signors</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Blockland-Randall</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>I am against any disturbance in or near the Pactola / Jenny Gulch area. The Black Hills is a gorgeous local and tourist economy. Any $5 generated by exploration and/or drilling is short term and cannot replace the negative impact of disturbance of water, roads, quality of life for humans and animals.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>Gearlach</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The potential for water contamination is the number one concern. With Pactola being the primary source of drinking water for Rapid City, stopping this project seems obvious. Once gold is found and the project moves forward, there will be no way to protect the safety of our water..</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>Gearlach</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>We and our partners in the tourism industry use the land that is being proposed for the drilling project and the Forest Service roads for the UTV activities in the Black Hills. For the duration of the project and years after, the natural beauty and access will be compromised.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>Gearlach</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Jenny Gulch is where we take the majority of our guests for kayaking. The noise related to the proposed project will diminish the sacred beauty and serenity of the area. If gold is found and the area is mined, the natural beauty of the area will be severely compromised as well.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>Allard</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am in full support of the project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jade</td>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I would hate to see the negative impact and potential dangers due to mining and mining exploration to this special area, water source and outdoor oasis. Please help protect this vital Black Hills resource.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>Englehart-Bagley</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Ask that you not allow this exploratory drilling to go forward due to the potential groundwater contamination future gold mining could bring to the Black Hills. I understand that this is exploratory drilling and that no mining would take place at this time; however, exploratory drilling could open the area up for future gold mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>Englehart-Bagley</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We don’t need gold mining in the Black Hills, the area’s economy is doing fine without it. Hard rock mining is one of the nation’s most toxic industries and poses a risk to our forest’s multiple use and outdoor recreation.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Loos</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I write for purposes of documenting my strong opposition to the above-referenced project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Loos</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I have great concerns about the possible prejudice to the watershed in the area, which potentially could compromise the drinking water where I raise my family and run my business.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Loos</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>In my experience these mining activities also are a sight on the aesthetics of the land which I believe is worthy of protection.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Loos</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>We are a tourist and recreation area and these interests are not furthered with mining operations.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Messler</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Should mining pollute our landscape and soundscape, rip up what little forest we have preserved, the surrounding area would lose much of its appeal to visitors.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Messler</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Private well located on the banks of the creek which would surely be polluted by runoff, as would the city water supply.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F3 Gold, LLC</td>
<td>Rob Bergman</td>
<td>Brian Lentz</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Despite these clear statements in your scoping letter, we anticipate that some commenters may raise concerns about the potential impacts of mining, milling, processing, and road construction. We want to emphasize that such activities are neither pertinent to our proposed activities nor reasonably foreseeable results of our proposed activites. Any comments suggesting otherwise are inaccurate.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F3 Gold, LLC</td>
<td>Rob Bergman</td>
<td>Brian Lentz</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>When considering the scope of the EA it is important to remember that exploratory drilling for minerals is distinct from other types of drilling, such as for oil and gas. The drilling process for mineral exploration is conducted on a small footprint with drilling equipment equivalent to the equipment utilized in drilling a water well.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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</table>
**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signators** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Criteria** | **Comment** | **Response** |
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 3 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry & Soils | Exploratory drilling such as we have proposed poses no significant environmental impacts. The process does not use any toxic chemicals or hazardous materials. The process uses a diamond core drill bit, steel pipe and natural and biodegradable lubricants. The holes drilled are approximately 3” in diameter. The process uses the same equipment and techniques that are commonly used to drill water wells. The only thing we will be removing is the core rock sample, which is a cylinder of rock approximately 3” in diameter. | Comment noted. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 4 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Water Quality/Water Supply | As your scoping letter points out, water used in the drilling process will not be sourced from Rapid Creek or any surface water source. All water used for drilling will be sourced from approved industrial or municipal water sources. | Comment noted. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 5 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | The water used in drilling is captured in a system of settling tanks to allow drill cuttings to settle out of the water. No sumps will be used in the proposed exploration drilling project. | Comment noted. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 6 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | At the conclusion of drilling each site, all exploration core drilling holes will be sealed and reclaimed according to state and federal regulations. (See graphic "Drill Pad. Before & After"). | Comment noted. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 7 | Outside of Scope | Mining | In short, mining is not a reasonable effect of our project and if mining were ever proposed, numerous additional environmental review and permitting requirements would have to be satisfied before it could happen. | Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 8 | Regulatory process | FS Gold’s proposed project would normally fall within a categorical exclusion - a fact that USFS staff acknowledged during its public information meeting for the FS Gold Jenny Gulch Project held at the Mystic Ranger District Office on January 16, 2020. But despite the existence of a categorical exclusion for projects like ours, and the fact that no other approved exploration drilling project has ever required to undergo the EA process, the USFS determined that FS Gold’s proposed plan of operations should undergo an EA. | Comment noted. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 9 | Outside of Scope | Mining | We are counting on the USFS to keep its focus on the project, as proposed by FS Gold, and not speculate impacts from future events far outside the scope of our proposal, such as the fear by some that a mining operation may someday be developed in the area. Not all exploratory drilling leads to a mine. In fact, less than a tenth of one percent of all exploration projects lead to the development of a mine. | Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 10 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Water Quality/Water Supply | Our proposed drilling sites are located within the Precambrian rocks that form the crystalline core of the Black Hills. Our proposed operations are approximately 13 miles from the Madison and Minnelusa aquifers, which are the source of drinking water for Rapid City. It is scientifically impossible for proposed drilling to intersect the Madison or Minnelusa aquifers and impact the drinking water for Rapid City. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply, geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 11 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Water Quality/Water Supply | For example same have claimed that drilling in the Black Hills will impact water quality or contaminate sources of drinking water for the City of Rapid City, or even Ellsworth Air Force base. First, as discussed above, there is no scientific or environmental evidence to substantiate how the proposed drilling operations would pose significant risk or threat to either the pahtda reservoir, or the Madison or Minnelusa aquifers. Our project will not intersect with or impact the Madison or Minnelusa aquifers which supply Rapid City. Furthermore, Ellsworth Air Force Base is not located with the Rapid Creek Watershed. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply, geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 12 | Mitigation/Design Criteria | Recreation & Travel Management | Other concerns raised include impacts to those who wish to access the Black Hills National Forest for recreation and are concerned with road and trail access, noise, dust or other factors. Our plan of operations calls for up to 42 drill pad sites that are 500 by 50 ft. This small footprint represents less than four acres out of the 1.2-million -acre national forest. Our plan also calls for the use of existing trails and overland trails, with no new road construction proposed. Core drilling is a wet process and the water used in drilling means minimal dust will be generated. Far more dust is created by the UTVs that frequent the trails and gravel roads in the forest. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management. |
FS Gold, LLC | Rob | Bergman | Brian Lents | 224 | 13 | Mitigate | Public Health and Safety | Flare the noise generated by the core drilling is approximately 98.2 decibels at 40 ft. - or approximately the volume of a kitchen refrigerator - and will not create a significant impact. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management. |
Lisa | Ohlmer | 225 | 1 | Other | Water Quality/Water Supply | Please protect our water our lakes and wells, etc. PROJECT PACTAQA | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. |
Lisa | Ohlmer | 225 | 2 | Other | Recreation & Travel Management | This area matters significantly for locals and tourists alike. | The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Gehrer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not allow this to happen!</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. FS Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Lennon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management Vegetation &amp; Timber Resources</td>
<td>We need healthy economic development. Our current tourism and agricultural industries should be valued. This project would negatively impact both of those industries.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Lennon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>In addition, the area along Highway 388, especially Paetola Lake, is one of our most scenic areas. It is a gem of the Black Hills and gold exploration would not fit here. Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Durrum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>227</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>These cut-and-run gold companies would leave the environment a disaster. Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Durrum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>227</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>We need a Environmental Impact Statement on this project, not just an Environmental Assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of the decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Durrum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>227</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please consider the cumulative impacts of the proposed project. Which would include other gold operations in the area (some of which are unknown to us), the possibility of mining, and the impacts of mining on climate change. As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie</td>
<td>Meisner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>It is mining in this area that is putting our water supply, human health, wildlife, recreation, peoples businesses, the environmental at risk. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Point Chuck Point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>229</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This request for exploration should be denied.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. FS Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Point Chuck Point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>229</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>If the request is not denied, the Forest Service should conduct a full environmental impact statement, NOT just a short Environmental Assessment before granting any approval for exploration. Exploration leads to mining and the environmental review process should cover ALL potential aspects of the project. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of the decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Point Chuck Point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>229</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This project is in conflict with the use of this scenic area and threatens both the lake and the entire watershed for Rapid Creek which supplies water for Rapid City, Ellsworth Air Force Base and surrounding areas. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply and recreation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Point Chuck Point</td>
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<td></td>
<td>229</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>I am also concerned about the Forest Service timing of tribal consultation. Tribal consultation should come first.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jill Point</td>
<td>Chuck Point</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>1所说的项目建议可能不会被否决，但最低限度需要完成全面的环境影响声明(EIS)。</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelli McCormick</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>am writing in support of F3’s proposed exploration drilling in the Jenny Gulch area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kelli McCormick</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This activity is minimally invasive and the law requires them to reclaim the disturbed areas. Additionally, the drilling is no more or less at risk of affecting groundwater than any other well, and DENR requires proper plugging of each well. For these reasons, I see no reason to oppose F3’s exploration project at Jenny Gulch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Hey</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Have grave concerns about the effects on water quality below the exploration.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Hey</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Recreation will affect. My family and many visitors appreciate the quiet beauty of the Black Hills for Biking and Hiking.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Hey</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>It is their responsibility to give proof and examples of clean mining before a permit is even considered.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthias Roth</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>am much concerned over the proposed exploratory drilling to occur in the vicinity of Pactola Reservoir and the headwaters of Rapid Creek. I have actually stumbled onto a couple of claims while out hiking and am upset that anyone think it sane to consider mining to close to vital waterway.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthias Roth</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>A single well would destroy the creek and pollute the reservoir, which of course is more than just a holding tank for Rapid City's drinking water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthias Roth</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I will come out there to fish with my Dad. Now if a fishing pond sprang a leak and leaked sewage into the water, who’s going to fish there? Who is going to swim there? And who is going to foot the bill for the cleanup?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthias Roth</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>My worry is that these sorts of exploratory operations are rushed through the regulatory process. I would like a full environmental impact Statement to be done on this project, as it doesn’t take an ecologist to observe that a gold mind in the headwaters of Rapid Creek could be a disaster.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthias Roth</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The threat of a spill is a potential, but what would be certain if the project went through would be an increase in road construction and heavy truck use which would lead to an increase in soil erosion.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthias Roth</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The mine(s) would likely be large irreparable scars in the Black Hills, destroying crucial forest habitat. And its operation would continually stress wildlife; the economic cost falling on the hunting industry.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffery Sugrue</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>am concerned this exploratory drilling could impact the water quality/quantity of local private water wells, and also potentially contaminate Pactola reservoir, a major water source for Rapid City and Ellsworth AFB.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffery Sugrue</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Silver City Road is a narrow two-lane asphalt highway with steep grades and countless sharp curves. This highway has a thin asphalt layer that is old and is barely sustained to meet current light vehicle traffic to Silver City and access to upper Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek. There are areas along this road with obvious subsidence due to current vehicle traffic. Any additional heavy vehicle traffic by F3 Gold drilling apparatus could cause significant damage to the highway or be the cause of an accident due to a road slide at one of the subsidence areas.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffery Sugrue</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>There are active eagle nesting sites in the vicinity of the drilling area. There are also bald eagles, numerous owl species, and at least one goshawk nesting site nearby this area. Drilling activity could potentially disrupt raptor nesting and the survival of hatchlings.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffery Sugrue</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Potential water contamination of Pactola Reservoir could impact the aquatic environment and fish populations. This could have secondary impacts on wildlife, such as the osprey and eagles, that feed on these fish.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
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<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeffrey</td>
<td>Sugrue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>233</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Due to the above potential impacts, I strongly urge you to require the completion of a full-scale Environmental Impact Statement prior to any decision/permit that would allow exploratory drilling</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon Paulson</td>
<td>Craig Kingsbury</td>
<td>Emily (Kingsbury)</td>
<td>Sakai</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Our family owns a home in Silver City is extremely concerned with the proposed gold/gold mining/exploration.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon Paulson</td>
<td>Craig Kingsbury</td>
<td>Emily (Kingsbury)</td>
<td>Sakai</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>MiningAlthough we are not against hobbyist mining, the proposed search drilling and inevitable corporate mining is something that will drastically alter the quality of life, water and recreation we all enjoy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Haug</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to the proposed exploratory gold drilling project in Jenmy Gulch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Haug</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Were this proposed project to proceed, it would adversely affect the water quality for all Rapid City residents and everyone else who lives downstream from the drilling sites.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Bell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>236</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am very concerned for families throughout the Rapid City as we all receive our water from the Rapid Creek.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Bell</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>236</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Tanks containing this hazardous chemical could have a accident not unlike the water tank that turned over in Rockford. Should such a spill with cyanide tank take place every fish and wildlife will die in the creek. And it is possible that human life will be at very great risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaclyn Lanae</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>237</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Protect the beauty of the Black Hills, the associated recreation and tourism, the precious commodity that is clean water and healthy earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter Taylor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>238</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>As a recreational stakeholder I am most concerned about disturbing this unique landscape and reducing the fishery.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>You need to do a full Environmental Impact Statement on the FS Jenny Gulch project.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Kile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Downstream communities are at risk and it is the responsibility of the Black Hills National Forest Service to protect human communities from distant and foreign extraction ventures that absolutely will degrade public lands.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Harjes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am vehemently opposed to exploratory drilling, which sole purpose is to lead to gold mining around our water sources.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann Harjes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>At a very minimum I would expect a highly in-depth environmental impact study be done.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Arnold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>242</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>We are deeply concerned at the level of destruction to our area’s most precious resource: our Black Hills. The impact on wildlife, access to the area for recreation and damage to our forests are all very real factors.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Arnold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>242</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The risk of contamination to our watershed is a grave concern.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Arnold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>242</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Our area depends on the natural beauty of the Black hills for tourism.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is too precious of an area to even entertain without a full Environmental Impact Statement. I want to know all about the environmental implications and associated risks that come with mining gold.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Comment noted.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

Comment noted.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. **

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. **

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

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The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fish and wildlife.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fish and wildlife.

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The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fish and wildlife.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fish and wildlife.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fish and wildlife.
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signators</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Rapid City being the second largest city in SD is of economic importance to our state. With the coming growth of the EAB in the near future we will need more of a water resource than ever before. Again this is of great importance to the economic growth of our community.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>3 Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geochemistry, Geochimistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>Drilling into rock that contains elements that should not be brought to the surface and discarded haphazardly is more than absurd. It is reckless and wasteful. These elements would threaten the waters that flow into our water reservoirs.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geochemistry, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>4 Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>What measures will be taken to ensure that all waste water from drilling is disposed of safely?</td>
<td>F3 will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions prior to initiation of project activities. As part of this, F3 would need to work with its contractor to develop an approved waste management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>5 Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>What are the specifics on drilling waste? What elements are within the discharge from drilling? Are any elements radioactive? What elements are toxic?</td>
<td>F3 will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions prior to initiation of project activities. As part of this, F3 would need to work with its contractor to develop an approved waste management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>6 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>What data will be shared with the public?</td>
<td>F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website. Additional project documents, including the EA, will be posted to this site once available.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57428</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>7 Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Who will monitor? How will the monitoring be done, how often and by whom? Is there continuous monitoring of waste to determine what elements are being brought to the surface? What is the time in for testing, monitoring and sharing data?</td>
<td>The U.S. Forest Service will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of F3’s final approved Plan of Operations. Similarly, for permits required by other agencies, those agencies will be responsible for following up with F3 on any monitoring requirements they issue for the Project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>8 Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>How do we know that the company is not drilling at angles under private land? How will those land owners know?</td>
<td>F3 will be required to conduct the Project in accordance with the final Plan of Operations as approved by the U.S. Forest Service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>9 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Do we who live downstream own our own wells, have to be concerned for any contamination into our aquifer?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>10 Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geochemistry, Geochimistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>Will the drilling impact our aquifers?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geochemistry, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>11 Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Now and when will this monitoring take place? Who will pay for our wells to be monitored?</td>
<td>The U.S. Forest Service will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of F3’s final approved Plan of Operations. Similarly, for permits required by other agencies, those agencies will be responsible for following up with F3 on any monitoring requirements they issue for the Project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>12 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>As you can see I am concerned for the quality of our water. But I am also concerned for the quantity. I have personally witnessed severe drought here.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Rowe</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>13 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>At the lowest recorded data, how would drilling impact our water resources? Factoring in the future growth of our area?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caitlin Monahan</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Mining exploration in the Silver City, Jenny Gulch, and Serrynale Gulch region of the Black Hills is not acceptable.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caitlin Monahan</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Recovery of any mineral resources in this watershed will jeopardize pasticite reservoir and Rapid City’s water supply not to mention a huge source of recreational activities enjoyed by thousands of local families and a huge source of tourism revenue.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perry Gross</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not allow exploration or mining in the Jenny Gulch area.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 20-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Herreman</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a key stakeholder in this project and significant user of the Jenny Gulch Basin and Rapid Creek watershed I am vehemently opposed to the current process in place for this proposed exploration project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Herreman</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>2 Regulatory process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The EA process is inadequate to address this project and a full EIS needs to be undertaken for the sake of completeness.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Herreman</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The wildlife impact of this project presents significant concerns as this basin is summer and nesting habitat for critical protected species including osprey and bald eagles also with elk, deer and mountain goats.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Herreman</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The potential for a chemical spill in the watershed with the exploratory drilling will occur is another significant concern.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Herreman</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The access roads into the basin (particularly silver city road) are not adequate to support the equipment required for the drilling process and the traffic increase will harm the quality of life for the residents of the area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Herreman</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The other significant concern is for the amazing recreational area and trout fishery.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leon SwiftBird</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Any spill or unintended release of drilling fluids during the exploration project would migrate through fractured crystalline bedrock and contaminate this shallow aquifer/well water supply, which would compromise drinking water quality in Jenney gulch and impact homeowners immediately (Leading to a larger impact of citizens in Rapid City and the general region of South Dakota).</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leon SwiftBird</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>As you may or may not know, the Jenney Gulch area has been flagged as an area of vulnerability/concern since a research study of the Black Hills water since 2012 (See Attachment) which has been documented as due to the decades old mining operations on the property leaving the area with high susceptibility. As homeowners, we have taken extra precautions to protect our area water supply since this flag of vulnerability/susceptibility.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leon SwiftBird</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Any leaching of acid mine drainage from this exploration could impact water quality in Rapid Creek and Lake Pactola, which has implications for the entire Black Hills region.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brad Evans</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>However, I am in favor of drilling by FG Gold and Mineral Mountain. I can see no harm by drilling to determine the underground geology.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laural Bidwell</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not approve any mining activity– neither exploration nor mining, anywhere near Pactola reservoir or any other location that may impact the Rapid City Watershed.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. FG Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locateable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laural Bidwell</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>In addition to water quality concerns, the Black Hills is a major tourist and outdoor activity center. We do not want to blight the environment for external companies to extract gold.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laural Bidwell</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I oppose any permits for FG Gold Jenney Gulch Exploration.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flayk Ranch</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>OPPOSE this project for the sake of clean &amp; clear water in the Pactola watershed.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flayk Ranch</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As a fly fisher woman I implore you keep drilling from this water source.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesley Warren</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to any drilling in the BMHR.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marlis DeMitchell-Sade</td>
<td>Dr. Irvin Sade</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploratory mining operations would negatively impact our ability to enjoy the splendor of the pactola lake area in many ways including the aesthetic unpleasing of mining operations, the disruption of fauna and flora from the mining operations, as well as the potentially negative consequences of mining operation, which will introduce environmentally damaging effects to the area.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marlis DeMitchell-Sade</td>
<td>Dr. Irony Sade</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>We do not want the Rapid City water supply impacted by mining. The Pactola Lake area is critical for the Rapid City water supply. We rely on clean drinking water when we are in Rapid City, whether at work, shopping, or eating out. Even though it has been stated that F3 will be required to truck in their water supply, that does not rule out that the local water supply will not be impacted by mining operations. Underground waterways communicate in ways that we are unable to see; drilling introduces new pathways that can divert water with unintended consequences. In addition to creating new pathways that can divert water, new chemicals or elements can also be introduced that can destroy the cleanliness and palatability of the water. We do not want the quality of our water to be threatened by mining operations.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marlis DeMitchell-Sade</td>
<td>Dr. Irony Sade</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>3 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)</td>
<td>The land is owned by Native American tribes. Not only are the Black Hills sacred land to Native American tribes, but they have ownership claims to the land per signed treaties with the US government, that should supersede any mining claims, and consultation with them about the proposed project has been inadequate. Native American tribes are a sovereign nation, and consultation about the proposed project must be done to their standards and approval, and on their timelines. I cannot stress enough how important it is that the tribes who have ownership of the land be in agreement with the planned exploratory mining, that the treaties signed by the US government be honored and respected.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marlis DeMitchell-Sade</td>
<td>Dr. Irony Sade</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>4 Other</td>
<td>Vegetation &amp; Timber Resources</td>
<td>Clearing areas in order to complete the exploratory drilling project will negatively impact the Pactola Lake area. Although F3 will reportedly be required to reclaim the footprints of the land they will clear to create their drilling areas, they will most likely utilize clearcutting in order to make the space they require for their operations. The negative effects of clearcutting have been well documented, and may include increased stream flow during storms and resulting destruction, loss of habitat and species diversity, and overall disruption of the forest ecosystem. It provides increased opportunities for invasive species to take root and crowd out native flora. It also frequently results in loss of recreational opportunities and destruction of scenery. It takes years to reclaim the clearcut areas, years which will have negative consequences for the flora and fauna impacted by clearcutting. 42 clear-cut sites are far too many to allow. Clear-cut sites are ugly.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to vegetation and timber resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Armstrong</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As President of the Rapid City Common Council, please know I am strongly against the proposed exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch, Broad Gulch, and Sunnyside region directly adjacent to Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Armstrong</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Armstrong</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>3 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>I would recommend completing a full, unbiased Environmental Impact Study for this watershed rather than the short EA process being currently proposed.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette Freeman</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>The Black Hills are a sanctuary surrounded by prairie, 350 miles from any metropolitan area. The clay soil of the prairie prevents water absorption, therefore theoretically the BH act as a funnel replenishing groundwater aquifers.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Whillock</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Whillock</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Whillock</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Lembas</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon Tambling-Harris</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Tambling-Harris</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Tambling-Harris</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Tambling-Harris</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Tambling-Harris</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Tambling-Harris</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Gool</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Gool</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geophysics, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential harmful impact to these surrounding communities.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22.28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 22.34). Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Glood</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Another concern is will this company be required to remove the condition of the roads they will use to access these drill sites?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Glood</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Socioeconomics</td>
<td>Furthermore the majority of my life savings is invested in this property. The land value of this property is critical to me. I hope that I never have to sell it but if I do it is critical that its value not be diminished by any unforeseen environmental impacts caused by this proposed drilling project.</td>
<td>F3's proposal is for exploratory drilling. Design criteria will be developed as part of the EA to help mitigate and reduce associated impacts.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kendal Haug</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am opposed to the proposed exploratory gold drilling project in Jenny Gulch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Lueck</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>the local indigenous people do not support this</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Lueck</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The impact could negatively impact thousands of people harming the waters of Rapid City.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Lueck</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Tribal consultation should always come first and it did not.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Lueck</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Cultural resources will be harmed. Just for greedy seekers.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Lueck</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>This will harm the economics of the area. Effecting tourism</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Besley</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I oppose the Forest Service allowing the drilling project to proceed without a full environmental assessment, to include the future economic impact on tourism and recreation and on quality of Rapid City's major water supply.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Besley</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am a fisherman, hiker, and general outdoor enthusiast, concerned that this project if eventually leading to full scale mining may have unintended consequences for our precious water and for the appearance of the Black Hills.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry: F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 21-54].</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dianne LaRoe</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The Forest Service didn’t consult the local tribes which violates the free, prior and informed consent as laid out by there permanent forum on indigenous rights at the United Nations.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dianne LaRoe</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Gold exploration leads to mining which impacts the water quality and quality of life in the community. It can impact access to sacred sites and recreation.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not allow any extraction from sacred and unceded lands.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development [30 USC 22, 28]. The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry: F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended [30 USC 21-54].</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>This project is in a high impact area that could impact thousands of people. The Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a short Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>If you use Rapid City water or a well by Rapid Creek, tell them you don’t want your water impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration leads to mining, and the environmental review process should cover all potential impacts of the project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The forest service did not state tribal consultation early enough. Tribal consultation should come first.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Cultural resources and access to them would be hindered</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>WE need healthy economic development and reduce our current tourism and agriculture, which would negatively impact the project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Recreation activities could be impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The area along Highway 385 and Pactola Lake is one of our most scenic areas, and gold exploration would not fit with this use.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Simcha</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>People live in the immediate area where drilling could happen, and 24-hour noise and traffic would destroy their use of their property.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nina Turner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>271</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The Black Hills have already suffered the results of mining. The water pollution and noise will negatively affect tourism, residential life, and the unique environment in this beautiful area.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida Kahlo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process Mora</td>
<td></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>A full environmental impact statement should be conducted by the forest service, not just an environmental assessment.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” [40 CFR 1508.9]. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida Kahlo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process Mora</td>
<td></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The forest service did not begin tribal consultation early enough. Tribal consultation should come first. Indigenous peoples must be respected and consulted accordingly. Furthermore access to cultural resources would be hindered.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida Kahlo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process Mora</td>
<td></td>
<td>272</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The scenic area along Highway 385 and Pactola Lake would be ruined by exploration and potential mining, as would current agriculture and tourism activities.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Carlson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>273</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Believe that the proposed operation can be completed without it effect under the supervision of the appropriate governing agencies.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The project could impact thousands of people, so the forest service should do a full environmental Impact Statement, not just a short assessment</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” [40 CFR 1508.9]. The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Because exploration leads to mining, the environmental review process should cover all potential impacts of the project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The forest service did not start tribal consultation early enough, tribal consultation should come first.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Cultural resources and access would be hindered and those things are more important.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Agriculture and tourism are important economic avenues and this project would negatively impact those recreation would be impacted as well.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Gold exploration would impact scenic areas seen along highway 385 and Pactola Lake.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Bail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>274</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>The noise and traffic inconvenience of the drilling will negatively impact people who live in the immediate area.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frances</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>First of all, there was no consultation with the Lakota tribe this is their sacred land.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frances</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>2 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Second, there needs to be a full environmental impact study, not just a short one, to include the impact on water and land.</td>
<td>(The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frances</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>3 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The Black Hills is a high impact area which would affect thousands of people. We know that exploration is really mining. And this will affect not only the year round residents, but tourists as well. It will negatively impact the local economy.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Dutler</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Also came to an understanding of the historical injustice that occurred when the United States took the Black Hills from the Lakota’s in 1877, a historical injustice which the U.S. Supreme court recognized in 1980. Because of this, I believe that without the full approval of the sovereign Lakota Nations in the region the project should not go forward.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Robbins</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Any disturbance and destruction would be completely disreputable violation of the sacred Black Hills, would impact the water, and harmful to the environment at large.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evelyn</td>
<td>Prowell</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Economic rewards of a few tail-of-state inversions must be measured against the cost of long-term damage to the main water source for Elkhorn and Rapid City areas.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evelyn</td>
<td>Prowell</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalie S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>279</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The Forest Service will be following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalie S.</td>
<td></td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>This project is in a high impact area that could impact thousands of people. The Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a short Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>If you use Rapid City water or a well by Rapid Creek, tell them you don’t want your water impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>3 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration leads to mining, and the environmental review process should cover all potential impacts of the project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>4 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The Forest Service did not initiate tribal consultation early enough. Tribal consultation should come first.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>5 Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Cultural resources and access to them would be hindered.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob</td>
<td>Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>6 Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>We need healthy economic development and value our current tourism and agriculture, which would be negatively impacted by this project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Recreation activates could be impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The area along Highway 385 and Pactola lake is one of our most scenic areas, and gold exploration would not fit with this use.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Ripley</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>People live in the immediate area where drilling could happen, and 24-hour noise and traffic would destroy their use of their property.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amie Grasmann</td>
<td>A L T Grasmann</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do NOT allow gold exploration to move forward on the Black Hills. Please listen to the voices of the Oyeti Sakowin who say the site is sacred to them.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendi Wachsmuth</td>
<td></td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>I am writing to say consultation with tribes was not initiated on time in regard to gold mining in the Black Hills. These are sacred lands, already stolen and besmirched with the images of those who stole them. This is an unnecessary project which will only harm relations further with the indigenous people of the United States.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie Gantz</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing to oppose gold exploration in the sacred Black Hills of the Lakota. This would have a destructive and dangerous impact on the land, the people and the culture of this area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie Gantz</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>2 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Tribal consultation did not begin early enough in the process in the process, it would negatively impact the physical health of the people of the region.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonnie Gantz</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>3 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>A negative impact would occur to the water table of the area, which could further impact the water for the rest of the state.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tauna Lockhart</td>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am deeply concerned and interested stakeholder with regard to the proposal by F3 to do exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch area.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tauna Lockhart</td>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>2 General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>I am ery disappointed that the exploratory drilling has the potential to impact wildlife residents in the area, and any water sources, including seasonal streams, drainage pathways and Ultimately Pactola Lake. Pactola lake is one of the sources for drinking water for South Dakota’s second largest city, Rapid City. Exploratory drilling sites have been shown to contribute to noise pollution, air pollution, and damage to their use.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tauna Lockhart</td>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>3 General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>I would like to see documentation that F3 has managed a project with these similar specifications (near a reservoir that feeds a city downstream) and that they have had little or no impact on the wildlife, water, or ecosystem in which they have worked.</td>
<td>The Plan of Operations will have requirements in it to protect natural resources. Regular inspections of the drilling project will be conducted to make sure the Plan conditions are being followed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tauna Lockhart</td>
<td></td>
<td>284</td>
<td>4 Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>Additionally, I would like to know if they do discover gold, will they be the ones mining or are they selling? If they are selling, will their promises of good will and remediation be a legal obligation for the company that purchases their mining rights?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becca Jayne</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>It will absolutely destroy the natural water supply we depend on.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becca Jayne</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>It will destroy the homes for any animal near the sites; these animals require the serenity they’ve been born into for survival. It will introduce toxicity on a level unfathomable, do not do this to Pactola.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife and water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Becca Jayne</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>3 Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The visitors that come to enjoy the Black Hills, especially that of Pactola, will refuse to visit. It will degrade our economy and heavily reduce any chance of future growth.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Bowron</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>In short, I am in favor and support the applicants plan for the proposed drilling exploration.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Bowron</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>2 Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>I think there is a real possibility that opponents to this project may intentionally attempt to sabotage or vandalize the drill rig or other activities associated with the project. This concern extends even to intentional and illegal dumping of noxious chemicals, with the intent of blaming such activity on the applicant, or even the possibility of inflicting harm on the applicants employees and contractors. This possibility represents a greater threat to the public lands and the proposed drilling program itself.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signatures</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td></td>
<td>288</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Evaluation of potential project-related effects to geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td></td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>i jennypen project may impact native American land, not just archaeological projects.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the FS Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td></td>
<td>290</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact.” (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td></td>
<td>290</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The potential contamination of this critical drinking water source for over 80,000 residents would be a primary concern and consideration.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>Decker</td>
<td></td>
<td>291</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The proposed exploration will interfere with my use of the Mission Trail by horse and foot in the exploration area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td></td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The proposed exploration will interfere with my use of the Mission Trail by horse and foot in the exploration area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Seidel</td>
<td></td>
<td>293</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This sacred land and it needs to be preserved for religious, cultural, environmental, and even economic (Tourism) reasons.</td>
<td>Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>William</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process: EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in this document.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other: Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management Vegetation &amp; Timber Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process: Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wade</td>
<td>Ellett</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Weights the proposed drilling project are likely to cause erosion and related debris.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wade</td>
<td>Ellett</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other: Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>Icelandic fisheries are important to the economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brody</td>
<td>Salazar</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process: EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in this document.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemma</td>
<td>Lockhart</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process: EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in this document.</td>
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<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gemma</td>
<td>Lockhart</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other: Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>Especially request the most comprehensive review and scientific analysis possible of the</td>
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<td>presence of the minknow rainbow or bronze colored fish (the lake chub in Pactola Lake)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other: Statement of Project Opinon</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>As a long-time resident of Rapid City and the Black Hills, I am strongly opposed to the</td>
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<td>proposed F3 Gold LLC Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope: Mining</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Frequently kayak, hike, fish, and enjoy the natural beauty of the area in which F3 Gold</td>
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<td>wants to drill, with the intent of mining.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other: Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Also rely on this source for my daily drinking water.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel Albright</td>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>F3 Mining's proposed exploratory drilling and intended mining will lead to increased industrial traffic and activity in the area. This will likely have a negative impact on roads wildlife and natural beauty of the region.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel Albright</td>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Exploratory drilling and the intended mining will put the fishery at higher risk. This includes the entire Rapid Creek watershed at and below the proposed drilling site.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Albright</td>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>Albright</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Exploratory drilling and the intended mining will put the primary water sources for all areas downstream at higher risk of contamination. This includes Rapid City, Box Elder, and Ellsworth AFB.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Brekhus</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Brekhus</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Oppose the proposed exploratory drilling in the Jenny Gulch, Broad Gulch, and Surnesvaid region directly adjacent to Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Beth Brekhus</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Brekhus</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Economic impact of a potential contamination of the Rapid City area water sources.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Brekhus</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Brekhus</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Economic impact of a potential contamination of area streams and creeks where people fish on a daily basis.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply and fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Brekhus</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Brekhus</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The economic impact to recreation activities on Pactola Reservoir if there is a contamination.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Brekhus</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Brekhus</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>What is the estimated cost of restoring the land to its natural state following the exploratory drilling activities.</td>
<td>The cost of soil restoration depends on a variety of factors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Brekhus</td>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Brekhus</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
<td>Please address the past exploratory drilling experience of F3 Gold LLC and its financial stability.</td>
<td>F3 Gold will be required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the U.S. Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest Service has no limitations on what the amount can be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>No project is in a high-impact area that could impact thousands of people. The Forest Service should do a full Environmental Impact Statement, not just a short Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>If you use Rapid City water or a well by Rapid Creek, tell them you don’t want your water impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration leads to mining, and the environmental review process should cover all potential impacts of the project.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The forest service did not state tribal consultation early enough. Tribal consultation should come first.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Cultural resources and access to them would be hindered</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Will need healthy economic development and would not damage tourism and agriculture which would be negatively impacted by this project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Recreation activities could be impacted.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>The area along Highway 185 and Pactola lake is one of our most scenic areas, and gold exploration would not fit with this use.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Strange</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>People live in the immediate area where drilling could happen, and 24-hour noise and traffic would destroy their use of their property.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Jennifer Strange</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>These can include and in no way be limited to unintentional consequences for the human population in terms of increased traffic inconvenience and fatalities, increased air water and ground pollution, stress on public and human services including schools and hospitals, increase of drug and other illegal substance use and access, Man camps that often serve as hot bed of criminal behavior including sexual assault and sexual exploitation of women and children and more.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>With regard to the conduct of the open house, I feel as if the format was deliberately slanted to provide as little information to the members of the public who were in attendance and to prevent as many questions as possible.</td>
<td>Comment noted. The public was encouraged to discuss the project and ask questions with a number of project team members in attendance. A presentation on the project was also provided during the open house. In addition, comment cards were available for members of the public to submit written comments.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Prior to the slide presentation, a USFS spokesperson said that the information to date as included in the presentation, indicated the FS project would qualify for a USFS CAT X. I feel that the USFS deliberately used acronyms instead of full terminology because many people in attendance would not understand the information. I conducted on-line searches of federal, regional, and local USFS sites and could not find a full listing of USFS CAT-X items. I found references to proposed amendments to a few CAT-X items for Special Use Projects (none applied to this situation) as well as references to other documents, such as land management plans. Searches of the other referenced documents also did not locate any such CAT-X items.</td>
<td>The expression &quot;CAT-X or CAT-X&quot; is an abbreviation for a &quot;Categorical exclusion&quot; in NEPA. This was presented and defined during the public meeting power point presentation. The power point presentation was also made available on the Black Hills NF website with this project's scoping documents.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>The USFS spokesperson said an EA was being prepared because of water resources concerns; however, the letter sent out providing public notice indicated the EA was being prepared &quot;to facilitate planning, decision making, and public disclosure.&quot; which is one true statement.</td>
<td>The description in the scoping letter is correct. Water resources is one of the many resources that will be evaluated in the EA.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The USFS spokesperson also said the USFS is confident the result of the EA will be a FONSI - this seems to be jumping to a conclusion before the studies and research have been conducted, which is the reverse order of the normal scientific process. The spokesperson then said, if significant impacts are found, the USFS will go for a full EIS. I fail to understand how you can be confident of a FONSI in one statement, then in the next statement purport that significant impacts could be found.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>The pre-meeting letter noted the Forest Service roads (primary and additional), some of which will need to be widened or improved, as well as temporary overland trails that will need to be constructed prior to being used to access the proposed bore hole sites, the 42 well sites, and 2 larger equipment staging areas. Without more detail, the limited information presented.</td>
<td>The proposed exploratory drilling project would be required to acquire all applicable federal, state, and local permits and approvals prior to initiation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>All (3) [dil] cuttings be containerized and removed off site? Will the cuttings be left on site? If left on site, will they be covered or left exposed to precipitation? If left on site and exposed, how will the surrounding land and watershed be protected from runoff?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>None of the USFS personnel I spoke with at the meeting could or would answer the question as to what will happen to the water/fluids used for drilling. Will the fluids be captured and disposed offsite, will the fluids be allowed to run on/into to surrounding land or watershed? Will the fluids be allowed to seep into subsurface faults and or fractures? Is there any possibility of fluid migration into any of the local aquifers?</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Jo Nelson</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Are there any plans to sample private or public wells in the area surrounding the proposed project area?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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IO Nelson 301 10 Other Water Quality/Water Supply There was no mention in either the pre-meeting letter or the presentation that discussed the fact that many of the minerals in the Black Hills contain naturally-occurring arsenic. Locals sometimes refer to the bare hillsides near Pactola Reservoir as the Arsenic Hills and speculate this is why no trees grow on the Hills. Arsenic is also known to be a chronic problem in the drinking water supply for Hill City. If drill cuttings are allowed to remain unprotected on site, or if drilling fluids are allowed to run onto the land or into the watershed areas, are there any plans to protect the land or watersheds from arsenic contamination? If water from the Hill City municipal water supply is used as a water supply for the drilling operations, will the water be tested to determine the arsenic level in order to ensure no subsurface arsenic contamination occurs from the drilling operations? The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply, geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils.

Deanna Lammers 302 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Fisheries & Wildlife I oppose the F3 Gold Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project because the people that use Pactola could be harmed along with wildlife. Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.

Deanna Lammers 302 2 Other Water Quality/Water supply Any spill could contaminate our drinking water and put our lives at risk. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Billie Ariste 303 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Fisheries & Wildlife I oppose the F3 Gold Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project because even a small spill from a gold mining operation into pactola would harm wildlife and fisheries. Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Sarah Pierce 304 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Water Quality/Water supply I oppose the F3 Gold Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project as the process could lead to the contamination of our water supply. Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Cante Heart 305 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Water Quality/Water supply Cante Heart, oppose the F3 Exploration Drilling Project and all toxic mining or drilling in the Black Hills. These projects harm water quality and wildlife. Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

Cante Heart 305 2 Other Water Quality/Water supply Our lives are put in danger if our drinking water is affected. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality.

Andrew Bentley 306 1 Other Wetlands & Aquatic Resources This proposed gold exploration project threatens the watershed for Rapid Creek, which will impact Rapid City and surrounding areas. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to wetlands and aquatic resources.

Andrew Bentley 306 2 Other General Environmental Concern No project not only threatens regional water supplies, but tourism agriculture, wildlife, recreation, and Cultural Resources. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

Edith Clammons 307 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Water Quality/Water supply I oppose all toxic mining and drilling in BH because they harm our water quality and our lives. Comment noted. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Ann Sandberg 308 1 Other Water Quality/Water supply What would you do, if your drinking water was contaminated? And how much or your taxes would be diverted to decontaminate the municipal water supply. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.

Paula Fox Paula Long Fox 309 1 Regulatory Process What is the protocol when two laws give you conflicting messages? For instance the old mining law of the 1800s is in direct conflict with the federal water pollution acts listed below: P.L. 86-517" U.S.C. 528-531). This act declares that the purposes of the national forests include outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and fish and wildlife. The act directs the Secretary of Agriculture to administer national forest renewable surface resources for multiple use and sustained yield. Federal Water Pollution Control Act, Act of June 30, 1948 (P.L. 80-840; 33 U.S.C. 1251-1387. October 18, 1972, as amended 1973-1983, 1987, 1988, 1990-1992, 1994, 1995, and 1996). This act is a comprehensive statute aimed at existing and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters. All Forest Service NEPA decisions must follow applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The purpose of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), Decision Notice (DN), and Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared under NEPA are to provide an objective review of project-related effects.

Sena Parkhurst 310 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I oppose drilling in the Black Hills for the purpose of gold exploration due to the toxic legacy left behind by previous gold exploration and mining activities. Comment noted.
The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.

The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources.

The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do an extensive and thorough Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9).</td>
<td>An environmental assessment has been prepared for this project. The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The responsible official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process Cumulative Assessment</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please consider cumulative impacts of the Army-Guidance F3 project exploration and potential mining and Mineral Mountain Resource's exploration and potential mining.</td>
<td>As part of the NEPA process, the Forest Service must address direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts across all resource categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please disclose the Forest Service Management areas that the prospective mine would overlap.</td>
<td>The EA identifies the Forest Service Management Areas that overlap with proposed project elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please collect and display geo-chemical data and details on eventual mining system planned.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
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<td>315</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other General Environmental Concern</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please collect and display a lot of baseline data on the weather, surface water, underground hydrology, air quality, soil, historic cultural properties, scenery, recreational use and biodiversity values. Please discuss any impacts to the above values.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects against current site conditions, as well as potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Incorporate Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please discuss any wastes and waste management or storage.</td>
<td>If it will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions prior to initiation of project activities. As part of this, F3 would need to work with its contractor to develop an approved waste management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
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<td>315</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other Botanical Resources</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please discuss impacts to &quot;at-risk&quot; Plants &amp; animals, including sensitive or state and federal threatened and endangered species.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please discuss effects on scenery. Please discuss the Scenery Management System's designations and objectives for the area &amp; the impacts from the Project to the visuals. Please &quot;ground-truth&quot; SMS assigned values, please review the SMS assigned values to see if they were done correctly during the Forest Plan Revision - As Jody Timm (F5 landscape architect) calculated the designations in 3 days, calculating beauty from a computer at the Supervisor's Office. (not by inspecting areas). Some of the values factored in by the computer were pine structural stages and cover types. With little kill or logging in the area the structural stages or cover type may have changed and thus the SMS values perhaps should be changed, but at least need to be checked.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please review wildlife related recreation like bird watching or fishing.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management, as well as impacts to wildlife and fisheries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Other Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Will it have any effect on Silver City? Please discuss effects on Transportation systems.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Will any mining happen nearby on private land, which would be connected action?</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Are there any nearby areas with special road less, wild/pristine appearance or remote values?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Incorporate Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>For forest service lands - please discuss both the assigned and potential recreational opportunity spectrum classes for the area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Incorporate Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please discuss noise &amp; light pollution.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Please discuss soilblacks, as mitigation to various impacts.</td>
<td>The EA process evaluates measures to minimize and mitigate potential project-related effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Hilding</td>
<td></td>
<td>315</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Incorporate sewage</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
<td>Will it have any effect on Central City RNA?</td>
<td>There are no RNA's located within or directly adjacent to the proposed project area. The Canyon City RNA is located to the West of the proposed project boundary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairie Hills Audubon Society</td>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Nielson</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We attach links to a 2006 report &quot;Comparison of Predicted and Actual Water Quality at Hard Rock Mines.&quot; Please study this report. Do any of the conditions Kuipers identifies as problematic for water quality during mining/mine closure exist at F3 Jenny Gulch or Mineral Mountain?</td>
<td>The Best Available Science (BAS) approach will be used while conducting environmental analysis for the proposed project. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia &amp; Jeff Bemis</td>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Sutliff</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>First, this area is directly at the access point of Pactola Reservoir that provides drinking water to Rapid City and surrounding communities. We cannot risk our water supply.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia &amp; Jeff Bemis</td>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Sutliff</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Second, many locations in which exploratory drilling occurs in the Black Hills are damaged beyond repair. The ecological risks are not worth it.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia &amp; Jeff Bemis</td>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>Sutliff</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>First, there are no examples of metallic sulfide mine that has been operated and closed without substantial negative impacts to water quality and the surrounding environment.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karissa</td>
<td>Lowen</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>We rely on the clean water of Rapid Creek just as does everyone in our community. We do not need to allow outside interests to damage such a beautiful place, and we have no reason to trust that they will care for our water resources.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base (EAFB) has concerns about threats to surface waters and groundwater from the proposed action. This is a situation where EAFB has equities that could be directly impacted by the action (granting the permit to allow exploratory drilling) of itself.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Specifically we are interested to know details about significant material storage locations, materials to be stored, waste characterization and storage, structural controls and pollution prevention practices, monitoring for contaminant migration, and reports.</td>
<td>F3 will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions prior to initiation of project activities. As part of this, F3 would need to work with its contractor to develop an approved waste management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We think the proposed action underestimates the extent of disturbance.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The proposal indicates industrial or municipal water will be used but it is unclear as to where water will come from or how it will be delivered.</td>
<td>F3 has made its Plan of Operations available on the U.S. Forest Service project website. <a href="https://www.fs.fed.us/project/project/75428">https://www.fs.fed.us/project/project/75428</a>. The Plan of Operations addresses water sourcing and is incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mitigation/Design Criteria</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Additionally, a 6,000 ft. borehole to extract a core is likely to produce a significant quantity of drilling mud. To our knowledge, no provisions for containment or disposal of drilling by products have been discussed.</td>
<td>F3 will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions prior to initiation of project activities. As part of this, F3 would need to work with its contractor to develop an approved waste management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Out of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Our main concern will be mitigating the high level of risk posed by failures of mining structural controls and practices within geologic formations. Such failures have been known to generate acid drainage and migration of heavy metals into water sources. Integrating Air Force Operational Risk Management Principles, we consider that the probability of failure, for most types of structural controls and practices, is in the “likely” category. The Severity of impact, to Consider degradation of our primary drinking water resource as either temporary or permanent, can be categorized as “critical” to catastrophic. As a result the risk of mishap could be categorized as “high” to “Extremely High.”</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>In our view, any proposal or study involving mining within the Pactola basin would have to identify robust practices that mitigate mishap probability, such as permanent and temporary structural controls, a storm water pollution prevention plan, routine inspection and monitoring, routine and emergency reporting, Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures plans, adequate coverage for mishap cleanup, and site restoration (e.g. how to plug wells), and off-site disposal or treatment of waste.</td>
<td>F3 will be required to obtain all relevant permits, approvals, agreements, and other permissions prior to initiation of project activities. As part of this, F3 would need to work with its contractor to develop an approved waste management plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uni</td>
<td>Slum</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please refuse the permits to mine at Pactola. Tehe lake is not only a historic gathering point, but South Dakota has so abused its waterheds that few safely support life. We cannot afford what happens when clean water is gone.</td>
<td>The General Mining Law of 1872, as amended, states that all valuable mineral deposits in Public Domain lands of the United States are to be free and open to exploration and development (30 USC 22, 28). The Forest Service, through the Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. 482, is authorized to create rules to regulate the occupancy and use authorized by the United States mining laws of certain National Forest System lands open to mineral entry. F3 Gold, LLC has a statutory right to explore locatable minerals (gold) as proposed in accordance with the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended (30 USC 21-54).</td>
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<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cheyenne Tribe</td>
<td>Lumpy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Our office requests copies of class III surveys and literature reviews for the entire project area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources. This project will comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The FS will coordinate findings of cultural resources reviews with the appropriate parties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Cheyenne Tribe</td>
<td>Lumpy</td>
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<td>320</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Additionally, due to the ground disturbance activities proposed for this project we require that tribes conduct a site visit to ensure that sites of religious and cultural significance to tribes are properly identified, assessed, and formally evaluated. Otherwise, our office requests tribal participation in any pedestrian field work the contractor for this project conducts.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to cultural resources. This project will comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Monitoring efforts will be discussed as part of the tribal consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurt Renner</td>
<td>Steven Renner</td>
<td></td>
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<td>321</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Wetlands &amp; Aquatic Resources</td>
<td>I am concerned about some locations near my developed springs, also some of these test locations are on meadows where I have seen small pickups stuck in the mud. I am sure that drill rig would cause considerable more damage than a light pickup.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to wetlands and aquatic resources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Renner</td>
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<td>322</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>I am concerned about water contamination with this drilling project.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>323</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>While we live just north of the proposed drilling project, our land is close enough to be affected by the sound and traffic since we face south on a meadow which is part of the Black Hills National Forest.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>323</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The proposed drilling area includes land frequented by elk and deer. Elk pass through this area on a regular basis. Deer nestle down at night, nearly every night, on and adjacent to the meadow. There is no way they won't be affected by the drilling.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>323</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>In summer we and our neighbors cool our homes by opening our windows. Any noise in the area echoes across the meadow if drilling proceeds on a 24/7 basis, there is no way we won't be affected by noise from the drilling.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
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<td>323</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Rangeland &amp; Non-native Invasive Species</td>
<td>This land is leased each summer to a rancher for grazing cattle. His cattle frequently graze and bed down in this area. There is no way they won't be affected by the drilling.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to rangeland and non-native invasive species.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
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<td>323</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>All of the residents of Alpino Acres Meadow Subdivision have individual wells, to the depth of 85 to 100 feet. While the water has some iron content, we are concerned that drilling will impact the source of our wells by releasing other materials and pollutants. Will be assured that our water source will not be affected by the drilling.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
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<td></td>
<td>323</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Rapid Creek and Pactola Reservoir are directly impacted by the results of this drilling. If the water quality is ruined by the drilling process there is probably no way the drilling or the state or the federal government will be able to restore it to its pristine quality.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Fisher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>323</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>This area is popular for ATV enthusiast. There is no way they won't be affected by drilling and the transporting of equipment. This is especially the case on the Rochford and Jenny Gulch Roads.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Helker</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am firmly in opposition to this project because- to my understanding- Jenny Creek is the upper end of the Pactola Lake Watershed which is a primary source of Drinking Water for Rapid City Residents and a lovely part of the Hills.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>David Helker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>324</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Why, in Heaven’s name, would the agency potentially approve a project that could threaten a water supply with sediment, possible chemical pollutants, and actions that may affect the area’s hydrology?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Knutson</td>
<td>Artis Knutson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>325</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Socioeconomics</td>
<td>We feel that any exploration or mining in this area will do nothing but lower the value of our property and yet our taxes will not go down.</td>
<td>F’s proposal is for exploratory drilling. Design criteria will be developed as part of the EA to help mitigate and reduce associated impacts. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The proposal is for exploratory drilling. The EA will display design criteria to help mitigate and reduce impacts.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Knutson</td>
<td>Artis Knutson</td>
<td></td>
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<td>325</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>In going to create more noise and traffic in the area. We bough this property for the peace and quiet.</td>
<td>Based on public comments, a public health and safety section, including noise, has been incorporated into the EA. The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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<td>Nat Roseland</td>
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<td>326</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>My comments are against the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drill Project. Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.</td>
<td>Frank DiCesare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>The proposed exploratory bore holes will likely transition through various aquifers. There can be no guarantee that these bore holes will not act as conduits which may allow natural contaminants from the surface or various subterranean levels to cross into potable aquifers, potentially contaminating the water sources on which many people residing in the central hills rely.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geohydrology, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.</td>
<td>Frank DiCesare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>327</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>This exploratory process will require large amounts of water to lubricate the drilling equipment. Containment and cleaning of the drilling water is crucial to protect the various surface and near-surface watersheds in the area.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.</td>
<td>Frank DiCesare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>327</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geochemistry, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>If the bores determine that there are no feasible gold deposits for future mining then appropriate and timely methods must be implemented to guarantee no cross-contamination of aquifers for years to come.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to geology, geochemistry, geochemistry, and soils.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Izaak Walton League of America, Inc.</td>
<td>Frank DiCesare</td>
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<td>327</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Should sufficient gold deposits be found to justify mining, then the resulting impact of any follow-on excavations needs to be addressed in addition to the impact of the explorations. Simply stated, the cause and effect needs to be addressed in the initial environmental assessment.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darlene Hutchinson</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>328</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I do not approve.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Darlene Hutchinson</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>328</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>They would ruin the beauty of the Hills</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Darlene Hutchinson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>328</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Motion &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>We have enough traffic with people going to Jenny Gulch. They would destroy the road.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to access and transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>While I have immediate personal concerns about noise and dust from trucks on nearby roads and long-range concerns about the inevitable upheaval if gold is discovered, I wish to raise an issue of economic impact in a multiple use forest.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Rangeland &amp; Non-native Invasive Species</td>
<td>Since 1995, we have known the ranchers who have grazing permits for pasture bordering our development. Those ranchers have been good citizens. Together we maintain fences, exchange phone calls about safety of animals, etc. Literally in my back yard and throughout the proposed drilling area, area ranchers have a substantial number of cow-calf pairs in this multiple-use forest.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to rangeland and non-native invasive species.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Wetlands &amp; Aquatic Resources</td>
<td>There were similar wetlands throughout the area proposed for drilling. Noise and dust from drilling rigs, truck traffic and damage to surface waterways seem impossible to manage safely.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to wetlands and aquatic resources.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Rangeland &amp; Non-native Invasive Species</td>
<td>Other wildlife can coexist with their cow-calf summer visitors, using some resources without much disruption. However, young calves, still nursing, are likely to experience the most stress from this invasion of their grazing lands.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to rangeland and non-native invasive species.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>In drought years, spring provide essential water these cattle. Given the complex hydrology of the shale and shist of Silver City/Jenny Gulch area, contamination of these springs could have long-range economic consequences for lessees as well as for area wildlife.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Rangeland &amp; Non-native Invasive Species</td>
<td>Finally, heavy equipment on the Roadfront Road and Jenny Gulch-Sunnyside will be no friend to easily-damaged cattle gates. Who will pay for inevitable damage?</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to rangeland and non-native invasive species.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Rangeland &amp; Non-native Invasive Species</td>
<td>I respectfully request that any impact studies take into consideration the economic disruption on grazing lessees and animal safety.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to rangeland.</td>
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<td>Donna Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>South Dakota lists the Black Hills redtelly snake, S.o. pahasapae, as a species of concern due to its limited range and vulnerability to factors affecting the suitability of habitat. Within the Black Hills National Forest in Wyoming and South Dakota the Black Hills redtelly snake is considered sensitive by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to fisheries and wildlife.</td>
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<td>Elena Fisher</td>
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<td>329</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Request that any impact studies consider the Black Hills redtelly snake.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Based on the information provided, we would like to notify you that Yankton Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Office does not agree with this project set forth. We are opposed to any extraction (See attached Resolution) in Treaty lands and do not think proper consultation has been met with the Yankton Sioux Tribe. We are opposed to any projects that continually erode the cultural landscapes of Treaty lands.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>Through the process outlined in the Ihanktonwan Consultation W/ope, we would like to have the are monitored during construction of the project.</td>
<td>Monitoring efforts will be discussed as a part of the tribal consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Please let us know if you will engage in consultation pursuant to the Ihanktonwan Consultation W/ope.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The Yankton Sioux Tribe has adopted the Ihanktonwan Consultation W/ope (Protocols for Consultation with the Yankton Sioux Tribe). Accordingly, in order to go into consultation with the Yankton Sioux Tribe, the USDA, Black Hills National Forest, Mystic Ranger District Office must follow the process set forth in the Ihanktonwan Consultation W/ope.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Based on the information provided, we would like to notify you that Yankton Sioux Tribal Historic Preservation Office does not agree with the determination that there will be &quot;No Adverse Effect&quot;. Helapa (Black Hills) is sacred to the tribes and to determine that an undertaking will have no effect is not possible, due to the fact that the entire Helapa is a cultural landscape and any undertakings that occur in the Helapa adversely affect our sacred Black Hills.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>If this project continues despite our objection, we would like to be notified if any inadvertent discoveries or cultural artifacts are found.</td>
<td>This will be discussed as a part of the tribal consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)</td>
<td>This letter is not a consultation. In order to go into consultation with the Yankton Sioux Tribe, the USDA, Forest Service, Mystic Ranger District must come and meet with the tribes General Council and Business and Claims Committee. The Yankton Sioux Tribe is a Non-IRA tribe and has a traditional form of government.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Yankton Sioux Tribe</td>
<td>Kip</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle</td>
<td>THPO Director</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>This is a letter to request that you release all information on proposed and actual gold exploration projects in the Mystic Ranger District and complete full Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for each mining project. The futures of Rapid Creek, the central Black Hills, Lakota cultural and treaty resources, Rapid City and Ellsworth Air Force Base are threatened by these projects, and full disclosure and complete consideration are imperative.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>197 signators</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>335</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>am writing to request that you release all information on proposed and actual gold exploration projects in the Mystic Ranger District and complete full Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for each mining project. The futures of Rapid Creek, the central Black Hills, Lakota cultural and treaty resources, Rapid City and Ellsworth Air Force Base are threatened by these projects, and full disclosure and complete consideration are imperative.</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
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<td>197 signators</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Proposed gold mining projects require tribal consultation and serious consideration of the issues raised by the Lakota and other indigenous peoples in the region. Without full EIS evaluations, these concerns will not receive the required &quot;hard look.&quot;</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>197 signators</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>The release of all information being withheld by the U.S. Forest Service on current and proposed projects is a prerequisite to thorough EIS processes.</td>
<td>Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>197 Signors</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Historically, mining operations have harmed land, wildlife and water in the Black Hills, and two former gold mines have been declared Superfund sites. If there were to be mining spill (usually cyanide, arsenic, and other heavy metals), Rapid Creek would be polluted, and the aquifers would be polluted soon after.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>197 Signors</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Concern over the potential harm that could be caused to Rapid Creek and its associated communities has led American Rivers to include it on the list of America’s Most Endangered Rivers of 2020.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>197 Signors</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>All of Rapid City's water sources have their beginnings in Rapid Creek, and damage to the Creek could have permanent, widespread impacts.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>197 Signors</td>
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<td>335</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>What's more, the economy depends on tourists who want to continue fishing, boating, hiking, bicycling and sightseeing in a beautiful ecosystem that centers on plentiful, clean water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This issue is scary. For many reasons. The idea that we would allow this mining activity to threaten the Rapid Creek watershed on this level is insane. It's basic risk management. The potentially negative outcomes far outweigh the possible benefits. It's not even close.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs EIS</td>
<td>The purpose of an environmental assessment is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no significant impact at the time of decision. The intensity factors would be addressed in that document.</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Proposed gold mining projects require tribal consultation and serious consideration of the issues raised by the Lakota and other indigenous peoples in the region. Without full EIS evaluations, these concerns will not receive the required &quot;hard look.&quot;</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest also has received invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>The release of all information being withheld by the U.S. Forest Service on current and proposed projects is a prerequisite to thorough EIS processes.</td>
<td>Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available. [<a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/forestservice/5428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/forestservice/5428</a>]</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Historically, mining operations have harmed land, wildlife and water in the Black Hills, and two former gold mines have been declared Superfund sites. If there were to be a mining spill (usually cyanide, arsenic and other heavy metals), Rapid Creek would be polluted, and the aquifers would be polluted soon after.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td></td>
<td>336</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Concern over the potential harm that could be caused to Rapid Creek and its associated communities has led American Rivers to include it on the list of America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2020.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>All of Rapid City’s water sources have their beginnings in Rapid Creek, and damage to the Creek could have permanent, widespread impacts.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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<td>Rich Morrison</td>
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<td>336</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>What's more, the economy depends on tourists who want to continue fishing, boating, hiking, bicycling and sightseeing in a beautiful ecosystem that centers on plentiful, clean water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carol McKinstry</td>
<td></td>
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<td>337</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This party has been added to the project mailing list.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tisha Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>There has to be accountability and the acceptance that mistakes and weeks happen and is the cost to the people in the area worth the risk and worse revenue revenue if it even comes into their own pockets. My belief is it does not.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Tisha Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Proposed gold mining projects require tribal consultation and serious consideration of the issues raised by the Lakota and other indigenous peoples in the region. Without full EIS evaluations, these concerns will not receive the required &quot;hard look.&quot;</td>
<td>The Black Hills National Forest has issued invitations to 17 Tribal governments to initiate formal government-to-government consultation regarding the F3 Gold proposal. The Forest Service is following up on all responses received. The Forest Service will also be consulting with Tribal governments under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as the appropriate data become available and consultation packages are developed.</td>
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<td>Tisha Johnson</td>
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<td>338</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>The release of all information being withheld by the U.S. Forest Service on current and proposed projects is a prerequisite to thorough EIS processes.</td>
<td>Project documents, including the EA, will be posted to the project website once available. [<a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/forestservice/5428">https://www.fs.usda.gov/forestservice/5428</a>]</td>
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<td>Tisha Johnson</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>All of Rapid City’s water sources have their beginnings in Rapid Creek, and damage to the Creek could have permanent, widespread impacts.</td>
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<td>Tisha Johnson</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation &amp; Travel Management</td>
<td>What's more, the economy depends on tourists who want to continue fishing, boating, hiking, bicycling and sightseeing in a beautiful ecosystem that centers on plentiful, clean water.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to recreation and travel management.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signators</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bradley</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing this to support the work being done by Fs Gold and Big Rock Exploration.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<td>Bradley</td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>People are excited because they think that drilling will ruin their wells and that fracking is going to take place, because they are looking for uranium. This is far from the case. They want to do exploratory drilling.</td>
<td>The EA evaluates potential project-related effects to water quality/water supply.</td>
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Appendix I

Draft EA Comments and Responses
Carla Hayse 1 1 Outside of Scope Digging It is inconceivable that the FS would consider granting access to a drilling company in such an important and vital recreational area as Fishtail. The Silver City towards Deerfield, where there are ugly signs threatening "humpbacks" onto mining claims. What a calamity. If it is not in your best interest to protect this measured environment, then at least consider the impact of digging on the local communities. And if mining occurs, the financial impact on all of western South Dakota would be considerable. Free would want to go boating, hiking, hunting, etc. in an area with ugly and polluting mine on its slopes.

Carla Hayse 1 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion We’ve stated that it has to power to deny mining activity. It is vitally so because there are several locations around the county where digging has been prevented. Please develop some courage and place obstructions in the way of this mining.

Carla Hayse 1 3 Regulatory Process Forest Health Division Will the proposed drilling area extend into an S 2 Management Area. What will you do about that? Will you protect that area or just roll over and allow the company to have its way?

Carla Hayse 1 4 Other Public Health and Safety Fishtail and Silver Bottoms A proposal to deep-drilling, operating 24/ 7, year round - this obviously invokes great noise, and lighting. How does that NOT affect nearby wildlife, or human activity?

Carla Hayse 1 5 Regulatory Process NWIC Your decision to identify this project as an S 2, instead of an S 1, shows that your concern for the environment is deep seeded secondary to your support for companies that pollute the air and water. This is shameful. If this proposal truly identified actions as categorical exclusions, the FS would base its decision on categorical exclusions. For 40 CFR part 1508.4, a proposed action may be modified from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 1508.4(b) identifies short-term (i.e. 1 year or less), mineral, energy, or military activities and their incidental impacts that may require cross-country travel by vehicle and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. It’s a proposed action for this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EA’s proposed to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented as a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Carla Hayse 1 6 Other Statement of Project Opinion Being "No Action" is an option you can impose. Please do so.

Carla Hayse 1 7 Regulatory Process Comment Period Meanwhile, please extend the public comment period. For such a sensitive issue, this seems fair and appropriate.

David Gannett 2 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I’m opposed to this exploration project! I’m concerned of the environmental impacts to our fresh water sources and damage to the landscape. This exploration should not be allowed to move forward.

Dale and Ray Chapman 2 1 Other Comment Period Forest Health Division We received a potential for the first time today on the comment period to open. We are working on getting our comments and facts in order. Could you please give us a longer time? It seems short with our busy workdays and we would like more time.

Gary Abrahamson 4 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Oh, just a few bare holes scattered about, nothing to see here.... BUT when they find what they are looking for, then comes the destruction of Jenny Gulch. Oh, I forgot. It is supposed and promised time limit on the destruction. Now I feel much better!

Ishlei Zhao 5 1 Other Water Quantity/Drainage Supply Pipelining will hit my property and then drain stream Riptide City, right? Bradley please provide water in the creek from the city, including losing my view to look passing. The last thing I need to have arouse in my well and in the creek too. It is not very clear to the effects drink. Rapid Creek, and our question is: Why is this being tolerated? Why isn’t the water for Riptide City and the surrounding areas not being protected?

Ishlei Zhao 5 2 Other Comment Period Forest Health and Drainage I strongly disagree with this drilling project. We ask for an extension of time, so that we can have a thorough review of the document, and so everyone who wants to make comments gets the opportunity to make comments.

Kathy Durrum 6 1 Regulatory Process Comment Period Forest Health and Drainage There will be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 40 CFR 1508 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 40 CFR 1508.3 Comments on proposed project or activity. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments—(1) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice.

Other: 220.6, (40 CFR 1508.4(b))—Comments on proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice.

(d) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Ike von Knebel 6 2 Other Comment Period Forest Health and Drainage Carolee, Barbara, Jill, Carolyn, and Sarah.
Lyden 7 1 Other Water Quality/Water Supply We are concerned about clean water in The Black Hills.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 1 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.

Field staff will not be in the Black Hills to conduct this project. Please use the 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment should be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Joint Coal Conservation Jessica Pacifica 8 1 Regulatory Process Extends Period We request the public comment period be extended for the Black Hills (west) field project. Thirty days is too short a timeframe for the public to become informed and submit comments on such a potentially impactful project.

Field staff will not be in the Black Hills to conduct this project. Please use the 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment should be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Joint Coal Conservation Jessica Pacifica 8 2 Regulatory Process Extends Period The project would occur in the Black Hills, which are the treaty territory of the Lakota people. The USFS must ensure that government-to-government consultations are in place, and that the project goes forward, free of prior and current consultations and agreements that have been granted from the Lakota traditional councils. The Draft EA, an extensive natural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and HDR (July 4, 2021), offers review and comment. A letter dated September 8, 2021, was received from the SHPO; corresponding with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.4-6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Field staff will not be in the Black Hills to conduct this project. Please use the 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment should be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Black Hills Mesa Water Alliance Jared writing 9 1 Regulatory Process Extends Period This is a formal request for an extension of time to complete the Black Hills mesA water project. The EA requires substantial research and consideration, and we cannot complete this task within 30 days.

Field staff will not be in the Black Hills to conduct this project. Please use the 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment should be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Black Hills Mesa Water Alliance Jared writing 9 2 Regulatory Process Extends Period For thirty days is not enough time to read, research, confer, and comment on the draft Environmental Assessment (EA). Our request for an extension of the time to comment was summarily denied. Hence, these comments are not as knowledgeable or thorough as they would be with more time to consider the Draft EA. This puts the public at a disadvantage.

Field staff will not be in the Black Hills to conduct this project. Please use the 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment should be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Black Hills Coal Reveal Alliance Jared writing 9 4 Regulatory Process At Comment Second, the EA is vague, general, and incomplete. It does not contain enough information for members of the public or organizations with a direct interest in the 2 project to be fully informed. All results of potential impacts are written off with the comment that the applicant's actions in following Federal laws and regulations will solve all potential problems.

The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS semiannual NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS semiannual NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Black Hills Coal Reveal Alliance Jared writing 9 6 Regulatory Process At Comment Final the level of due diligence is too lenient. The project is complex and requires an in-depth analysis and consultation with all stakeholders, including the public, to ensure that all potential impacts are considered.

The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS semiannual NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Black Hills Coal Reveal Alliance Jared writing 9 7 Regulatory Process Alternatives Analysis Next, the EA provides only two alternatives for this project, two similar alternatives - one with a similar level of drawbacks and a similar level of benefits. This is clearly not "all reasonable alternatives". The Forest Service needs to go back to the drawing board on this and really think about what other alternatives might be possible.

The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS semiannual NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Black Hills Coal Reveal Alliance Jared writing 9 1 Other (EA) Non-F 80, we again request that an Environmental Impact Statement be completed. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 210, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation if an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 210(a)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 meter of roadway, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. It’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a higher level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated its EIS proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 11 Other Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement... With a post-setting problem that we would be likely to point out is that the EA does not consider all of the comments provided in the scoping process. We have read all the comments provided in the scoping process, and there are a number of things that are not covered in the EA.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 12 Other Water Mainliner/Drill Supply Aquifers and the water in facilities containing supply of water needs are not only Rapid City, but also of Ellsworth Air Force Base. Some of this water is gathered... The EA also needs to consider the growing impacts of climate change, particularly in the sections related to water flow, flooding, amount of precipitation, aquifer exchange, the likely ranges of plants and animals, and related topics.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 19 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

We will be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the U.S. Forest Service. In addition, F3 will be required to comply with all environmental regulations and stipulations that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 18 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

What is the state government role in this project?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 17 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

How often will the project area be impacted? What penalties are possible?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 16 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

Project Description: Documentation for adherence to federal service standards and guidelines is assumed. What is the basis of this assumption?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 15 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

EA Content: The Forest Service's discussion of enforcement of the existing laws is mentioned. Enforcement will just happen somehow. Who will be enforcing what laws - not what agency, but what office or position is responsible for each type of enforcement? Who will hold them accountable?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 14 Incorporate Project Description

What are F3's adherence to federal service standards and guidelines are assumed. What is the basis of this assumption?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 13 Other Project Description

How many times is F3 likely to drill or drill for each gas?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 12 Other Water Mainliner/Drill Supply Aquifers and the water in facilities containing supply of water needs are not only Rapid City, but also of Ellsworth Air Force Base. Some of this water is gathered... The EA also needs to consider the growing impacts of climate change, particularly in the sections related to water flow, flooding, amount of precipitation, aquifer exchange, the likely ranges of plants and animals, and related topics.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 11 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

Public Agency Engagement

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 10 Regulatory Process Public Agency Engagement

Project Description: The EA also needs to consider the growing impacts of climate change, particularly in the sections related to water flow, flooding, amount of precipitation, aquifer exchange, the likely ranges of plants and animals, and related topics.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 9 Outside of Scope

Neglect, another major lack which lacks the lack of consideration of development and the related lack of consideration of all likely cumulative impacts. Most obviously, gold mining is a likely impact of this project. Yet the EA mentions mining only once -- in Block C. Each section of this EA needs to consider the substantial, inevitable, cumulative impacts that mining according to the EA.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 8 Other Document of Project Scope

Given the evident lack of thought shown in the draft EA, we most certainly would select the "No Action" alternative.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 7 Other

Lilias Jarding 9 8 Other Statement

Other

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 6 Other

Lilias Jarding 9 9 Outside

Outside

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 5 Other

Lilias Jarding 9 10 Regulatory Process

Regulatory Process

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 4 Other

Lilias Jarding 9 11 Regulatory Process

Regulatory Process

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 3 Other

Lilias Jarding 9 12 Regulatory Process

Regulatory Process

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 2 Regulatory Process

The EA also needs to consider the growing impacts of climate change, particularly in the sections related to water flow, flooding, amount of precipitation, aquifer exchange, the likely ranges of plants and animals, and related topics.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 1 Incorporate

Project Description: The draft EA repeatedly says, "no other chemicals or solvents would be used in drilling." Typically, drilling involves more than the use of water. What other substances will be used? What are their characteristics when they impact the environment? Where are the "hazardous" solvents the company says it uses? Why are they not mentioned in the EA?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 2 Incorporate Project Description

What will drilling wastes and cuttings be composed of? Why does the Forest Service think these wastes do not need an adequate disposal method for some of them? Under what circumstances would the Forest Service determine that drilling wastes and cuttings should be "transported off site at approved disposal location?" What are the decision criteria and scale?

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 1 Incorporate Project Description

What are the capabilities of local first responders, compared to the issues that could present? This needs to be discussed in more detail.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 1 Incorporate

Project Description: The EA also needs to consider the growing impacts of climate change, particularly in the sections related to water flow, flooding, amount of precipitation, aquifer exchange, the likely ranges of plants and animals, and related topics.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

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Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

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Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

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Black Hills Clean Water Alliance

gloss gisting 9 1 Incorporate Project Description

What are the capabilities of local first responders, compared to the issues that could present? This needs to be discussed in more detail.
Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 27 | Other | Literature & Wildlife | 

Is there any factual basis for the draft EA’s assertion that wildlife that is chased off the project area by this project will “return to previous habitats” after the project is completed? How will plans that have been torn up “return”?

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. There have been several studies (see references below) completed on disturbance/habitat impacts to wildlife, especially with big game. Species will have a flight response initially but some may habituate to a disturbance over time. These studies show that wildlife will return once disturbance stops. References: FHD, A. and DL. L. 2002. Human-caused disturbance stimulates a form of predation risk. Conservation biology, 1(3). Bowes, A. L. 1995. Responses of wildlife to noise. Wildlife biology, 1(3). References to wildlife and fisheries: Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Consistency through management and research. SL project activities are considered short term (less than 1 year) and not occurring at the same time across the Project area. Disturbed areas would be reclaimed and reseeded in draft EA Appendix A, the Draft Reclamation Plan.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 25 | Other | Public Health and Safety |

Which historic mine workings in the project area are at risk of failure due to the presence of project equipment? How will the company and the Forest Service prevent damage to human health, equipment, and the environment from these workings?

Atmospheric data in the draft EA, known mining-related hazards have been mapped and considered in Project planning, planned drill holes are not anticipated to intersect any known historical mine shafts, holes, adits, or workings. The historical underground mines have been small, and workings have been within crystalline rock. Therefore, there is a low risk of actually triggering subsidence underground. New workings.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 29 | Other | Water Quality/Water Supply |

How diagenetic can you be to state that “no lakes are present in the Project area,” when everyone knows there is a major lake close by? Potlatch Reservoir is only half a mile from the proposed drilling sites – and downstream. What would the impacts on the reservoir be?

Section 3.3.1 of the Draft EA states, “There are no natural lakes present in the Project area. One perennial stream, Jerry Gush Creek, is located within the Project area and flows southwest to the outlet into Potlatch Reservoir, which is approximately 0.5 miles south of the Project area and represents the primary source of aquatic recreation in this region.”

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 39 | Other | Water Quality/Water Supply |

How much water would the proposed project use?

The MEP of Operations, approximately 0.990 x 10^6 gallons of water would be used per day per drill rig. However, water would be recycled back into the drilling process to minimize total water needs.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 31 | Acquisitive | Water Quality/Water Supply |

Is the Forest Service aware that much of the project area is a municipal watershed?

Refer to Figure 1 of the Draft EA, Appendix D - Water Quality and Hydrology Technical Report. Section 2.2.1 contained in this document contains representations on the effects to the municipal watershed. As noted in the EA and Appendix E, water would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source, re-water would be sourced directly from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 32 | Acquisitive | Public Health and Safety |

Is there an alluvial Pleistocene terrace 1.5 miles from the project area (which was misidentified as being in Rapid City) and is completely different Ecology used to determine adverse impacts? This proposed project clearly requires a local air quality station.

AIP of this Project Area is defined by an alluvial Pleistocene terrace located 1.5 miles from the proposed project area and the area is considered a local air quality station.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 33 | Other | Reclamation |

Who makes the decision when reclamation of Forest Service infrastructure is modified and/or maintained on an "as needed basis"?

The Forest Service will approve a reclamation plan as a part of the Final Plan of Operations. The Forest Service will monitor the implementation of the reclamation plan and will not release the bond until the agency’s reclamation requirements have been met. Reclamation is not completed to Forest Service requirements the bond will be used to complete the reclamation.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 34 | Other | Literature & Wildlife |

How can the forest service prove both that a species is found in multiple places in South Rapiddriver Road and that it is not likely to be in the project area?

The USFS conducted many surveys in the area and used those findings, along with habitats present in the Project area, to inform the impact assessment for the Project. Potential effects of all project alternatives on botanical resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C - Botany Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 35 | Other | Water & Transportation |

What “local authorities” would be involved in the decision on whether to provide prior approval for project equipment to exceed local road weight restrictions?

Appendix B, Draft Notice of Transportation and Reclamation Technical Report, states that if and/or its contractor’s equipment would not exceed local road weight restrictions without prior approval by applicable authorities. The applicable authority would be the entity that has jurisdiction over the particular roadway and is expected to be either the USFS or Pennington County, depending on the roadway.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 36 | Acquisitive | Reclamation |

How can the Forest Service say both “no direct effects to fishing or aquatic activities are anticipated” and that there will be “potential increased short-term sedimentation and turbidity” as a result of the project? Why? (pg.17)

As noted in Appendix C.5 of the Draft EA, “no direct effects to fishing or aquatic activities are anticipated.” The USFS has conducted many surveys in the area and used those findings, along with habitats present in the Project area, to inform the impact assessment for the Project.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 37 | Other | Literature & Wildlife |

Are reported observations that animal and plant species are “not known to occur” in the area. Has anyone looked for them? From the information given in Appendix C, it appears not.

The USFS has conducted surveys of the entire area and used those findings, along with habitats present in the Project area, to inform the impact assessment for the Project.

Black Hills Clean Water Alliance | Draft soliciting | 9 | 38 | Other | Cultural Resources |

What forest service guidelines prohibit material from historic activities from being disposed in “natural drainages.” This project proposes to place cuttings on the ground along the edges of waterways. How does this follow the guidelines?

Draft EA Section 2.3.3.2 of the Draft EA states, “All new excavations, borrow pits or landform disturbances into streams, lakes and wetlands - How is it possible to construct roads that severely damaged as "linear" - in waterways for this project?”

At Section 2.3.3.2 of the Draft EA, these crossings would occur during the winter months to the extent practicable.

Springs are generally not connected hydrologically or hydraulically to groundwater due to the underlying geology (metamorphic graywacke and unfractured metamorphic). There are some exceptions to this where springs are grouped together within individual waterbodies. In the case the springs share the same localised source of groundwater, which is the alluvium associated with stream/roads or their floodplains. As previously captured in the wells locations within drainages and stream channels or their branches and floodplains, most springs are hydrologically connected to streams. Section 3.2.2.1 of the Draft EA Appendix C – Geology, Geohydrology, and Hydrogeology Technical Report, Section 3.2.1.2 has been updated to clarify that the springs in the project area are unlikely to be connected hydrologically to groundwater or other springs but are likely connected to nearby streams where they exist.

Most of the springs are undeveloped. A few have been developed for stock watering purposes and have a constructed pond impounding the spring outflow and/or a spring collection box that pipes water to an offsite stock tank. One spring, located on USDA land near the northwest corner of private property in Township 2 North, Range 4 East, Section 13 S3W1/4 has a special use permit allowing the private landowner to use the spring water for private stock watering. No springs on USGS land within the project area have been developed for domestic uses. No known springs are currently mapped on private parcels within the project area based on field observations (photo by John W. Brown and interpretation of remotely sensed air imagery).

The test site described in this Draft EA may not be representative of the full extent of the area described in the Draft EA and the sequences of action set forth in this Draft EA.

Potential impacts to wildlife are discussed in: Draft EA, Appendix E – Soils, Geology, and Hydrologic Technical Report, Section 5.3.2.2.2 and Section 5.3.3.3.3 of the Draft EA.

Potential impacts to aquifers are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Soils, Geology, and Hydrologic Technical Report, Section 5.3.3.2.2 and Section 5.3.3.2.2 of the Draft EA.

Potential impacts are discussed in: Section 5.3.3.2 of the Draft EA and the Draft EA, Appendix C – Soils, Geology, and Hydrologic Technical Report, section 5.3.2.2.2. As noted in these sections, impacts would be minor, localised, and short-term due to the limited quantity of drilling.

Additional references for this subject have been added to Appendix C.

Thenearest residents to a drill pad in the project area are a 24 Unit from a proposed drilling pad. The impact on the residence would be more "short-term, located, localised, effects." As stated in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Draft Public Health and Safety Technical Report, Section 3.2.2.2, there are no residents within 500 feet of Alternative C drilling locations. There are three Alternative C drilling locations that are within 500 feet of a residence: E1P-12, E1P-102, and E1P-131. These drilling locations are 500, 400, and 380 feet, respectively, from a known residence.

Potential project effects on noise are described in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Draft Public Health and Safety Technical Report, Section 2.2.5.

Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix D – Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreational Technical Report. This appendix also describes the responsibility for repairing any unexpected roadway damage, as well as relocation requirements.
EA 1500, Lilias and Service Handbook 1909.15. All Alliance part the Clean threatened species, D Water the proposed discuss inadequate. in Appendix is "some state. There keep the same downhole drilling: the annular circulation or false at depth. Pressurized water (impervious bentonite clay mixed with water) maintains passage of water into the drill hole. Exploration core holes are hand-built with pumped great suriy consisting of bentonite and water then capped at the surface.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

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For curious purposes, today legal notice publication date (02/22/21) is day zero. Tomorrow (02/23/21) would be day 1. We seek calendar days to count to 30.
The draft Environmental Assessment follows the U.S. Department of Interior's NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

The Northwest Territories are home to a variety of species, and the assessment would consider impacts on wildlife and the environment. The draft EA provides a comprehensive analysis of the cumulative effects of the project, including those on the biological and environmental resources in the area.

The draft EA is available for public comment and review. Interested parties are encouraged to provide comments on the draft EA before the deadline of April 8, 2022.

The draft EA is a critical tool for ensuring that the project is developed in an environmentally sustainable manner and that any potential impacts are adequately addressed. Comments on the draft EA will be used to inform the development of the final EA and to guide the implementation of the project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft Draft</td>
<td>Sonja Swift</td>
<td>11 2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jennifer Hasvold</td>
<td>17 1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
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<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
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<td>Curtis 18</td>
<td>Regulatory Comment</td>
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<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>All potential effects of announced changes in the Draft EA are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scott Diagostine</td>
<td>15 1</td>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>
Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 800, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 300(b)(2) identifies short terms (1 year or less) mining, energy, or geophysical investigations and their residential activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3’s proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (36 CFR 1508.1). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

There will not be an extension to the NEPA EA comment period. Please see the “46 CFR 415” regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments 46 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USGS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendages that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the “46 CFR 218” regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 46 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.
The draft EA does not describe details on the cultural resources site visit completed p. 21 of draft EA. The State Historic Preservation Officer lacks the knowledge and expertise to protect cultural resources and sacred sites in the Jenny Guhl area. Prioritizing the SHPO over Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) for relevant tribes is not only in violation of federal law (National Historic Preservation Act); but also ensures that resources in this area will not be protected. The process to evaluate the proposed project area for its cultural and spiritual relevance must not just involve tribes, the process must be driven by tribes. Indigenous people must be in charge of evaluating the significance of their own sacred lands. Non-Indigenous people do not have the knowledge necessary to do this successfully.

The project is temporary, as it is anticipated to last one year from start-up through rehabilitation; as such, cumulative effects are discussed in this context. Potential effects (including cumulative effects) of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E, Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed project action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EA’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 219 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.25 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be evaluated in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the notice. (2) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth analysis of all the resources discussed in the EA.

The USFS followed up with communication to the commenter for clarification on this statement. At this time the USFS, has not received any communications back from the commenter.

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Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E, Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

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<td>Cheryl</td>
<td>Leach-Valade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Live in Spearfish and strongly believe the Black Hills should be kept pristine. The Forest Service should be acting in good faith toward the ecology, including water sources, and history of the Black Hills. Companies proposing exploratory drilling don't have the best interest of our land and water in mind. These companies want a profit for the CEO and shareholders only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I oppose strongly this proposed project, for the reasons I stated prior impacts to water, roads, and wildlife and having read the Draft EA also oppose this project on numerous other impacts I had not previously considered. Given a choice I would request the USFS go with Alternative A-No Action. My second choice would be Alternative C-Modified Proposed Action. In no way, support the full scope of D3's proposal. It is impossible to &quot;return to preexisting conditions.&quot; The key way to maintain pre-existing conditions is to not disturb them in the first place.</td>
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<td>Mary</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td></td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>The summary on the EA states the project will last approximately 1 year from initiation through drilling and reclamation, however the F3 Gold LLC web site lists that drilling for drilling only with reclamation taking another 6 months. Again as a stakeholder in this, I strongly object to this!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myria</td>
<td>Gravier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As noted in Section 1.5 of the Draft EA, the Project would last approximately one year from initiation through drilling and reclamation.</td>
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<td>Myria</td>
<td>Gravier</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>No. You can bet my lane against this project would take place in my back yard. But, even if that were not the case I would still be in support of option A, no exploration now or ever. I know the project analysis and I think it speaks for itself. The neg impact of drilling in this neighborhood is huge. Could there be anything worth drilling for? Maybe. But at the depth it might be found, not likely worth the effort or the expense. Any absement in the area can attest to this it does the the same evidence of the many &quot;glory holes&quot; present on my lease and in the proposed drilling area. Could it be attractive for the Forest Service to think private enterprise could help with repairing roads and clearing timber in the area but I think we both know what a slippery slope that might turn out to be!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norma Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I feel the wildflowers that live outside of Spearfish area should be allowed to move forward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norma Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norma Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2 Other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA reviews. It Gold is required to submit a reclamation plan to the Forest Service prior to authorization for project initiation in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2880. In addition, F3 Gold is responsible for submitting a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project, with the bond amount determined by the Forest Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noreen</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>An application should be denied. Yes, the long unadjusted U.S. tax authorities mineral exploration, but NEPA requires resource protection. The only reason for the proposed drilling is a potential gold mining, which should never - under any circumstances - be allowed in this critical watershed habitat!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noreen</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Regulatory Process - Permit Assurance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Wicks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not proceed with this project. The benefit is not worth the risk to our environment and drinking water. These are the true non-renewable resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments noted: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.
Organization | First Name | Last Name | Additional Information | Letter Number | Comment Number | Action | Process | Resource | Comment
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Crystal Cole | 28 | 1 | Regulatory Process | Comment Period | This email serves as a request for an extension of time to thoroughly review the Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project. Because this project is upstream from Pelstia Lake and will directly affect Rapid City's water supply, it is imperative that the Forest Service grant a thorough review of the document and the opportunity for the public to make comments.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.35 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Extent. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 1 | Regulatory Process | Comment Period | Ask an extension to comment on the Jenny Gulch mining exploration Jenny Gulch Gold Mining Exploration Project. The proximity to Pecos lake and potential impacts to the Rapid City's water supply via silt weathering make this an important EA and many people will care about it and want to review and comment. Pelstia Lake area is an intensive use developed recreation area.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.35 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Extent. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 2 | Other | Comment/Project Evaluation | Suggest gold mining or other mining around Pecos Lake is just too big for Rapid City and needs more study.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 3 | Regulatory Process | Forest Plan Revision | Mining Act of 1872 | Suggest that the Forest Service investigate ways to withdraw the area surrounding Pecos lake, from mineral entry. This includes asking the Congressional Delegation for a specific bill to withdraw a portion of this area to provide special protection to the area from the adverse impact of the 1872 Mining Law.

This is outside the scope of the Project. Mineral withdrawals are handled by the Bureau of Land Management.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 4 | Regulatory Process | Forest Plan Revision | EA vs ES | Suggest reviewing the Watershed Protection area in the Santa Fe National Forest in New Mexico. I think this was an administrative designation created by the National Forest Service in C. from the 1960s. Please consider for the Forest Service to create a similar administrative designation for Rapid City watershed. Santa Fe's watershed protection rules might be too strict for the black Hills as part of the watershed in the Medicine Bow National Forest has no forests with real estate cleansing. These include large tracts of less than 1 mi² of lowland road, use and mineral interest of existing roads as a categorical exclusion action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental operational impacts. It's a proposed action that's a definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2025. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. The 36 CFR part 218, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 218.83 identifies four different situations—(1) minor, (2) major, (3) emergency, and (4) categories that must be approved by the responsible official. If the responsible official determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be added to an EA or EIS to assess those potential effects. The responsible official may also evaluate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has evaluated this proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to determine whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The responsible official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines that the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 5 | Regulatory Process | Forest Plan Revision | EA or ES should include a discussion of all options to withdraw the area from mineral entry.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2025. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. Mineral withdrawals are handled by the Bureau of Land Management.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 6 | Regulatory Process | Water Quality/Water Supply | Request a thorough discussion of how the Clean Water Act and mining law, as administered by South Dakota DNR, would protect Rapid City's watershed. Can the Forest Service require more aggressive protections against pollution than the Clean Water Act? Clean Air Act, Federal water disposal law or SD mining law?

This would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USFS as part of the EA decision, and the USFS requires compliance with the Clean Water Act prior to approving the Plan of Operations. In addition, this will be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project.

Nancy Holding | 29 | 7 | Regulatory Process | Water Quality/Water Supply | Preclude all beneficial uses assigned to all streams that could be impacted. It is my opinion that both Wyoming and South Dakota collect fisheries data on larger streams, but ignore fisheries data collection in small flow streams. Streams that are labeled as intermittent, can have fish during the flow times and/or have a “string of pearls”, by which I mean perennially flowing water near springs, so the stream is intermittently dry than when dry than wet, but the larger streams get classified as intermittent. The smaller perennial side sets can have fish. Documenting fish in small streams and telling DNR about the fish, would increase the protections in a higher water quality standard (if needed FWS use petition Water Management Board for rule making). Small or low flow streams don't often support game fish and thus the wildlife departments ignore them. Our native fish were at small/non-game fish and some are at risk, such as the lake chub.

Sections 2.2.4.4 of Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report states, “Within the Project area, the single stream that has assigned beneficial uses is: coldwater permanent fish Propagation waterways; limited contact recreation waterways, fish and wildlife propagation, recreation, and stock waterways; and irrigation waterways (reference [20]).”

Requesting the Water Management Board for rule making is out of the scope of this Project.
Nancy Hildingiding
20 0 Other Declaration
If you proceeded with the project and are looking at reclamation please consider revisiting beaver dam analog data. Please discuss any history of beaver in the area and impact to beaver.

Comment stated: Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including beaver) are not discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 9 Other Cultural Resources (Museum Resources)
Please discuss Native American concerns.

See Draft EA Section 3.4.5.1, which states: "Due to the sensitive nature of information presented in the cultural resources report, this document is only to be shared with appropriate agency and tribal entities and is exempt from public availability requirements."

Nancy Hildingiding
20 10 Other Fisheries & Wildlife
Please review impacts to rare plants and animals.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on rare botanical species are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C: baseline Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on rare wildlife and fish species are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Evaluation Report.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 11 Other Recreation
Please discuss impact to sport and recreation. Please review the RMA designations for the area. The Forest Plan was done over 25 years ago, the scenic beauty, and recreational values may have changed.

Section 3.2 of Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation has been updated to include further discussion on recreation.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 12 Other Statement of Project Scope
We are one step closer to this project.

Comment stated.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 13 Regulatory Process Forest Planning Process
Do you feel that you will be able to withdraw this area from mineral entry and make amendments to the Forest Plan for new Management Area designations to justify such withdrawals? A watershed protection area could have one option [see an area created in the nineties on Santa Fe Mountain in Santa Fe, New Mexico]. Also, some folks have suggested recreation designations for the watershed.

The Forest Plan review process continues in October 2020. The anticipated date for completion is 2020. Until revised is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current planning tool. Mineral withdrawals are administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Developing a forest-wide watershed protection area is outside of the scope of this project.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 14 Regulatory Process Alternative Analysis
You need another alternative that avoids drilling in wet areas and B.2, but does not increase roads so much. You need another alternative that changes the area’s Forest Plan management area designations to management objectives that protect water quality better.

Section 2.1.3 of Draft EA, Appendix C: Alternative C releases drilling slots out of MA 0.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment at this time. Alternative C also moves drilling slots to avoid potential impacts to the 2006 Bi.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 15 Other Statement of Project Scope
We object to any drilling in the 2.5 Management Area. It is proposed for Alternative B, with a flare plan amendment.

Comment stated: see Draft EA Sections 2.3. Alternative C releases drilling slots out of MA 0.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment at this time. Alternative C also moves drilling slots to avoid potential impacts to the 2006 Bi.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 16 Other Water Quality/Water Supply
We object to any drilling in the 2.5 Management Area. It is proposed for Alternative B, with a flare plan amendment.

Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C releases drilling slots out of MA 0.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment at this time. Alternative C also moves drilling slots to avoid potential impacts to the 2006 Bi.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 17 Regulatory Process And Use
We should declare the location of the Canyon City Research Natural Area and discuss any potential impacts to that area — such as noise or dust. Impacts to an area could possibly occur. You should consider the other management areas in other areas. Pages 5, 6, and 7 has a real (2) (10) plus a real number for wildlife of management areas without test title of management areas.

The Canyon City Research Natural Area is outside of the Project area; impacts to that RMA are not anticipated from the Project. Management Areas are discussed in the Draft EA Section 2.3.1. The Draft EA database is a narrative of the Management Areas within the project area on pages 6-8.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 18 Other Site Description
Describe in detail all potential habitats in the map legends on the map. We are not discussing or discussing the data but are not defined or discussed in the text — what are they? Are the “project exclusion areas” being utilized? The black dots with a small white ring enclosing it, needs to be included in the legend. If it means it is a drill site in both B and C Alternatives it does that should be explained in the legend.

Figure 2.1 (p. 3 of the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sides, Geology, hydrology Technical Report) shows topography across the project area.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 19 Other Biological Resources
You should provide Maps of cover types and give structural stages, to help us understand the project area.

Habitat mapped in large-scale.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 20 Other Water Quality/Water Supply
You should provide a separate map for wetlands and surface water. It should include existing areas that are potential or ephemeral and give their names. The map or a chart should show what beneficial uses the respective streams are assigned to. Your biology should inspect streams to check whether they are a few fish and cut that DMR has assigned the correct beneficial uses to their streams. We hear that state agencies don’t do a good job of inspecting low flow streams, likely they should not be game fish during their fish inventories.

The biological resources overview figure is located in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Sides, Geology, hydrology Technical Report. See Section 2.5.4.4 of the Draft EA, Appendix D - Sides, Geology, hydrology Technical Report for further discussion on the biological resources overview.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 21 Other Water Quality/Water Supply
You should not make sense of your visual description of Plant, and Beave and be compared when crossing/imposing streams.

This is discussed in Sections 4.3.1.4 and 4.3.1.5 of Appendix D. Under Alternative B & C, none of the drill sites located within streams. Alternative B routes 10 drill sites to avoid potential impacts to the WC. Temporary overhead trails for both alternatives would cross streams; however, this would occur in the winter to the extent practicable.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 22 Other Recreation
You need the map of the values assigned by the Scenic Management System. You need a discussion of scenic values and impacts to scenic.

Section 3.2 of Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation has been updated to include further discussion on scenery.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 23 Other Recreation
You should provide a map of recreation assets in the surrounding area, including parks and trails. If any topics of concern to Cross, and points ground scale, as described in Section 3.2.2 of the draft appendix, there is none in the Project area.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 24 Regulatory Process Government in Governance (Regional Coordination)
The mandated tribal consultation seems to be consistent, allegedly due to COVID. The discussion of cultural resources and the project’s potential impacts to them, is very hard to understand. We need a map. We hope you will respect treaties and work well with them.

For a national resource overview figure is provided in the draft EA, Appendix D - Sides, Geology, hydrology Technical Report. Section 2.5.4.4 of the Draft EA, Appendix D - Sides, Geology, hydrology Technical Report for further discussion on the biological resources overview.

Nancy Hildingiding
20 25 Other Fisheries & Wildlife
You should provide more information on Beaver. It is a BMP. How does the proposed project affect Beaver habitat? See the Draft EA, Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of sites SPC-016, SPC-017, and SPC-018 from May 1 to June 15 to further increase potential effects to high bar swimming. It will be required to follow applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines for wildlife.

As noted in the Draft EA, Section 3.7.1.1 and 3.4.1.4, no drill sites are located in perennial or intermittent streams. Streams would be crossed using existing roads or using temporary roads in the winter to the extent practicable. See the Draft EA, Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report for relevant Forest Plan standards and guidelines for avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. Project activities would avoid active beaver complexes.
F3 would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USGS as part of the EA decision. In addition, F3 will be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project.

These impacts are discussed in Sections 3 and 2.2.2 of the Draft EA and in the Draft EA, Appendices A – Zods, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report, Section 3.2.2.2. As noted in these sections, drill cuttings that contain mineralized rock would be buried on site or disposed of offsite to mitigate this risk.

F3's cuttings management program complies with South Dakota state disposal rules. F3's cuttings management program also proposes the use of storage tanks instead of leach pads to further minimize potential effect.

As noted in Table 6-E of the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report, suitable habitat (e.g., calcareous formations) for the Fl bridgerensis is not present in the Project area.

It would be like you discuss impacts to the Fl bridgerensis. Could the Fl bridgerensis remain in the area? We are concerned as it was designated for listing with the USFWS. The Fl bridgerensis is threatened due to a history of over browsing by Bighorn Sheep. We suspect this disturbance to be an uncertain and want the FS to run out for it. If it is a unique species, it only exists in Iowa and 8 known locations in the Black Hills.

As stated in the Statement of Project Opinion, the area is up-lying and not in the main water source for Rapid City, Ellsworth AFB, and surrounding areas. Please do NOT use any mining or mining exploration occur anywhere in that area.

For the USACE, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to NPS (August 2, 2011) and MNDP (July 6, 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 2000-062 Tribal Coordination, Consultation and Consultation.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 16 CFR part 300, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 16 CFR part 200 (2)(d)(ii) identifies short-term (2 year) or short mineral energy, or geophysical investigations and their residential support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads or a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has excluded F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The Bighorn Sheep, now endangered, are a species crete this for the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2011) and MNDP (July 6, 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 2000-062 Tribal Coordination, Consultation and Consultation.

If the analysis results in a finding of no significant impact at the time of decision, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine if the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis showed that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2-1: Trailing activities in the vicinity of S Neutral Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 15 to avoid disturbance during the sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USGS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger. Also see Section 3.5 and Appendix D - Section 6.2, Table 6-1, Section 4.1.2. Additional information is added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of tine SPC-017, SPC-017, and SPC-018 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to high sheep densities.

The Forest Service, to fulfill its ethical duty, must include and analyze all reasonable alternatives to F3’s proposal. It is clear they have not done so. Without doubt, there is simply no way to predict the negative impact to the Rapid City water supply.

The Forest Service, to fulfill its ethical duty, must include and analyze all reasonable alternatives to F3’s proposal. It is clear they have not done so. Without doubt, there is simply no way to predict the negative impact to the Rapid City water supply.

As noted in Table 6-E of the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report, suitable habitat (e.g., calcareous formations) for the Fl bridgerensis is not present in the Project area.

As stated in the Statement of Project Opinion, the area is up-lying and not in the main water source for Rapid City, Ellsworth AFB, and surrounding areas. Please do NOT use any mining or mining exploration occur anywhere in that area.

For the USACE, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to NPS (August 2, 2011) and MNDP (July 6, 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 2000-062 Tribal Coordination, Consultation and Consultation.

For the USACE, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2011) and MNDP (July 6, 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 2000-062 Tribal Coordination, Consultation and Consultation.
Jane Beisner 32 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion
Please do not give this project your stamp of approval. I grew up in this area and want to keep it as a beautiful forest/wetland area for my grandchildren.
Comment noted.

Greg Nile 31 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
I am writing today to express my opposition to gold exploration in the Black Hills. I am opposed to this because of past mining externalization of costs to the community, and because the risk to our water can’t possibly be indemnified. Please do not do any exploration, and seek ways to shut down existing mining operations.
Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.

Greg Ohe 31 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
I absolutely oppose this exploration project by F3 Gold. The proposal states the goal is not mining - so why are they drilling 42 holes? I support the No Action proposal. Please deny this project so we can maintain the pristine condition of the natural beauty!
Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Greg Ohe 35 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
I have seen many other proposals like the F3 Gold entity back a gold project and they all seem to leave the Black Hills in worse shape than they had promised. I want to preserve the Hills and our water at all costs and oppose the F3 Gold entity. Support the “No Action” alternative.
Comment noted. F3 Gold is required to submit a reclamation plan to the Forest Service prior to authorization for project initiation in accordance with Forest Service Manual 860. In addition, F3 Gold is responsible for submitting a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project, with the bond amount determined by the Forest Service. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Greg Ohe 35 2 Regulatory Opinion
An Environmental Impact Statement has not been done.
Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220 (220) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mining, energy, or geophysical investigations and their ancillary support activities that require minimal resource impacts or minimal environmental impacts, such as damage to natural features that result from minimal resource use. Where such exclusion can be demonstrated, a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) may be prepared in lieu of an EIS. A Full Analysis (FA) is required to proceed with a project that is not categorically excluded.

Greg Ohe 35 3 Regulatory Opinion
A Written Agreement to Government Consultation (tribal engagement) Nothing has been negotiated and considered properly.
For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas that were disturbed is conducted. This report is submitted to the SHPO (August 4, 2021) and HPO (April 1, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1100.02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Greg Ohe 35 4 Regulatory Opinion
A Forest Service Permit is issued.
For Draft Environmental Assessment follow the 1983 streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Kevin Ryan 36 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
I am writing this to register my opposition to the proposed F3 exploratory drilling project near Jenny Gulch and Pactola reservoir. I am a life long resident of the Black Hills and strongly oppose this permit being issued.
Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Kevin Ryan 36 2 Other Water Management Supply
My family and I have used the reservoir and the facilities for hunting and fishing that possible water contamination from drilling will destroy it. The city of Rapid City, where I live, uses the water from Pactola to support life in the city. Should this water source become contaminated, well, I think you know what could potentially happen. If gold is discovered, then what is the next step to mine that gold. The water in this area is too valuable to the residents of Rapid City, Rapid City, and to the people who rely on Pactola for recreation and life in general. I love fishing the waters of Pactola and the connecting streams and feel greatly for their survival should this drilling be allowed.
Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Kevin Ryan 36 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion
I am a life long resident of the Black Hills and strongly oppose this permit being issued.
Comment noted.

Ken Samudra 37 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
Please allow the "No Action" for the search and removal of any gold near our most important watersheds.
Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Kerr Stephens 38 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
I oppose the F3 Gold exploration project and ask that you take the No Action Alternative.
Comment noted.
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<td>Environmental assessment report is too vague and should undergo a full EA.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USGS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 210.6, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220 (a)(3)(ii) identifies short term (1 year or less) mining, mineral, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard roads, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. This proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated this proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<td>Michael Robinson</td>
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<td>EIA vs ES</td>
<td>Despite the EA published by F3, there has been no formal environmental impact study performed.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR part 220.6, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 220.6(b)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Robinson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>Have found here for over 10 years and have noted that it is wet year, there is considerable water flow down both Gorman Gulch and Sunnyside Gulch.</td>
<td>The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E – soils, geology, and hydrology. Technical Report, Section 6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Robinson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Water &amp; Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Despite the fact that there is some local traffic up Gorman and Sunnyside, there are not mapped historic trails by the US Forest Service off road maps. I am concerned about 24/7 traffic on these roads (particularly Gorman since it has no outlet).</td>
<td>Sunnyside Gulch Road (HR 671) is a public highway open to all vehicles year-round. Gorman Gulch Road (HR 141 and 142.2B) is also a public roadway open to highway legal vehicles year-round. Since they are public roadways, they are not mapped in USFS off road maps.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Robinson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>F3 is allowed to pursue it’s initial project, I am concerned greatly about the effect should valuable minerals be found. That is, what happens to our property value, peaceful setting and tourism should they decide to then proceed with full-scale mining.</td>
<td>The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Robinson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EIA vs ES</td>
<td>Would urge the FS Forest Service to delay the request for the F3 project at least until a formal environmental impact study. See Draft EA Section 3.4.6, which states: “The evaluation of these criteria is based on the environmental report, this document is only able to be heard with appropriate agencies and interested parties and is exempt from public availability requirements.”</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Robinson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>We also are aware if there are any prior tribal or cultural areas in the project area that would be disturbed.</td>
<td>The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Simonds</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key concerns are: 1) Impact to our area’s only water source.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A – soils, geology, and hydrology. Technical Report, Section 6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Simonds</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Public Agency Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed environmental study and results of that study published to the interests of Pennington and Meade counties.</td>
<td>The DEIS EA was made available to the public for a 30-day review and comment period, which concluded on October 21, 2021.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>David Simonds</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wildlife &amp; Wildlife Habitat</td>
<td></td>
<td>Impact to wildlife habitat that currently in pristine and not developed.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B – Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Simonds</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Statement of Proposed Action</td>
<td></td>
<td>To this our country’s forest and shouldn’t be exploited for corporations to profit.</td>
<td>Convenant noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Anderson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Statement of Proposed Action</td>
<td></td>
<td>Am opposed to F3 entry Gulch project and support the “No Action” alternative. The other two alternatives of allowing 62 2½ pads requested by F3 Gold or 47 ½ in avoiding sensitive places are unacceptable.</td>
<td>Convenant noted.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Assessment is incomplete and an Environmental Assessment/Biological Evaluation (EIS) is required. The USFS, that under NEPA, may exclude analysis, documentation, and certain regulations as may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that require incidental repair to reach site for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FV’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action is likely to result in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

In summary, the draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

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The USFS EA, an intensive forest resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to BLM (August 29, 2021) and to FV (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 14 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1520-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Consultations.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish and minimization measures are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of all SRC-016, SRC-017, and SRC-019 from May 1 to June 31 to further minimize potential effects to big horn sheep.

The MDMA roads within the project area and planned to be used on the project were checked and confirmed to be accurate as presented in the Draft EA. All roads not proposed to be used as part of the project have been removed from figures to minimize confusion.

The Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6. Water would not be sourced directly from local surface water.

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Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6. Water would not be sourced directly from local surface water.
Thomas and Diane 45 6 Other Knees & Transportation In the summer of 2023 an environmental group was legally camped near the north and Sunnyvale Gulch. They drove in and set up tents. A forest service law enforcement agent told them they could camp there but not bring their vehicles. The gold exploration is planning large drilling trucks in the same area and plans to move their headquarters. How can this be allowed when a totally law abiding group was told they couldn’t have their vehicles in the same area.

Thomas and Diane 45 7 Other Knees & Transportation If the gold exploration group is allowed to close onto forest service with no special permits and not be required to clear up everything, how can people (jim and dirt dogs, etc.) not be allowed to do the same thing and be allowed to tear up the federal forest? That would be difficult to keep people on the designated trail and to keep permits. This illegal for application area as.

Thomas and Diane 45 8 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The drilling process requires water as a lubricant. Several, if not all of the planned drilling sites in Sunnyvale Gulch are adjacent to or near private property with homes, cabins, private wells and approved septic systems. They could easily drain the small amounts of water these formations contain, and may make them permanently useless the holes they drill aren’t properly sealed. We depend on snow and rain to keep our “aquifer” viable and if they are constantly draining, they’ll never fill up again especially with the drought we are currently experiencing. We also have several springs in the area that the wildlife depend on. There will also be disturbed. Along with the water depletion, comes the heavy drilling machinery which could easily become the hazards.

Thomas and Diane 45 9 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Last year F3 did lots of extensive seismic studies and are aware of where the probable sites of water are. There are nearly a dozen sites adjacent to the private land on Sunnyvale Gulch, and they are all part of the F3 mining claims.

Thomas and Diane 45 10 Other Water Quality/Water Supply My wife and I have lived on Sunnyvale Gulch nearly 30 years, and put thousands of hours of work on our property and tried to keep the surrounding forestable. We have also participated in all the fire programs offered by the forest service and the San Juan Firewise program. In all probability we will lose our home because of lack of water. Any water drainage goes directly into Painted and Rapid City’s water supply.

Thomas and Diane 45 11 Other Knead Health and Safety F3 is allowed into Sunnyvale wash area there may be as many as 15 homes and cabins that will be affected. Possibly more.

Thomas and Diane 46 1 Other Environmental Impact Statement F3 will be drilling for potable water from this small area. We hope the forest service finds it incompatible with the Black Hills National Forest. Several peoples lives depend on.

Jeremiah Davis 46 2 Other Recreation Water Quality/Water Supply In my view, both “Alternative B” and “Alternative C” pose a serious threat to the environmental status of Lake Patrick, and to the domestic water supply for Rapid City, Ellsworth AFB, and other communities in the central Black Hills of South Dakota. While Lake Patrick is a man-made reservoir, it has a pristine nature. Over the years we have enjoyed swimming there the entire time I have lived in Rapid City, and know its highly valued for fishing, waterfowling, and all outdoor recreation.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6. F3 is required to conduct field surveys per South Dakota state requirements.

Jeremiah Davis 46 3 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Even more important is the fact that the Rapid City metro area, which is growing very rapidly, depends on Rapid Creek, and the watershed, for clean drinking water. The creek is in a semi arid region, which is likely to grow drier in future years with climate change. Either Alternative B or Alternative C presents a serious threat to the future quality of our drinking water, and increases the likelihood that we will need to build a very expensive pipeline to the Missouri River.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6.

Jeremiah Davis 46 4 Other Services & Utilities The wildlife in the area surrounding the drilling of exploratory holes will also be seriously threatened.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.
Comment noted. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.

Support the “No Action” alternative and urge you to complete a full Environmental Impact Statement to assess the risks of drilling activity to our water, the forest, wildlife, and recreation (which for outcomes gold existing in potential revenue to Western River business.)

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2022. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2000 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. As noted in Draft EA Section 3.9, Alternative C includes drilling sites out of M.A.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

All the forest services has failed to complete authentic Tribal consultation, not only during scoping, but in this constrained 30-day comment period.

The Forest Plan amendment process of 2014 (October 2021) and that of 2015 (August 2022) are designed to meet the goals and standards of the 2000 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan, which is the current plan on record. As noted in Draft EA Section 3.9, Alternative C includes drilling sites out of M.A.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

Comment noted. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.

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Anna Bruce

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I’m writing because I love Pacheco Reservoir. Today I went paddleboarding in Jenny Gutch. I was completely alone. No other boaters, swimmers, etc. The solitude and peace that I experienced were unparalleled. That time keeps my mental health balanced and my soul refreshed. To think that this could be contaminated or destroyed by mining exploration is heartbreaking. Please do not let this reservoir be destroyed. Clean water is a precious resource that is far more valuable than any gold mine. Water is essential for life, not gold. The Black Hills and Pacheco reservoir are an amazing place. The Forest Service is here to protect and preserve our national forests, please continue this mission.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. Section 3.

Terry Skillman

54, 4 Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I feel the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area is a major concern. The area is home to a variety of wildlife and plant species, many of which are rare or endangered. The proposed drilling/exploration would likely result in habitat destruction and disturbance to the local ecosystem. This is not only concerning for the environment, but also for the local community who rely on the area for recreation and tourism. It is important that we protect this area and its unique resources for future generations.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I believe the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area is not necessary and could potentially harm the environment. It is important to consider the long-term impacts of this project on the area and its residents. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could impact the local hydrology and affect water quality. It is crucial that we take the necessary steps to protect the area and its resources.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I support the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area. The area has significant mineral resources that should be explored. It is important to consider the economic benefits that could be gained from this project. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could stimulate the local economy and create jobs.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I believe the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area could potentially harm the environment. It is important to consider the potential impacts of this project on the area and its residents. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could impact the local hydrology and affect water quality. It is crucial that we take the necessary steps to protect the area and its resources.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I support the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area. The area has significant mineral resources that should be explored. It is important to consider the economic benefits that could be gained from this project. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could stimulate the local economy and create jobs.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I believe the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area could potentially harm the environment. It is important to consider the potential impacts of this project on the area and its residents. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could impact the local hydrology and affect water quality. It is crucial that we take the necessary steps to protect the area and its resources.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I support the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area. The area has significant mineral resources that should be explored. It is important to consider the economic benefits that could be gained from this project. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could stimulate the local economy and create jobs.


Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I believe the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area could potentially harm the environment. It is important to consider the potential impacts of this project on the area and its residents. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could impact the local hydrology and affect water quality. It is crucial that we take the necessary steps to protect the area and its resources.


Other

1. Other

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Other

1. Other

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Other

1. Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I support the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gutch area. The area has significant mineral resources that should be explored. It is important to consider the economic benefits that could be gained from this project. Additionally, the proposed drilling/exploration could stimulate the local economy and create jobs.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

See Draft EA Table 2.1. “Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sonora Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the high sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.” Also see Section 5.3 and Appendix O Section 4.2, Table 1-1, Section H.7.2, and Table 4-2. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the final EA to limit drilling of sites SPF-014, SPF-017, and SPF-019 from May 3 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to high sheep lambing.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(a)(3) identifies short-term (2 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorical excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. Project’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

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The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 4.3 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1750.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
John | Design | 61 | 2 | Outside of Scope | Mining | 2. This mine will have a disastrous effect on the water table. For all who use these waters for their drinking water. The mine produces no problems, there will be safe drinking water, but they are long gone or go out of business when the ponies, when the dams burst, when we are at an environmental breakpoint. Now the public has to foot the bill for containment, treatment and mitigation. | Mining activity is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2022. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2020 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for formal review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO confirming our recommendation. See Sections 4.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Wendy | Luedde | 62 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | 2. The impacts to wildlife will have on the environment is irreversible and unavoidable. | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Wendy | Luedde | 62 | 3 | Regulatory Processes | Forest Plan Revision | 3. The Forest Service proposal to amend a Plan that is already 16 years past its last amendment (2005) is unacceptable and negligent. More than a decade of change on the Black Hills National Forest through fps, pine bark beetle infestation, and unsustainable logging practices would go ignored in the proposed "amendment" to allow mineral exploration. | The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2022. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2020 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Wendy | Luedde | 62 | 4 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | 2. No mining company has ever been held to be the guardian of our nation's forests. They need to meet this responsibility by rejecting this whole proposal. Failure to do so will result in public outcry, probable congressional intervention and ongoing lawsuits. DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME. | Comment noted. This is outside of the scope of the EA.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Jeffrey | Sugrue | 63 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | This is a violation of forest code, state law, and federal regulations. More serious concerns about the F3 Gold Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project and the need for an Environmental Assessment to support a No Action ruling or at minimum a full Environmental Impact Statement for the following reasons; | Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including birds, fish, and fish) are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. An express route is located approximately 0.3 miles southeast of the Project area. USFWS established protection buffers for these species are Boreal Outside of the Project area. F3 would adhere to Forest Plan Standard 3209 Protect known raptor nests, as mentioned in Section 6.2.10 of Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
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Jeffrey | Sugrue | 63 | 2 | Other | Water Quality/Water Supply | 2. The exploration/drift area is located in watersheds that drain into Rapid Creek and the Pactola Reservoir (Jenny Gulch, Gemma Gulch, Summit Gulch). It is evident that exploration drilling could impact the surface and ground water quality of local private water wells, and also potentially contaminate the Pactola Reservoir, a major water source for Rapid City and Ellsworth AFB. | Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Geology, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
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Jeffrey | Sugrue | 63 | 3 | Other | Access & Transportation | 2. Silver City Road is a narrow two-lane asphalt highway with three grades and countless sharp curves. This highway has a thin asphalt layer that is old and is only sustained to meet current traffic vehicle traffic to Silver City and access to upper Pactola Reservoir and Rapid Creek. There are areas along this road with subsidence due to current vehicle traffic. Any additional heavy vehicle traffic by F3 Gold drilling apparatus could cause significant damage to the highway or be the source of an accident due to a road slide at one of the subsidence areas. | Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also describes F3's responsibility for ensuring any unexpected roadway damage, as well as reclamation requirements.

**Organization** | **First Name** | **Last Name** | **Additional Signature** | **Letter Number** | **Comment Number** | **Action** | **Resource** | **Comment** | **Response**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Jeffrey | Sugrue | 63 | 4 | Other | Natural Areas & Wildlife | 2. There are also potential nesting sites in the vicinity of the drilling area. There are also Bald Eagles, numerous owl species, and at least one goshawk nesting site nearby this area. Drilling activity could potentially disrupt raptor nesting and the survival of hatchlings. | Potential effects of project alternatives on wildlife including bald eagles, owls, and goshawks and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. An express route is located approximately 0.3 miles southeast of the Project area. USFWS established protection buffers for these species are Boreal Outside of the Project area. F3 would adhere to Forest Plan Standard 3209 Protect known raptor nests, as mentioned in Section 6.2.10 of Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Action Number</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and Jodi</td>
<td>Sugra</td>
<td>63 5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Potential water contamination of Paradise Reservoir could impact the aquatic environment and fish populations. This could have secondary impacts on wildlife, such as the prey that feed on these fish.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and Jodi</td>
<td>Sugra</td>
<td>63 6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Wildlife Health and Safety</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Wildlife Health and Safety</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Emergency response to any injury/kill incident would be accomplished by the Silver City WSD. This is a small volunteer fire department that may not have the capacity to adequately provide timely fire fighting treatment in the event of an injury/kill incident.</td>
<td>Action to the Reserve Hospital and emergency medical facilities via the existing roadways is described in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Public Health and Safety Technical Report, Section 2.2.6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and Jodi</td>
<td>Sugra</td>
<td>63 7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Mines &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Mines &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Draft Acess, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also describes FJ's responsibility for requiring any unscheduled roadway damage, as well as roadwork requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and Jodi</td>
<td>Sugra</td>
<td>64 8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>In the 2013-2014 mining season, the Board of Minerals and Natural Resources, a state agency designated by the Governor to regulate mining conditions, issued a mining permit that the developer now considers a key to the project’s success.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment/Final EIS streamlined NEPA format and contains technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and Jodi</td>
<td>Sugra</td>
<td>64 9</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>The draft environmental assessment is inadequate. It does not critically assess the impact to the surface and ground water quality and water supplies. It does not appear to assess the potential impact to nesting raptors species in the area. It does not recognize the impact to maintenance and safe trafficability of Silver City Road.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment/Final EIS streamlined NEPA format and contains technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeffrey and Jodi</td>
<td>Sugra</td>
<td>64 10</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs RS</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs RS</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Due to the above potential impacts, I request No Action (EA). If this is not supportable, I urge you to require the completion of a full-scale NEPA prior to beginning exploratory drilling. The fragile nature of our environment and the potential damage to water quality demands this level of investigation to ensure there will not be irreversible damage caused by the drilling.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 201, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 201 (b)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FJ's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Managan</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Am not opposed to the exploration project itself. I am opposed to the possible mining in that area if gold is found. I don't think this project is a good fit in a national forest with their mission being &quot;to sustain the health and diversity, etc for present and future generations&quot;. The Black Hills does not have a good reputation for responsibly mining gold and has contaminated precious drinking water which is becoming more and more an endangered element on our planet Earth.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 201, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 201 (b)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FJ's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Ashley</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Am against the mining proposal. Black Hills Proposal runs a ranger at a local hotel, can tell you from first hand good knowledge such destruction of our black hills natural beauty would utterly effect one of our largest forms of revenue: Tourism. We make plenty of money already for our area. I have seen the number of people from out of state coming to visit and spend money. We do not need this new source of revenue.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 201, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 201 (b)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FJ's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Support alternation A. There is no action alternative.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
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<td>Additional Signature</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
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<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Bay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>personally oppose the proposal to allow exploratory drilling for gold in the Rapid Creek Watershed. I support the no action alternative, and believe a full EA needs to be completed at minimum. Given the sensitive nature of Rapid Creek to pollution and the huge economic benefit the pristine watershed brings to South Dakota mining and mining exploration should not be allowed in this area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristi Villafuerte</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>AEA vs ES</td>
<td>comment period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristi Villafuerte</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>Support the &quot;no action&quot; alternative. Leave the Black Hills alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristi Villafuerte</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>AEA vs ES</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>An infill environmental impact statement is needed to assess the risk of drilling activities and their potential impacts on our water, forest, wildlife, and recreation. The assessment they have done is insufficient, relies too heavily on promises from the company proposing the drilling, and does not provide adequate time for comment. Just 30 days on activity that poses a risk of decades of harm.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Branch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>AEA vs ES</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>This is all about greed and money and not about the welfare of the Black Hills and the people who cherish them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Green</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>AEA vs ES</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>Do not waste drilling in the area of Hwy 150 &amp; Hwy 12, both a cabin owners there, and feel that to allow drilling would change the environment and landscape.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandy Hirt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>AEA vs ES</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>The surrounding area is so severely impacted I strongly support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>William and Frances Hirsch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>AEA vs ES</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>We are writing to express our strong opposition to the 3S Gold’s Jenny Creek Project. We support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Response:

- Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.
- Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(b)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical exploration and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FV's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FV's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS. There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments.

Comments provided in this document are not final and will be incorporated into the Final Draft EIS, if issued.

- Comment noted. Potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Additional Signature</th>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>A in SE</td>
<td>Believe the draft Environmental Assessment is vague and incomplete and that an Environmental Impact Statement should be done. This is a sensitive environmental area and all steps must be done to insure that it is protected.</td>
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<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 210.4, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 210 (a)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of four-lane standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair or removal for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FV’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FV’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<td>William</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Government to Consultation (tribal representation)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Believe that adequate consultation with the Native American Tribes has not been done to ensure proper protection of their cultural resources in this area.</td>
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<td>For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2001) and THPO (July 2, 2001) for review and comment. A letter dated September 28, 2001, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendations. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Activities &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td></td>
<td>We are familiar with the area and are strongly concerned about the impact this proposed have on raptor nesting and livestock migration and habitation of which could be negatively impacted.</td>
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<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2.1: &quot;If diving activities in the vicinity of some loaded oilfield would be restricted due to the risk of doing this during the hunting season would be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Range.” Also see Sections 3.6a and Appendix D Section 4.2, Table 4.1, Section 4.2.3, and Table 4.3. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit diving of oilfield SPC-6G2-C, SPC-157, and SPC-959 from May 1, to June 15 to further minimize potential impacts to birds during breeding season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>A in SE</td>
<td>Believe the Forest Service must analyze all potential impacts of the project which has not been done. This project could negatively impact the water supply of Eagle City.</td>
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<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td>Again we strongly oppose this project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>There is a good track record of town here and that part of the reason for the backlash. What if the water is contaminated? What is your plan then. What is it such a small amount it has not noticed for 10 years and people have health issues from bad water, cannot tell problems, you name it!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential effects of all project activities on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Sediment, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Streams &amp; Transportation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not like the idea of truck and equipment driving by, ribbons and destroying our cables property.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix H. Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also identifies FV’s responsibility for repairing any unspecified roadway damage, as well as relocation requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed mine/mine and just a exploration company will indeed ruin everything is there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Public Agency Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td>Few have been several opportunities for public engagement throughout the time NEPA process, as described in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Public Involvement Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Potential Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td>If 10% is required to submit a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project. The Forest Service will calculate the bond. The bond amount will be based on the actual cost to the Forest Service for hiring a contractor to conduct the work. The Forest has no limitations on what amount the can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>Swain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Curedent Period</td>
<td></td>
<td>There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 210 regulations below that discuss exclusions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 210.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments – (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greg Sears 73 8 Regulatory Process A: vs ES Request that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be drafted. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 201A, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 201A(b)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their residential support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. If 3E’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EIS to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (36 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Greg Sears 73 9 Regulatory Process A: Content Request that the Forest Service analyze all impacts of the project. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Greg Sears 73 10 Regulatory Process Alternatives Analysis Request that the Forest Service include and analyze all reasonable alternatives to the project plan. EPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR § 1508.1(1) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and environmentally feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

Greg Sears 73 11 Regulatory Process A: Content The draft Environmental Assessment is vague and incomplete. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Greg Sears 73 12 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement) Standard Tribal Consultation and protection of cultural resources are incorporated for the Draft EA, an interstate heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and HPPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting on our recommendation. See Sections 3 & 5.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Forest Service 1531-002 Tribal Consultation Coordination and Consultation.

Greg Sears 73 13 Other Statement of Project Opinion Support the "no action" alternative. Comment noted: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C - Water, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report. Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Local Resident 74 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Oppose allowing any company to do exploratory drilling for gold in any or all of anywhere near Pactola Reservoir. While exploring for gold is not permitting gold mining there is no other purpose for it but to set up mines near our water supply should gold be found. So why allow exploration for something that is a threat to Pactola? I vote for the "no action" alternative on this permit request.

Comment noted: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C - Water, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report. Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Charles Good 75 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I don’t understand how this mining request can even be entertained considering they are proposing its operation in the area that provide our entire rapid city area with their water.

Comment noted: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C - Water, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report. Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

Charles Good 75 2 Regulatory Process Public Involvement/Engagement This is completely unacceptable. As a stake holder in this area it does seem if it is possible to meet with the forest service about this further to discuss.

There have been several opportunities for public engagement throughout the USFS NEPA process, as described in the Draft EA, Appendix G - Public Involvement/Engagement.

Jake Miller 76 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I’ve known about this F3 gold mine proposal upstream of Pactola lake and the facts that you guys want to just let them mine is an embarrassment to the US forest service. You guys are a joke you don’t do a damn thing for the black hills nothing but a bunch of sell outs.

Comment noted.

Ella Evans 77 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I have lived right above this area for over 26 years. I am definitely not on this idea of mining near South Dakota resident.

Comment noted.

Local Resident 78 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I have been living in the Black Hills since I was 2 year old. (entry 489, Silver City and the waterwheel leading into Pactola Reservoir). I have special place in my heart and love the land. The last thing we need is exploratory drilling by a mining company based in Minnesota. Please say NO to the entry Gulch gold exploration project and leave the Black Hills Natural forest to enrich the lives of South Dakotans and the wildlife that call them home.

Comment noted: Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Mike Robert 79 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Wish to convey my opposition to any exploratory drilling in entry Gulch and Silver City.

Comment noted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justin Senator</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs ES</td>
<td>Upon reviewing the Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed gold exploration project by T3 Gold in the Mystic Ranger District it is apparent that a full EIS is the correct course of action for this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Senator</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Forest Plan Revision</td>
<td>As an avid user of the forest for recreation including hiking, fishing, hunting, and paddling I am a strong stakeholder in this project. The ES project is not compatible with the 64 year old Forest Plan that was published in 1967 which actually prohibits this exploration project. The proposal to amend the plan and allow this exploration without a current Forest Plan is negligent and should not be allowed to proceed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Senator</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Waters &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>The lack of tribal consultation is deeply concerning as well as the area’s historical usage and there are many medicinal/plant species in the riparian area. For the Draft EA, an extensive biogeographic inventory of all areas to be identified was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and TMDP (April 1, 2021) offices for review and comments. A letter dated September 30, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Fischer</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Am writing to express my opposition to the proposed digging of exploratory holes in the area near Ingham County. The potential environmental impact to Riparian Creek watershed and Pastaica Reservoir is too high a risk. As a nearby resident who depends on these water sources, I must object to this proposal. It is simply not been studied sufficiently to be deemed safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Lalake</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td>It has come to my attention that there is a permit being requested for exploratory drilling in the Jenny’s Gulch ski area in the County. Although I am not well opposed to using natural resources, such as responsible forestry, and mining in areas of little environmental and recreation impact, I am highly opposed to activities that hinder recreation, clean water, and responsible conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcus Lalake</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Natural Area</td>
<td>Not that 30 days is inadequate to properly complete this proposal. More than half the proposed mountain biking trails that would benefit the community that have had more opposition than this static move, and have been subject to extensive environmental impact studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
please do not grant this drilling project. The natural beauty of this area is precious, and my wife and I take several trips to this area every year from Tea SD. We love hiking, fishing, and would love to explore kayaking this area.

We
36 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion 1. As a South Dakota/17% supporter I've a valuable south green project and support this "No Action" alternative.

comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the DRAFT EA, Appendix E - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3.

36 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion 1. A full environmental impact statement is needed to assess the risk of drilling activity to our water, our forest, wildlife, and recreation. The assessment done is insufficient, risks too heavy on promises from the company proposing the drilling, and does not provide adequate time for comment. 30 days is far too short a comment period for an activity that poses a risk of decades of harm.

regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 1504, a proposed action may be established from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action is within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 200(b)(3) identifies short term (1 year or less), mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and those incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach core holes and other data-collection features. It's a proposed action that fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated F3's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.25 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (c) Opportunity to comment. (2) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2018. The anticipated date for completion is 2020. until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of MA 62 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

For the Draft EA, an extensive historical resource inventory of all areas to be impacted was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and TRPO (June 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurrence with our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of 36 CFR 218. Draft EA is consultation ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1700-002 Tribal Consultation Coordination and Consultation.

For the Draft EA, an extensive historical resource inventory of all areas to be impacted was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and TRPO (June 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurrence with our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of 36 CFR 218. Draft EA is consultation ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1700-002 Tribal Consultation Coordination and Consultation.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2018. The anticipated date for completion is 2020. until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of MA 62 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2018. The anticipated date for completion is 2020. until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of MA 62 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

Copyright noted. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.

Key
66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please, fil, on the mining permits.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.

66 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted.
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silver City</td>
<td>Louisa</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This area is in an area that is important to me as someone who enjoys the quiet and the natural beauty of this splendid land as an angler and outdoors woman. So much of the Black Hills is already polluted with tourism and areas where people disrupt the land, water and wildlife. Don’t let this area become another area that gets ruined too, especially for the sake of gold mining. This area is incredible, so beautiful and special; why ruin this treasure for the sake of more earth rape and money??? Please consider the importance and value of the land and water over the destruction and greed of a mine like this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Audra</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The whole Black Hills project!!! Aren’t people doing this to ruin the Black Hills??!! To rape its ground and continue to let Big Business make $$$? The Black Hills has always been a special place in South Dakota to go to. I have been going there since I was a child. My husband and I stayed at Silver City before the Pandemic for our 40th anniversary too! Beautiful area. Leave it alone! Along with the rest of the Hills! We have also considered living out there when we retire and we keep marking off places to go because you have already ruined it with mining or logging or leaving the traffic of big trucks zooming by places like Windia, (that is not quiet anymore). Do not let this happen. “NO ACTION”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>Cuskey</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please refer to all allowing gold exploration to occur. This is not far to wildlife... there is so little left for their use now! I would protect this area for me and the lives of my self, partner, and family as we use this area for hiking, fishing, and exploring also.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Kolbeck</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Support the No Action Alternative to the Jenny Gold Gold Mining Project. Pocahontas and the Rapid Creek Watershed are too important to all of this kind of activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Kolbeck</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regulatory Concerns</td>
<td>Also require you extend the comment period for public comments. This is an inappropriately short amount of time for enough people to have time to evaluate the options and comment on such a significant action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peg</td>
<td>Parnells</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We are writing in opposition to the Jenny Gold gold mining project. This is irresponsible and negligent. We must protect our water and all natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>Hook</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please stop this project, accidents will happen not in Rapid City and the surrounding area depend on this water and no amount of gold will replace that. Stop drilling in the Black Hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Lefrancois-Stack</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>As an outdoor enthusiast and Black Hills resident, myself and my three sons use Pocahontas Reservoir and Jenny Cynx for kayaking, hiking, swimming, and playing in the Hills. We are devastated to hear that, with such short notice, this area of our beautiful Black Hills could be taken from us. We need clean water in Rapid City. We need to keep the Black Hills for generations to come.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The idea of gold exploration in the Black Hills is a travesty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Quantity</td>
<td>Following the water is a given if this project goes forward.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Further concern is the tax oversight and zoning decisions by forestry management that undermines the Number One in goals for creating and protecting national parks and forests. The Number One Goal is protecting the beauty of the other species we share this planet with: animals, birds, plants and minerals.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristen</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please vote no on any gold exploration.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibby</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Rapid Creek needs protection from mining and other environmental hazards.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gregg</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Oppose the gold exploration project near Jenny Gulch. There is minimal benefit only to those wanting to exploit the resource with huge risks to the downstream ecosystems that so many people benefit from. I have two properties in the black hills that I want my children to be able to enjoy in the future. Please say no to further dangerous gold exploration in the black hills.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signatures</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BillionAir Force Base</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>Incomplete analysis within the draft EA results in no estimate of the maximum cuttings volume as either a portion of the disturbed area or for the proposed disposal. Reclamation plans (para 3.2.1) propose to regrade the drilling pads to pre-project contours and return trails to pre-existing conditions. The cuttings were roughly estimated by us to be over 12 cubic yards per site. The reclamation, as described (Appendix A, Reclamation Plan, Drill Plans and Laydowns Reclamation), doesn’t mention cuttings as part of the grading plan. Under the Operations section, following Drill Plans and Laydowns Reclamation, cuttings and fines are just going to be disposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BillionAir Force Base</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Public Health and Safety</td>
<td>Analysis within the draft EA inadequately addresses mitigation for the release of sulfide and metal bearing deposits (para 2.3.2.2) due to disposal of cuttings. Paragraph 3.7.2.2 describes the problem exactly as “extracted mineralized cuttings would release acidity and/or metals to runoff or infiltration water.” The EA, including Table 2-3, lists only site disposal for drill cuttings and fines. In addition, paragraph 2.2.1 and Table 2-1 completely ignore the disposal of drilling wastewater an industrial effluent which also must be characterized and classified for proper disposal. Clean up actions at similar sites, such as GHI Edge mine, left South Dakota and US EPA with a tremendous and ongoing responsibility for mine waste cleanup and treatment of acidic drainages after closure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BillionAir Force Base</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>On-site burial with native cover as proposed (Appendix A, Reclamation Plan, Operations) is not a feasible or effective water quality protection measure. Burial should required pre‐permitting, and water quality monitoring after long term site monitoring. The types and amounts of soil available on location would be unsuitable for use in cover. A feasible and effective measure would be to re‐use the wastes in a burial site that would prevent exposure as described in paragraph 3.7.3.2. As wastes are generated, the excavator would provide a measurable compliance objective, reduce sizing of on‐site protective features, reduce reclamation efforts and, ultimately, minimize the migration of pollutants to water resources. Disposal of cuttings needs to be an operational case, not a reclamation cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BillionAir Force Base</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>The Reclamation Plan should provide clear expectations for the application of reclaimed site. The ambiguity of the language used in the Reclamation Plan “as directed by the USFS and State of South Dakota,” “if necessary,” “regular basis,” not “open and regular communication with the State of South Dakota” does not meet acceptable performance standards. These changes reverse to one cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BillionAir Force Base</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>Financial Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BillionAir Force Base</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Guyer</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The draft EA fails the support to make the claim of para 3.7.3.1. “Project activities are not anticipated to affect surface waters.” As cited in paragraph 3.7.3.1, the project is proposed within the Pamlico basin, a municipal watershed already “functioning at risk,” with direct influence from the project area to the nearest 0.5 miles south. The activities read implement rigorous measures, throughout the entire project, to protect storm water runoff, surface waters and drinking water sources from acidic drainages, transport of metals and acidification. There are good practices mentioned in the draft EA, Facility and Reclamation Plan, however, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) is needed to prescribe measures for the site operator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Response

The average drill hole depth across the proposed exploratory drilling program is approximately 1,000 feet, approximately 1.5 to 2 cubic yards of cuttings would be expected per hole depending on depth. Cutoffs management is addressed in Section 2.2.1 of the EA. Spread drill cutting depth would be dependent on hole depth with most sites resulting in a spread drill cuttings depth of 0.5 inches; however, deeper sites (up to 6000 feet deep) may result in up to approximately 1.5 inches of drill cuttings spread across the drill pad. Although depths up to 6000 feet would be authorized, very few holes are planned to extend to this depth; most holes would be drilled to a depth of approximately 1,000 feet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Jenks</td>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The extent of disturbance described (Para 1.4, 1.9, 2.6 &amp; 3.6 areas) is underestimated at least 20 percent, apparently having been modeled using an eight-foot wide trail over the routes of access. The width of a typical one-ton dray truck is eight feet. The wheeltrack might be less than eight feet, but the vehicle body and mirror could not pass wide vegetation and boulders—removal of which will increase the earth disturbance. What are the widths of the water truck, the 10,000 gallon water storage tanks and the equipment needed to move them? Paragraph 3.2-6 said 12-foot wide trails; the discontinuity needs resolution and extent revised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Jenks</td>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Colonel Brady Vara</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Air &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>It would be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>Jean</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The extent of disturbance generally requires coverage and regulation by a state or EPA Surface Water Discharge permit. The draft EA does not mention what type of permit will be needed to regulate the operations. What discharge coverage will be sought to gain approval for and regulate the discharge of oil cutting fluids, aqueous/biologic of cuttings, and operation/erosion of the earth disturbance? Coverage under an individual Industrial Storm Water Permit might be most appropriate. Monitoring and sampling an discharge points should be implemented for the purpose of proving the effectiveness of protective measures and the assertion of para 3.7.3.1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Land use proposed for the Black Hills is not in the interest of the residents of the Black Hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid City</td>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The leading photograph is not pristine but rather modified take near Mt. Blackmore. Fails are fast and that is not Blackmore. You should know what photos are about Blackmore, which is lovely and wonderful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>David</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>In and near stars and lover of Prettywildside, Riding Creek and many surrounding areas, I completely oppose this project and believe it should be terminated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Prettywildside is beloved for its beauty, for the recreational activities it makes possible, for wildlife it supports, and for the water it provides to area residents. It is no place for drilling. Please do not permit this. You can’t be the “same” now into the past”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Support “NO” on this drilling expansion project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>Require an extension for public comment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Water and the pristine Black Hills/Paonia area are too valuable to let its be ruined with, it is NOT ok, to damage our resources for oil exploration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The purpose of the Black Hills/Paonia Project is to make a lot of money, while potentially destroying, certainly harming Rapid City’s water supply. The pristine forest and wildlife in this rather large area of the Black Hills is invaluable PLEASE DENY THIS PERMIT! So that future generations can reap the benefits that I have had the privilege to experience by living and playing in the beautiful Black Hills in my life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response**

A SWPPP would be prepared as required by project permitting.
The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FID's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no significant impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed project may result in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USDA internal NEPA format and contains several technical appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendices B - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment and Ecological Technical Report.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2011) and THPO (July 2, 2011) for review and comments. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. See sections 3A and 3B of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA will allow us to send the USDA Department Regulations 1530.00-302 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation and Recreational Technical Report - Section 3.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment and Ecological Technical Report.

The presence of a significant amount of mining-related development may change the potential effects of the project. The relationships between the mining-related activities and the forest-related activities will be discussed in the Draft EA. The Draft EA will include all the necessary documents to assess the potential effects of the project.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no significant impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed project may result in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

The purpose of the proposal is to assess the potential effects of the mining activities proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA reviews.

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The purpose of the proposal is to assess the potential effects of the mining activities proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA reviews.
Dr. Double 112 2 Regulatory Process 2 EA Content The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Dr. D. and Cellia 113 1 Other Regulatory Process 1 Statement of Project Opinion Comment Period We support the "No Action" alternative for the project. There is only responsible to extend the public comment period. We retired to the black hills in order to enjoy the out of doors—the beauty of the landscape and the absence of wildlife. I am not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.

Jenna Akkott 114 1 Outside of Scope 1 Mining Would not lose the place called home through for some people to get gold. It went through; it would destroy the beautiful creek and national wildlife breeding grounds. Keep the hills clean and the gold industry out.

Dr. Don 115 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion EA Content It is not clear how you would consider supporting not on the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Project. The benefits of going forward with this project are obvious for the expense of the money. The potential for damaging our drinking water appears too high. The ecological benefits appear outweighing in areas where this has happened and so much of our economy thrives on the hills natural beauty. Please consider supporting us.

Dr. Christie 116 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Support the "No Action" alternative.

Dr. D. 117 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion EA Content Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix G - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Jean Redland 118 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Strongly support the "No action" alternative. Please do not open up the possibility of mining in the Jenny Gulch and Silver City area. Let's not spoil our own nest.

Richard Waters 119 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix G - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix G - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. A Finding shall determine the project.

Richard Waters 119 2 Regulatory Process 2 EA Content An Environmental Impact Statement must be completed. The Forest Service needs to analyze all impacts of the project.

Richard Waters 119 3 Regulatory Process 2 Public and Agency Engagement Keep me in and all concerned taxpayers informed on these issues along with any decision on this FJ Gold Project.

Beth Schneider 120 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Comment Period Please do not allow this exploration to will destroy the habitat in the area. It will also likely (probably) pollute the water supply for anyone along road crews through a few bucks profit for a small percentage of people will have lasting damage for many more. Please, do not allow this to happen.

Ann Armat 121 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion EA Content We implore you to delete the Jenny Gulch alternative to the Jenny Gulch Exploration Mining Project.

Charles Christie 122 1 Outside of Scope 1 Mining Not greatly concerned about mining and the impact that will have in the water bodies and environment.

Charles Christie 122 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion Supported FJ Jenny Gulch gold project and support the "No-action" alternative.

Anne Detmers 121 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion "No action" alternative. This is an important area for hiking, taking, water sports and tourism. This project would spoil all of this in addition to those who live in the immediate area.

Patrick and Anna laden 122 1 Other Regulatory Process 2 Statement of Project Opinion Comment Period We support the "No Action" alternative for the project. There is only responsible to extend the public comment period. We retired to the black hills in order to enjoy the out of doors—the beauty of the landscape and the absence of wildlife. We'd like to see a streamlining of the NEPA process.

Kevin 123 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion EA Content An Environmental Impact Statement must be completed. The Forest Service needs to analyze all impacts of the project.

Patrick and Anna laden 124 1 Other Regulatory Process 2 Statement of Project Opinion Comment Period We support the "No Action" alternative for the project. There is only responsible to extend the public comment period. We retired to the black hills in order to enjoy the out of doors—the beauty of the landscape and the absence of wildlife. We'd like to see a streamlining of the NEPA process.

Patrick and Anna laden 125 1 Other Regulatory Process 2 Statement of Project Opinion Comment Period We support the "No Action" alternative for the project. There is only responsible to extend the public comment period. We retired to the black hills in order to enjoy the out of doors—the beauty of the landscape and the absence of wildlife. We'd like to see a streamlining of the NEPA process.

Patrick and Anna laden 126 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Support the "No Action" alternative.

Patrick and Anna laden 127 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion EA Content An Environmental Impact Statement must be completed. The Forest Service needs to analyze all impacts of the project.

Patrick and Anna laden 128 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion EA Content An Environmental Impact Statement must be completed. The Forest Service needs to analyze all impacts of the project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Christie</td>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Forest Plan Revisions</td>
<td>The proposed to amend a plan that is already 30 years past its last amendment (2005) is unacceptable and negligent. More than a decade of change on the Black Hills National Forest through fire, mine backlevel infestation, and unsustainable logging practices would be ignored in the proposed &quot;amendment” to allow mineral exploration.</td>
<td>The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2021. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of MA-82 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please do not allow any mining around or close to any water source! Please do not allow this horrific, water using, water polluting, destructive industry into the hills anymore! That industry has done enough damage, please stop them.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotts</td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>On what's right and stop this crap now before it's too late and the damage is done.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>On writing in support of the No Action Alternative.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>To such, any resulting contamination from this activity threatens to impact the quality of the water in Rapid City and much of the city’s water comes from Pactola Reservoir.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Additionally, the recreation and fishing activities provided by the lake are being negatively impacted by mining activity in the watershed.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation, Technical Report - Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries, Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>The National Forest is supposed to be a multi-use environment. This area is used for multiple recreation such as hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and related activities. It is also a favorite for hunters for a number of wild game species such as deer, elk, turkey, and mountain lion, to name a few. The traffic, general activity, and the disturbance of the forest to accommodate drilling will negatively impact all of these activities.</td>
<td>Potential project effects on recreation are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation, Technical Report, Section 3.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Anger, the traffic, general activity, noise, and forest disturbance would cause the sheep to look for new areas to inhabit, further stressing the population and lowering the number of lambs born yearly.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries, Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2.1 - &quot;Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnydale Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the big horn sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFWS Wildlife and District Rangers.&quot; Also see Section 5.5 and Appendix D - Section 9.2, Table 9-1, Section 9.3, and Table 9-2. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the final EA to drilling of sites SPC-016, SPC-017, and SPC-019 (May 1 to June 15) to further minimize potential effects to big horn sheep lambing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Access &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>The road is currently built to handle the heavy truck and other traffic. The drilling activity would entail the use of these homes would be impacted. The road would have to be reconstructed for the drilling and/or mining activity which also results in more unnecessary inconvenience for these residents.</td>
<td>Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also describes FWP's responsibility for repairing any unexpected roadway damage, as well as restoration requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicki</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Please do not allow this permit to go through.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred &amp; Vicki</td>
<td>Dakeen</td>
<td></td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>We are writing again to ask that a No Action ruling is given to 1-2 Gold for their exploration activities near Silver City.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signature</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Comment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| (Redacted)   | Schlief    | 128       | 2                    | Regulatory Process | A vs ES | EA Content | As we stated in prior, a full Environmental Impact statement should be done if no Action is not permissible. For the following reasons: The Draft Environmental Assessment is not thorough enough. This would directly impact Osprey, Dachs and Goshawks. I did not even see Osprey listed on the EA. This does not directly impact Elk and Deer. This would directly impact Big horn Sheep. Not just on Sunday but German as well. This could impact private wells in and around Silver City. This could impact aquifers in the areas included in the drilling. This could impact water in Rapid Creek and Lake Pahto which provide water for surrounding residents. Silver City road has many hills and curves that are already dangerous, adding heavy traffic will only make it worse. The road is in poor shape now. It will be difficult for the local Volunteer Fire Department to respond to additional calls for helping existing or drilling activities. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USGS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources (including wildlife, water resources, and public health and safety) discussed in the EA. Noisy road is located approximately 0.3 miles southeast of the Project area. USGS established protection buffers for this species are likewise outside of the Project area. It would adhere to Forest Plan Standard 2004. Protect known raptor roosts, as mentioned in Section 6.2.30 of Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Additional tribal site restrictions have been added to Alternative C to the Facia 1b to first drilling of site: SYC-016, SYC-017, and SYC-019 from May 16 to June 15 to further minimize potential impacts to bigger sheep/lambing.
| (Redacted)   | Schlief    | 128       | 3                    | Statement of Project Opinion | No to ES! | EA Content | We still have a real concern of the Minneapolis company that wants to explore Gold mining a Minneapolis Company to do the Environmental Assessment. Comment noted. The US Forest Service vetoed and approved the NPA contractor for this project based on a review of qualifications. |
| Mary Kay     | Buxton     | 120       | 1                    | Statement of Project Opinion | No! | EA Content | Please do not even consider this project to permit gold exploration in the Jensen Ranch area! This is my favorite go to place for hiking, biking, fishing and finding secrets. The current Forest Management Plan dictates in 1997 prohibits drilling and this is for good reason!!! Whenever drinking water is involved mining and drilling should be avoided. You cannot put a price on the value of water. You cannot put a price on the beauty of this area either. I have been going there to boven and recharge my soul and spirit for 15 years. Please use the "No Action Alternative"! Comment noted. Potential effects of all project activities on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix F - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Reports, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3. |
| (Redacted)   | Ireland    | 120       | 1                    | Outside of Scope | Mining | EA Content | The proposed exploration of surface holes is for the purpose of gold mining in a ravine. First, it is environmentally nonsensical. As one who makes a living guiding outdoor enthusiasts to the Black Hills, I view how much our natural beauty and wilderness make many of us jobs and brings in much revenue. This ravine stream is one that can last for generations if it is protected and used. Gold mining (previous) ruins the natural water streams come too the sea. Secondly the proposal has the real potential of creating an environmental disaster for all life (including human habitation) downstream from this critical waterbody. Former and current mining operations have been fraught with ecological mishaps. And lastly, the project will benefit only the smallest percentage of people living in this area. Most of the proceeds of gold mining do not stay with the inhabitants of the area. |
| (Redacted)   | Ireland    | 130 | 2                    | Statement of Project Opinion | No! | EA Content | Please refuse the permit for the 13 Jensen Back Gold Exploration Project. Comment noted. |
| (Redacted)   | Unenterprise | 131 | 1                    | Statement of Project Opinion | No to ES! | EA Content | Comment noted. |
| (Redacted)   | Leon       | 141       | 1                    | Statement of Project Opinion | No! | EA Content | Please do not allow any gold company to have access to the Black Hills. |
| (Redacted)   | Carr       | 141       | 1                    | Statement of Project Opinion | Support Not Action for the Idaho Hills gold project | EA Content | Comment noted. |
| (Redacted)   | Carr       | 182       | 2                    | Regulatory Process | 210 | EA Content | Support the comment! |
| (Redacted)   | McElroy    | 151       | 1                    | Statement of Project Opinion | Support Not Action for the Idaho Hills gold project | EA Content | Comment noted. |

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several specified categories. 36 CFR part 220(b)(3) identifies short-term (1-3 years) and/or small, energy-related, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FFE’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated FFE’s proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed project action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signatories</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Why would we want to destroy or endanger the natural beauty of the black hills for corporate profit?Protect our water; Destroy our wildlife? Deny the permit for the wild mining company Protect our resources!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Gomez</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>AEA Content</td>
<td>If my opinion, the draft environmental assessment does not address the issue that is raised by concerned individuals in open houses and action comments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Munson</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>127 1 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining found the hill is higher (as you know, a superb Hill), the conclusion that peer-reviewed science doesn't support the notion that gold can be located and extended safety in such a sensitive area as that watershed. The geologic formations are not disorder, and, therefore, risks are high for contamination of Blackhawk Area fluorine's water, and for the City of Rapid City as well. To sacrifice a pristine water supply that our entire area deploys upon for the unknown future (perpetually if we play cards right), in exchange for a limited and finite gold extraction scheme would, in my view, be foolishly and shortsighted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Response

Comment noted. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

As noted in Section 3.3 of the Draft EA, some resources were not identified as issues based on project scoping and review of the proposed project in the context of the environmental setting. As such, these resources are not discussed further in the Draft EA. As also noted in Section 3.1 of the Draft EA, a public health and safety assessment was not originally considered, but was added to the issue summary based on scoping comments.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(b)(3)(b) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorization geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) or the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Potential effects of all indirect alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6.

The exploration drilling area is located in the large watershed that drains into Rapid Creek and the Pactola Reservoir. Exploratory drilling could impact the surface and ground water quality of local private water wells, and also potentially contaminate Pactola Reservoir.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6.

The U.S. decides to proceed then I urge you to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement prior to any decision that would allow exploratory drilling.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6.

The U.S. decides to proceed then I urge you to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement prior to any decision that would allow exploratory drilling.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(b)(3)(b) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorization geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated F3’s proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.3). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 218, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 218(a)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their

Comment text continued.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report, Section 4.

Amending is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources (including tourism) are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3.

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments.

Additional provisions in the Proposed Project and Alternatives State that the 36 CFR 218.25 Comments on proposed projects and actions. (2) Opportunity to comment. (3) Time period for submission of comments— (i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice.

The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report, Section 4.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action Process</th>
<th>Action Type</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice Can Deussan</td>
<td>Alice Can Deussan</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>X vs ES</td>
<td>It is my understanding that there has not been a full environmental impact statement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220 (40CFR) identifies short term (3 year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and the incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. EIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Can Deussan</td>
<td>Alice Can Deussan</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statements of Project Scope</td>
<td>Strongly oppose this project and support the “no action” alternative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Pengra</td>
<td>Bruce Pengra</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>220.6(e)(8)</td>
<td>If not otherwise, the activities are prohibited by the current Forest Management Plan and would require that the plan which is in place be changed to accommodate the company which wants to do the exploration. Why has a Forest Management Plan and all the process that goes with it if it takes to violate that plan is for some company to ask that it be changed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Forest Service’s regulations 220.6(e)(8) of October 2008. The anticipated date for completion is 2022. Until revised is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2005 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of M-8.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Pengra</td>
<td>Bruce Pengra</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Public Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Not to mention that there has been limited publicity and very inadequate time for the public to review the Draft Environmental Assessment and voice their concerns about this project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There have been several opportunities for public participation throughout the USFS NEPA process, as described in the Draft EA, Appendix G - Public Involvement Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Osborne</td>
<td>Mary Osborne</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Scope</td>
<td>Opposed to fill Gold's Iron Gulch project, specifically because of water contamination.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment stated. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 1 - Site, Geology, and Hydrology: Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Osborne</td>
<td>Mary Osborne</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>X vs ES</td>
<td>Want to see an Environmental Impact Statement for the Gulch project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220 (40CFR) identifies short term (3 year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and the incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. EIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Holack</td>
<td>David Holack</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Scope</td>
<td>Opposed primarily because hard-rock mineral mining and clean water do not go together.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Site, Geology, and Hydrology: Technical Report, Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Holack</td>
<td>David Holack</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>believe the project so far is just to explore and so these impacts may be minimal, but what is the purpose in exploring if not to locate minerals to extract and then sell this information to a mining company? Why look anywhere on plan allowing mining?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization: David Heikes
Addition: 147 3 Other
Action: Other
Resource: Fisheries & Wildlife
Comment: Another issue has to do with habitat for eyrie, big horns, and other species. Ignorance may be disruptive and again the actual mining will be.

Response: Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. An eyrie nest is located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the Project area. USFS established protection buffers for these species are Bewick’s swans, including the Project area. If would adhere to Forest Plan Standards 200 (Protect known raptor nests), as mentioned in Section 6.2.10 of Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Organization: David Heikes
Addition: 147 4 Outside of Scope
Action: Mining
Comment: Why in God’s name, would you even consider a mining project in the watershed that needs directly into Patches and the drinking water for, etc. 100,000 plus people? The water of species 50. Why would you like the chance of ruining not only the water supply but also the beauty of the area as well as the loss of revenue? Why would you allow the agency take such a risk? Just stop.

Response: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Organization: Pat Shermer
Addition: 148 1 Outside of Scope
Action: Comment Period
Comment: It would be appreciated if you would extend the time for the public to know more about F3 Gold’s.Summary of gold project.

Response: There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations that below discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.65: Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (2) Time period for submission of comments—(1) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (2) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall be extended.

Organization: Pat Shermer
Addition: 148 3 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: Support the No Action alternative.

Response: Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Organization: Jeffrey Laffitte
Addition: 149 1 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: This project, like every other reclamation project in the Black Hills will leave a hole that will never be refilled. It is going going to remain as a hole for the future. It will also be a dark spot in the Black Hills that will be visible for miles for years to come. If someone wants to move the project we urge them to come to the USFS and talk to the Forest Service, they will be a hole in the future. I do not support the project.

Response: Comments noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife, and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Organization: Jeffrey Laffitte
Addition: 149 2 Regulatory Processes
Comment Period
Comment: There is a rash to approve this project. The public should be granted more than 30 days to review the Environmental Assessment document.

Response: There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations that below discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.65: Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (2) Time period for submission of comments—(1) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (2) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall be extended.

Organization: Jeffrey Laffitte
Addition: 149 3 Regulatory Processes
EA Comment
Comment: The Forest Service has yet to review the full impact of this project. This includes the direct impact of the mining project and the potential disruption of the native sheep population. And last but least is the damage to recreation at the lake Jacks Road Creek. In particular.

Response: The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources (including water, land, cultural resources, wildlife and fish, and recreation) discussed in the EA. Additional mining restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of sites SPC-006, SPC-007, and SPC-009 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to bighorn sheep.

Organization: Jeffrey Laffitte
Addition: 149 4 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: I conclude I want to say that I support the No Action Alternative.

Response: Comments noted.

Organization: Lavinio Buhld
Addition: 150 1 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: Wants more to be removed and the contaminated water used for mining will be.

Response: Comments noted.

Organization: Lavinio Buhld
Addition: 150 2 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: Time to revisit exploitive mining in Rapid Creek.

Response: Comments noted.

Organization: Lavinio Buhld
Addition: 151 1 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: Would like to protect Rapid Creek watershed and the central black hills from mining gold exploration. I move to have designated a recreation area.

Response: Comments noted.

Organization: Lavinio Buhld
Addition: 152 1 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: Need to protect Rapid Creek watershed and the central hills from mining gold exploration.

Response: Comments noted.

Organization: Alan and Vicki Bond
Addition: 153 1 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: The area is a prairie recreational area for me and my family for years. What the world needs to is to preserve these natural areas for future generations. What we don’t need is more gold.

Response: Comments noted.

Organization: Connie Ryan
Addition: 154 1 Other
Action: Statement of Project Opinion
Comment: Entity oppose the gold project I ask that you please protect Patches Reserve, Silver Creek and the entire Rapid Creek watershed for our water, for wildlife habitat, and to preserve sustainable forest resources that fuel our economy and provide us our hearts and souls.

Response: Comments noted. The potential effects of exploratory drilling to these resources are discussed in the Draft EA and appended appendices.

Organization: Connie Ryan
Addition: 154 2 Regulatory Processes
Government to Government Consultation Tribal Engagement
Comment: It is my understanding that the Forest Service has not met its legal requirements for Tribal Consultation.

Response: For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to DHRD (August 2, 2021) and HPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 30, 2021, was received from the DHRD concurrent with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Tribal Consultation is ongoing, and publication of the Final EA will adhere to the U.S. Department Regulation 3500-002 Tribal Consultation, Consultation and Notification.

Organization: Connie Ryan
Addition: 154 3 Other
Action: Other
Resources: Revised Mining Plan
Comment: The current forest Management plan prohibits this mining, which was last amended in 2005.

Response: The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2004. The anticipated date for completion is 2006. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2000 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan [as amended], which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Other Appendices. There are also references to drilling sites but if M&12 is to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Ohlinger</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Do not support this action. No action found to be the only option.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Ohlinger</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>DNR Highfly/Water Supply</td>
<td>Piling Rehns with Air Force tank water at risk along with liquid fuel supply is a major. There is a long history of gold mining damage here along with established superfund sites. Why risk our pristine water for some individuals wealth? With Rehns expansion this should not even be an issue. How will this area support the new plan? I hope not.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Ohlinger</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>We love too much to risk with vicious wildlife habitat destruction. So, the amazing Ellsworth Force needs our protection. They live and breed and have their babies in this area.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including big game species) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drills of gold in year 3, 4, and 5, under extraordinary potential effects to biggame/sheep.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Sauver</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>From the viewpoint of an average citizen, it seems like big corporations do anything they want with the resources we need. You are the people who can stand up for and against their greed. Please stand up.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz and Matt Volker</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We dedicate ourselves for all of the precious resources that exist.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jame Chumberlin</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please note against any gold exploration by the F3 group in our black hills. We all know this is unnecessary and puts our Black Hills water at risk.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ovando</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>House stop at the gold. Water is one of our most valuable resources. Clean water is the gold of all life on the earth. It should not be a commodity. Houses are not out our most precious resource for the allure of gold mining in the Sacred Falls.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Agee</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Allowing gas drill in a mineral‐rich area would begin the destruction of all that is unique and irreplaceable about the area. I vehemently stand in opposition to any drilling/exploration/mining in this watered area noting negative impacts on wildlife breeding and habitat, negative impact on water quality, negative impact on community/assembly.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources (including tourism) are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreational Technical Report - Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Agee</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Mineral exploration has not resulted in safe drinking water—nuisance and no impact.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan Agee</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Good, I think the estimates of the Pachynota area/hills any one would be forced with the presence and activities proposed for F3 Gold.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Deguephan</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>No mine removes an emphatic NO, for all the reasons listed in my earlier letter. I believe this is a horrific and that we are considering exploratory drilling in a major watered that supports a growing population of tens of thousands of citizens.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Deguephan</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Now, we understand that its activities could disrupt an important breeding ground for big horned rams, a species we want to thrive in the hills. Disrupting a breeding area and migration route would certainly undermine those efforts.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including big game species) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Applicable additional requirements have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drills of gold in year 3, 4, and 5, under extraordinary potential effects to big game/sheep.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Deguephan</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Our mine removes an emphatic NO, for all the reasons listed in my earlier letter. I believe this. I understand that its activities could disrupt an important breeding ground for big horned rams, a species we want to thrive in the hills. Disrupting a breeding area and migration route would certainly undermine those efforts.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Sols, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Agee</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>We live, understand that the activities could disrupt an important breeding ground for big horned rams, a species we want to thrive in the hills. Disrupting a breeding area and migration route would certainly undermine those efforts.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including big game species) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Applicable additional requirements have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit driling of gold in year 3, 4, and 5, under extraordinary potential effects to big game/sheep.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Agee</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>The draft EA is insufficient, making it difficult to render an informed opinion. It seems not to have evaluated all of the potential impacts of the F3 activities, nor has it adequately taken into account the impact of indigenous interests. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the 1989 streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical appendixes that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 28, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with the F3 Gold project’s proposed action is consistent with the terms of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and shall adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500.02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Agee</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A surface governmental to Government to Government Consultation (Tribe) engagement</td>
<td>The draft EIS contains a appendix, making it difficult to render an informed opinion. It seems not to have evaluated all of the potential impacts of the F3 activities, nor has it adequately taken into account the impact of indigenous interests.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the 1989 streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical appendixes that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 28, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with the F3 Gold project’s proposed action is consistent with the terms of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and shall adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500.02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- "Comment noted." indicates that a comment was made, but no specific action is suggested.
- "Comment noted." does not imply that the comment is ignored; it merely indicates that no specific action was taken in response.
- For the EA analysis, it's important to consider the context and implications of each comment, as well as the overall impact on project planning and decision-making.
Caryn Jerome

65 2 Outside of Scope

Mining

This review is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 3.

Kaylin Jones

188 3 Regulatory Process

Not a regulatory process

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6.

The federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 212.4, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categorical exclusions. 16 CFR part 212.4(b)(3) identifies short-term (3 years or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, use or minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The identified examples are authorizing geological investigations which can include roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to the EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also exclude a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has excluded F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to do in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.3). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of the decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be required as an EIS.

Joyce Douglas

64 1 Other

Statement of Project Opinion

There is no evidence that the study area is currently experiencing any significant adverse environmental impact. The study area is not impacted by mining or any other types of industrial activity. The impacted area is located on the Historic joyce Douglas Mining claim. The proposed action is to repair and maintain the roads and trails used to access the property.

Dashing effects on water and wildlife resources in the extractive industry are also discussed.

Carol Batch

164 1 Other

Statement of Project Opinion

There is no evidence that the study area is currently experiencing any significant adverse environmental impact. The study area is not impacted by mining or any other types of industrial activity. The impacted area is located on the Historic joyce Douglas Mining claim. The proposed action is to repair and maintain the roads and trails used to access the property.

Carol Batch

164 6 Other

Public Health and Safety

Wildlife Assurance

This company does not have a published history of clean-up or financial stability to prove to go bankrupt, equipment abandoned and the forest, wildlife, water and those suffer.

Potential project effects on existing roadway are described in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Draft Public Health and Safety Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 5 Other

Surface & Transportation

The documents state all of the temporary road will be "brought back to pre-existing condition." Take a look at the still forest service road from Fawn Drive. That has been closed for decades until it is not "brought to the forest."

Potential project effects on existing roadway are described in the Draft EA, Appendix J - Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also describes F3’s responsibility for repairing any unexpected roadway damage, as well as reclamation requirements.

Carol Batch

164 6 Other

Public Health and Safety

Noise. If none of the published documents the company states it will be running of the ATV and the noise will be that of a refrigerator running. Baloney. When my husband does an assault gun on our dogs, our neighbors react. So far further away can hear them. When I hear on the forest service road and is in a normal noise, my neighbor on the corner Deer Meadow Dr and White Tail Road can hear my voice (3000 feel away). And even if the drilling equipment could actually be that kind of noise, what about the workers talking and yelling over the sounds of their machines/cooperators? Their vehicles coming and going. Doors slamming. (The back up beep of each of the machines) The water pump will be noisy!

Potential project effects on public health and safety, including noise, are described in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Draft Public Health and Safety Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 3 Incorporate

Wildlife & Water Supply

This constant noise will drive the elk away the milk field that is present. The deer also will be sporadic as well as the fowl, coyotes, hawks, mountain lions, birds and so much more. When the ATV trail to the east of our house was opened without proper assessment, then closed in 2017, these animals lost their habitat for years, even after the trail was closed.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and water supply are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 3 Incorporate

Wildlife & Water Supply

This constant noise will drive the elk away the milk field that is present. The deer also will be sporadic as well as the fowl, coyotes, hawks, mountain lions, birds and so much more. When the ATV trail to the east of our house was opened without proper assessment, then closed in 2017, these animals lost their habitat for years, even after the trail was closed.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and water supply are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 9 Other

Biological Resources

Wildlife & Water Supply

The Mining Company states there are no threatened or endangered species affected in this area. During the process of getting this trail closed, there was an endangered frog, flora and fauna that were identified in the woods by two. That should be in the documentation from these meetings.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and water supply are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 10 Other

Water Quality/Water Supply

No. farmers had well failures after soil exploration. We certainly could have some huge. What about our quality of water?

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water quality and water supply are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6.

Carol Batch

165 11 Other

Recreation

With the planned "temporary" roads, we can expect an increase of recreational ATVs using them too. We already have ATVs using trailways to disrupt the big bears; they ignore closed gates and "no motor vehicle" signs; they not only drive, but motor vehicles signs, but go off road and mow down trees (required to USFS - no action taken after many contacts), they terrorize the grazing cattle.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreation are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 8 Other

Aquatic Quality/Water Supply

Still anything to drink with the water when drilling it? the used water then it is contaminated and the plans is to move it and eventually dump it.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water quality and water supply are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report.

Carol Batch

165 5 Other

Soils & Water Supply

If No, farmers had well failures after soil exploration. We certainly could have some huge. What about our quality of water?

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water quality and water supply are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Green &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>which is paying for the additional damage to Rockford itself! When is paying to repair damage Galch in order for these trucks to travel? Is it in horrible condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>And who pays for restoration after the Mining Company exits?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Regulatory Proces</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>the Forest Service has not met its legal requirements for Tribal Consultation. As we have already seen the burden was placed on Tribal officials to initiate requests on topics of cultural resources, sacred sites, and other issues that are essential for consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Regulatory Proces</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>AEA vs EIS</td>
<td>Where is the Environmental impact Study?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Regulatory Proces</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>The Forest Service has proposed an amendment to the CFR 17 to allow the mining companies to explore and mine the area. This would be done in a phase manner over 5 years. During this time, the land will be named the Black Hills National Forest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>It is impossible to give this company a permit to drill, to allow all these issues to affect the forest, our water, its wildlife, etc. A ROUSA’s 3% chance of finding oil, a productivity of less than 2% leads to the conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Regulatory Proces</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Project Plan Revision</td>
<td>The current forest management plan (published in 1999) prohibits this drilling. Why is it even under consideration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Blatch</td>
<td></td>
<td>166</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We need to preserve the nature and water that makes the Black Hills the black rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanagan</td>
<td>Debby</td>
<td></td>
<td>167</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am an opponent on this and oppose the proposed H3 Gold Mine exploration and potential mining activities. I am commented on the project and have included those comments in the file attached to this email. While my previous comments stand, I would like to reiterate my opposition to this speculative exploration activity. This kind of private gain done in public cost is destroying so much of what we Americans have enjoyed and held dear for generations. Regardless of the H3 Gold Mine operators claims, all of these activities will cause irreversible harm to our environment. And, if the past is prologue, the perpetrators will have no accountability for that harm. When H3Gold is finished with its profit driven exploit, the American taxpayers and inhabitants of the Black Hills will once again be left holding the bag. Again, please reject and stop this proposed project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanogan</td>
<td>Debell</td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Oppose this project because the threat it poses to Rapid City’s drinking water, wildlife (including a highborn sheep breeding area and migration routes), tribal and local communities, and recreation (for both locals and tourists) local laws and economies are at stake and should be used no more heavily than the profits of a private company from elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okanogan</td>
<td>Debell</td>
<td></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Regulatory Proces</td>
<td>prose</td>
<td>Extended Period</td>
<td>Short of delaying the project altogether, I would require an extension to give the public more time to review the environmental assessment and to respond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response

Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B, Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also describes F3’s responsibility for repairing any unexpected roadway damage, as well as restoration requirements.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2024. Draft revision comments are due in the current plan, which is the current plan on record. See Draft Section 2.3. Alternative Closures drilling one out of 10 is not the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

The draft Environmental Assessment contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources (including wildlife, cultural resources, recreation) discussed in the EA. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of sites SAP: 300, 301, 302, and 303 from May 1 to June 30 to further minimize potential effects to livestock/sheep lambing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Heikes</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>absent, impermissible, and impermissible to the potential pollution of this sacred resource. Water is life.</td>
<td>planted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jace DeCory</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Resource</td>
<td>EA, Mexican, 4-4.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Liz and Harvey Ayer</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>my husband and I support the no-action alternative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Liz and Harvey Ayer</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Notice Period</td>
<td>no new time is needed for public comments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>my research into this area, and I am happy to be part of the project for the restoration of this sacred resource. Water is life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>no new time is needed for public comments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>no new time is needed for public comments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>no new time is needed for public comments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
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<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>Have not had enough time to adequately digest all of the 365-page Environmental Assessment and would ask that you please make an Extension so more people can know it properly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>All primary concern is the impact this mining would make on the drinking water for one of its most populated areas and migration route. Bighorn Sheep have had a difficult time surviving of late and this would be even more detrimental.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>It is also my understanding that this area is near Bighorn Sheep's primary range and migration route. Bighorn Sheep have had a difficult time surviving of late and this would be even more detrimental.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)</td>
<td>Final report is also of concern with this project and haven't been adequately addressed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Comment</td>
<td>None of the potential impacts identified in this project will have any on this area for generations to come.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary Alternatives Analysis</td>
<td>If there are any alternatives to the Big Gold plan I am not aware of them but I can see this project going forward without making negative impacts here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annya Dashi</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Operations</td>
<td>Support F3's mining Gold project and support the No Action alternative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Kennedy</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Operations</td>
<td>Support the F3's mining Gold project and support the No Action alternative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Kennedy</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA's EL</td>
<td>A minimum, an Environmental Impact Statement should be done.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Newland</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Operations</td>
<td>Bighorn Sheep are too close to Bighorn Mountain and Rapid Creek, water sources to many in the area, which should be reason enough to exercise more caution on the issue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 210A, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) if Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220A(b) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of non-standard road, and use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS. | | | | | |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Roth</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs ES</td>
<td>Have read the Draft Environmental Assessment and felt it is not thorough enough, would like to see an Environmental Impact Statement where:</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation if it is an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220 defines short term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. It's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Roth</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>more attention given to the effects this timing would have on the area (the water, plants and wildlife) the trees that will be removed and the roads created to carry the project and even in best-case scenario:</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any timing activity planned in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Roth</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>in the Forest Service and F3 can show they have consulted with Indigenous Nation tribes in the Back 30s, and the results of those dialogues.</td>
<td>For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be affected was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (June 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 134.4 and 134.6 of the F3 EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Roth</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>am asking the Forest Service to please reconsider the &quot;No Action&quot; option to F3's proposed. I believe it is the right thing to do.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Stutz</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Am I to state that I support the F3 Jerry Black Gold Exploration Project? I support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Stutz</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Amendment Period</td>
<td>Please make an extension to allow time for the public to review the Draft Environmental Assessment.</td>
<td>There will be an extension to the BPA EA amendment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.25 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (i) Opportunity to comment. (ii) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Stutz</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs ES</td>
<td>Have read the Draft Environmental Assessment (EIA) and Environmental Impact Statement (ESI). All comments—(iv) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide in depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Stutz</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Consultation that would be continued, and make an effort to protect culture resources in the area.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation if it is an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220 defines short term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. It's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also escalate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no significant impact at the time of the decision. If the EA determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Stutz</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Stutz</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>May I to support the F3 Jerry Black Gold Exploration Project?</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>May I to support the F3 Jerry Black Gold Exploration Project?</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Amendment Period</td>
<td>30 Days is not adequate time for the public to review the Draft Environmental Assessment document. There must be an extension for this notice.</td>
<td>There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.5 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (i) Opportunity to comment. (ii) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Context</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment is vague and incomplete making it impossible for the public to be informed.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kathy Holliday 182 4 Regulatory Process 34 CFR 200.16 (4) The policy, the Forest Service is to make all possible efforts to avoid or minimize impacts and to identify and evaluate alternatives. The policy requires that the draft environmental assessment follow the sections 220.6, 220.7 and 220.9 of the NEPA regulations for class 2 projects (those that are not major actions and are less than major actions). The policy also states that the draft environmental assessment includes the following: (a) the existing or proposed action; (b) the purpose and need for the proposed action; (c) a brief statement of the environmental effects that the proposed action may have; (d) a list of alternatives to the proposed action; and (e) a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action.

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Kathy Holliday 182 5 Other Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement) Categorically Excluded Tribal Consultation and protection of cultural resources are incomplete.

The draft EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.2). The Responsible Official would determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the project action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be required to an EIS.

Kathy Holliday 182 6 Other Resultsj of NEPA: A unique high/mid slope bighorn area and migration route would be significantly impacted.

For the draft Environmental Assessment follows the USGS stream Par 200.16 process and it contains several technical appendices that provide an in-depth analysis of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Kathy Holliday 182 7 Regulatory Process 34 CFR 200.16 (8) The purpose and need analysis includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action. The purpose and need analysis for the proposed action includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action.

Kathy Holliday 182 8 Regulatory Process 34 CFR 200.16 (10) The purpose and need analysis includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action. The purpose and need analysis for the proposed action includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action.

Isabelle Smiley 183 1 Other Statement of Project Impact Strategic environmental assessment and development for the project's mineral resource development project would require a comprehensive and thorough analysis of the potential impacts. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USGS stream Par 200.16 process and it contains several technical appendices that provide an in-depth analysis of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Isabelle Smiley 183 2 Regulatory Process 34 CFR 200.16 (12) The purpose and need analysis includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action. The purpose and need analysis for the proposed action includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action.

Kenneth Hargens 184 1 Other Statement of Project Impact There has been much excitement and mis-information caused by an organization associated with the Rapid Creek watershed. These have sent them as small informers of the "modern" methods of core drilling for mineral exploration. Methods that do not harm the environment and leave little or no surface disturbance. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USGS stream Par 200.16 process and it contains several technical appendices that provide an in-depth analysis of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Mary Hertz 184 1 Other Statement of Project Impact Support NO ACTION on the Silver Gulch mining permit.

Mary Hertz 185 2 Outside of Scope Mining The black hills are a unique area-worth of complete preservation. The impact of such activity on big horn sheep, water quality and timber supply needs to be fully studied and considered before issuing any kind of mining permits.

Michael and Charlotte Blank 186 1 Other Statement of Project Impact Because of the possible big horn future impact, check the project lead to initial mining, we strongly recommend Alternative A, "No Action," as presented in the Draft Environmental Assessment.

Michael and Charlotte Blank 186 2 Regulatory Process 34 CFR 200.16 (14) The purpose and need analysis includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action. The purpose and need analysis for the proposed action includes a description of the purpose and need for the proposed action, a list of alternatives to the proposed action, a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action, and a description of the expected environmental effects of the proposed action.

Mary Holliday 182 4 Regulatory Process 34 CFR 200.16 (4) The policy, the Forest Service is to make all possible efforts to avoid or minimize impacts and to identify and evaluate alternatives. The policy requires that the draft environmental assessment follow the sections 220.6, 220.7 and 220.9 of the NEPA regulations for class 2 projects (those that are not major actions and are less than major actions). The policy also states that the draft environmental assessment includes the following: (a) the existing or proposed action; (b) the purpose and need for the proposed action; (c) a brief statement of the environmental effects that the proposed action may have; (d) a list of alternatives to the proposed action; and (e) a description of any approvals, permits, or other legal requirements associated with the proposed action.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Maris</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>In property owners and owners of a public well that we use for drinking water, we are concerned about the short-term plans for drilling. The proposed drilling depth of 500 to 1,500 feet has considerable potential to penetrate and contaminate aquifers underlying the project area and interrupt our water source and that of an estimated 40 private wells in the watershed. The only other water source in the area is a community spring available at &quot;the schoolhouse&quot; from a source of a mile-upstream fault. which drilling or mining could also contaminate. Possible effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Maris</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Mining/Action/Resource Number</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilton</td>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The mining must not allow the exploratory drilling project to continue due to the potential for severe impacts on people's recreation and well being. To do so would be terribly misguided and needlessly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Payton</td>
<td></td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Let's put the brakes on this proposal, we will not be opposed to the No Action alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Payton</td>
<td></td>
<td>188</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Statement Period</td>
<td>If you need to have more discussion, please extend the time allowing for more public comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Marley</td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Support F3 Gold's Kenny Back project and support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>Marley</td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Statement Period</td>
<td>Do not grant this permit without further analysis and time for citizens to understand the potential effects of the exploration activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>╣</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik</td>
<td>Sperlich</td>
<td></td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Strongly oppose F3 Gold's Back exploration project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Payton</td>
<td></td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Do not approve beautiful free-flowing wonderful streams. Please remove the No Action alternative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Oppose 200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Edlow</td>
<td></td>
<td>193</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>In opposition to the proposed mining project. I am an outdoor enthusiast and believe any mining in this area will have a deadly long-negative affect on our beloved Black Hills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The proposed mining project is not in my opinion, a justifiable project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>F3 is proposing the mining project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td>194</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alternative Analysis</td>
<td>NEPA regulations do not define exclusionary impact statements not even completed. Where completed, it needs to be specific and taken in consideration of all the stakeholders. All reasonable and alternatives must be researched and considered before proceeding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Edlow</td>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Against 200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The proposed mining project is not in my opinion, a justifiable project.</td>
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<td>Robinson</td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
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<td>Edlow</td>
<td></td>
<td>197</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please protect this area and reach the To Beck financial exploration project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>Paula</td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Would strongly support the mining for the exploratory project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>Paula</td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining projects can and generally do affect the mentioned items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>Paula</td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining companies have a long history of breaking their intentions to remediate local and watersheds, so we need to do our due diligence on this effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EA to an EA to assess potential project impacts. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, it would be documented in a finding of significant impact. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS. NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR § 1508.21(d) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the objectives of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Durieux</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The assessment is a step toward possible gold exploration just upstream from Patola Reservoir in the Black hills and a direct impact on not only water, but wildlife, such as the Bighorn Sheep breeding grounds.</td>
<td>Comment stated. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 3: Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including bighorn sheep) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2.1 - &quot;Shifting activities in the vicinity of Sunrayme Gold-Rush Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the discretion of the USFWS Wildlife Biologist and District Range.&quot; Also see Section 3.5 and Appendix D Section 3.2, Table 4.1, Section 4.2.2, Table 4.2, and Table 4.4. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit mining of sites SPC-016, SPC-017, and SPG-013 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to bighorn sheep lambing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Olson</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>am-opposed to exploration mining project.</td>
<td>Comment stated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith Leader</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Why would you allow a gold mining operation in any portion of the Black Hills? There is no way that an operation such as this is not going to negatively affect the downstream water shed. I am absolutely opposed to this proposal.</td>
<td>Comment stated. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 3: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valdie Hanson</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I urge you to decline permission to allow exploration mining near Rapid City's main water source.</td>
<td>Comment stated. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack and Linda</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>We are responsible to our communities and to future generations to prevent this drilling in the Jenny Gulch area, which will impact our water, our wildlife, our livelihoods, and our communities.</td>
<td>Comment stated. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack and Linda</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs EIS</td>
<td>Full Environmental Impact Statement is needed.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action must be excluded from further analyses and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220.10(a)(3) identifies short-term (1-year or less), mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of new standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. If's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official(s) (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also exclude a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated EF's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack and Linda</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>It is also imperative that a study of the economic impact this would create for recreation and tourism in the Black hills be included.</td>
<td>Potential project effects on recreation are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B, Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report, Section 3.2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack and Linda</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Bio-objects the E3 Jenny Gulch Gold Project and support the &quot;No Action&quot; Alternative.</td>
<td>Comment stated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Ashley</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs CE</td>
<td>Ask that the forest service analyze the impacts of the project and any reasonable alternatives.</td>
<td>The Draft Environmental Assessment reflects the USFWS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical reports appended that provide a in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR 1513 (b)(1) defines &quot;reasonable alternatives&quot; as a range of reasonable alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the Applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Ashley</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs EIS</td>
<td>Request that a full Environmental Impact Statement be completed.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action must be excluded from further analyses and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220.10(a)(3) identifies short-term (1-year or less), mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of new standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. If's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official(s) (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also exclude a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated EF's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCS</td>
<td>Kammered</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Oppose the H Gold Jenny Gulch gold project and support the &quot;No Action&quot; Alternative.</td>
<td>Comment stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Payeuch</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>My concern for our Black Hills is why am strongly opposed to the E3 Gold Jenny Gulch Project. Support the No Action alternative.</td>
<td>Comment stated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>First Name</td>
<td>Last Name</td>
<td>Additional Signature</td>
<td>Letter Number</td>
<td>Comment Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolyn Faluch</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A Comment on the EA vs ES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Believe the impacts of this project have not been fully completed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Faluch</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>There has been enough time for the public to review and submit comments on the document.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Leach-Valades</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support the &quot;no action&quot; alternative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Leach-Valades</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The purpose of the data holes and the site need an extension to make containments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlan Leach-Valades</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Francis</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have concerns about the effects of mining on the black hills. Unchecked, could another project be made in the name of short term economic gain?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Francis</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Do not fit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Believe that a complete environmental impact statement needs to be conducted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Francis</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None oppose.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Francis</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Amendment to Environmental Assessment is vague and incomplete.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Francis</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statements &amp; Whitehills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Would run a raptor nesting site unhealthy to drinking water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Francis</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support the F3 activity, high-field exploration-Drilling Project and support the “No Action” Alternative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

In the Draft EA, we have provided a permit to drill exploratory holes in the area of Jenny Gulch and Stratford Chuck. Comments noted.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Water, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Impact, Section 4.

We are writing to express our support for the "NO ACTION" alternative in the current Environmental Assessment document. Comments noted.

We are not in support of conducting site contaminant or more thorough Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as well as other reviews.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR parts 200, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 220 defines short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated F3's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The proposed action is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

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The comments noted. Following is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Comments noted.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

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We are not in support of conducting site contaminant or more thorough Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as well as other reviews.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR part 200, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 220 defines short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

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The current Environmental Assessment document is both incomplete and vague and does not allow ample time for public review.

For the EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be impacted was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 29, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 30, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting upon our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-02 Trial Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

The draft Environmental Assessment document is both vague and incomplete making it impossible for the public to be informed.

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The regulations indicate certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in the Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(a)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mining, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require less than 2 miles of standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorical exclusion. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. If it's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion.

The purpose of an EA to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR §1508.4). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action is likely to result in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an ES.

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There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 Below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments.

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The EA’s content for the Draft EA is under review and comment by the Responsible Official.

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Tribal consultation and protection of cultural resources are incomplete.

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It states the Maximum footprint of each drill site is 2500 sqft (760 feet by 50 feet). How will this be enforced to ensure it is not exceeded? I question their ability to get the stated amount of equipment in that space.

F3 Valley 6 Outside of Scope Mining It states "no mining, milling, or processing is proposed as part of the project." What are they drilling for then?

F3 Valley 6 Underground Water Quantity/Water Supply Are there a number of springs, streams, protected streams, or water impoundments within and adjacent to the proposed project boundaries? What assurances do the proposed property owners in the area have that all water sources will be safeguarded and protected from immediate or long-term effects from their drilling, tailings, pollution from vehicles, etc throughout this projects duration? What about any and all negative pollutant sources entering the water sources for wildlife?

F3 Valley 7 Other Water Quantity/Water Supply They are proposing to run same trails that are currently restricted (for use). Will they be required to comply with this restriction? If not, are they going to allow to widen these trails to accommodate their oversized vehicles? They should not be given any privileges beyond what is intended for recreational users.

F3 Valley 9 Other Access & Transportation They further state, "If additional approximately 4700 linear feet of 8 foot wide temporary overland trails may be constructed..." Where will these trails be allowed? What does "APPROXIMATELY" indicate or allow? They also claim these trails will be "altered and returned to natural conditions after project completion". When is the completion date? How do you return land to its natural condition after removing large well established trees and clearing the land for a road?

F3 Valley 10 Other Roads/Waterways The proposed road is a high volume and one acre for wildlife. How will the increased volume of traffic and disturbance of the wildlife be managed?

F3 Valley 11 Outside of Scope Access & Transportation These areas are critical to the immediate area and north of the proposed area to be mined. Our road district has to pay the Forest Service an annual fee for an assessment of every minor distance, approximately 400 feet that we constructed and maintain, to cross NFS property. Will F3 be required to do the same for the miles of roads and trails they will be using?

F3 Valley 12 Other Access & Transportation We have deduced that the road from the property to the north or south in disrupted or contaminated as a result of the drilling or mining, who will be responsible for repair?

F3 Valley 14 Regulatory Processes Water Assurance 2.9 mile, i.e., willing to sign agreements, prior to any drilling, exploration, or mining, that they will be responsible for and provide reimbursement to all upstream and downstream property owners if they experience any negative fall out from the proposed project? If they are not, then their motives and claims for no impact should be highly scrutinized.

F3 Valley 15 Other Statement of Project Purpose We have discussed with the Fisher University, we require you to move with a "No Activity" and stop the approved mining exploration of F3 Gold, Inc.

Sherry Knowl 1 Other Statement of Project Purpose They don't allow the same danger to violate Jenny Gold, Patoka-Moorehead, and Ripod Creek.

Bradley Baird 1 Other Statement of Project Purpose Please, please do approve this project!!

Kim Baker 1 Other Statement of Project Purpose am writing to consent against the no gold project.

Draft Letter 1 Other Statement of Project Purpose am writing in opposition to the proposed Jenny Gold Bell exploration Project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Add'l Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<th>Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Draft</td>
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<td>Gartner</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs ES</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>If the USDA is going to accept that risk again today, I implore you to deny this request or, at the very least, provide sufficient time for a complete environmental study and public review. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 201a, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 201a(b)(1) identifies short-term (3 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use-existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach drilling core holes and other data collection features. FTS's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EIS if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated FTS's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS. There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.21 – Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the notice. (d) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Air</td>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We are opposed to the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Project because of its potential impact on wildlife, habitat, and our water supply. Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report. Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. Section 3.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land and Air</td>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Exploration within existing trail to mine exploration in otherwise sensitive areas to the implementation of mine plans that bring powerful chemicals and geological disturbances to the land. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitty</td>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Geophysical surveys in this beautiful area will be negatively impacted by mining. Our beautiful watersheds may be seriously damaged and our water contaminated. Our family lives, bikes, ride horses, camp and utilize Pascola and Rapid Creek for water recreation. Gold mining would be disastrous in this area Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori</td>
<td>Duncan</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>The mining industry does not have a history of improving or rectifying the impact on areas it extracts raw materials from. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Bring the federal service to look below the proposed drilling/exploration in the Jenny Gulch area. Comment noted.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Order Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>Potential impacts of the proposed drilling cannot really be known, particularly with regard to underground water. The impact that this exploration could have on drinking water for the local area residents and Rapid City is unknown. It also threatens recreation in the Pascola Limekiln area and may have an adverse impact on wildlife, particularly the potential impact on Bighorn Sheep breeding and lambing. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report. Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2. &quot;Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnyside Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the lambing season and minimize disturbance to the area. All potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the discretion of the USGS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.&quot; Also see Section 3.5 and Appendix D Section 4.2, Table 6, 4.2, and Table 6.2. Additional mining restrictions have been added to Alternative 2 in the Final EA to avoid mining off-Sanpete-section 30-A3-1.54 and on 29-A1-10.5. More information potentials effects to, bighorn sheep lambing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government Consultation (Tribal Management)</td>
<td>Plan consultation and the potential impact on cultural resources appear to be incomplete. For the Draft EA, an inclusive Heritage Resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021 and July 2021 EIS HPO) in 2021 for review and comment. A letter dated September 17, 2021, was received from the SHPO concuring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.3.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will conform to the USDA Department Regulation 5100-062 Tribal Consultation and Coordination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>The draft environmental assessment appears to be ambiguous and incomplete and as such the public cannot be fully informed about the potential impact of this exploration. The Draft Environmental Assessment Tribes (DSET) streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the issues discussed in the EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Skillman</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>A vs B</td>
<td>An Environmental Impact Statement would be done. Federal regulators identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 201a, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 201a(b)(1) identifies short-term (3 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use-existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach drilling core holes and other data collection features. FTS's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EIS if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated FTS's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in &quot;determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact&quot; (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Organization | First Name | Last Name | Additional Signatory | Letter Number | Comment Number | Action | Action | Resource | Comment | Response
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 6 | Other | Access & Transportation | I am also concerned about the potential for damage to the roads and trails. The heavy equipment required for this exploration may worsen the condition of the roads and trails. The road expansion and use of existing trails needed for the proposed project will likely create more erosion and surface damage. | Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix D, Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report. This appendix also describes F3's responsibility for repairing any unexpected roadway damage, as well as restoration requirements.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 7 | Regulatory | Process | Administrative Alternatives Analysis | The forest service should analyze all potential impacts of this project and analyze and include all reasonable alternatives to this planned exploration. | The draft Environmental Assessment follows the U.S. Forest Service NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR § 1508.1(d) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meet the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Please do not allow any more internal (gold exploration, drilling, etc.) mining in the Black Hills. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | I am writing to support F3's proposed mineral exploration project in the Jenny Gulch/Silver City area, and in support of the findings of the draft EA conducted by USFS. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 2 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | The draft EA has provided an exceptionally thorough review of all stakeholder exploration drilling project and has helped identify low-level, temporary impacts associated with exploration activities, as well as ways in which to minimize potential impacts. For this reason, I am happy to support the findings of this draft EA. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 3 | Regulatory | Process | Alternatives Analysis | While temporary disturbances and effects were identified for several issue areas in the draft EA, there were no significant or long-term impacts identified for alternative C. Furthermore, Alternative C includes specific project adaptations to reduce the potential impacts which were identified. | Comment: NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR § 1508.1(d) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meet the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Support no action on the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project. The public needs have apparently been met on this, as most people want to protect our water and the beauty of the Black Hills, and in particular this lovely area. Let's allow the public's desire for long term good to weigh in on the decision. | Comment: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 1. There have been several opportunities for public engagement throughout the USFS NEPA process, as described in the Draft EA, Appendix G - Public Involvement Plan.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | No opposes F3's Jenny Gulch gold project and support the "No Action" alternative. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Please do not allow the drilling. It will degrade our water shed. | Comment: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | As a resident of the Black Hills, I feel absolutely no positive value in allowing further mineral exploration in the Black Hills and only potential degradation of the environment (with the Forest Service seems to disregard). I strongly request the No Action decision on the pending permit application. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | I am absolutely against mining in the Black Hills. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Open the potential hazards to local waters created by gold mining in the Black Hills, support the NO ACTION alternative to this permit. | Comment: Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Support the "No Action" alternative. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | No, no more mining exploration in the Black Hills. I support the "No Action" alternative. Please refer to the Jenny Gulch/Gold Exploration Project. The water quality for water is already compromised enough. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Alternatives consistent with the proposed mining activity in the Jenny Gulch area, and with the US Forest Service's draft Environmental Assessment thereof. | Comment: The draft Environmental Assessment follows the U.S. Forest Service NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | I am writing in support of F3's proposed mineral exploration project in the Jenny Gulch/Silver City area, and in support of the findings of the draft EA conducted by USFS. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Under the forest services' final direction, I have stated it is to provide a sustainable commodity including mineral resources, in an environmentally acceptable manner. I remind you to that there is NO mining activity that has ever been done or will be done in an environmentally acceptable manner. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | A subsidiary, I wish to request my objections to the proposed activity, and urge the United States Forest Service, which is supposed to represent all of the citizens of SD, to request this proposal, and issue a "No Action" ruling. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | A subsidiary, I wish to request my objections to the proposed activity, and urge the United States Forest Service, which is supposed to represent all of the citizens of SD, to request this proposal, and issue a "No Action" ruling. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | I am writing in support of F3's proposed mineral exploration project in the Jenny Gulch/Silver City area, and in support of the findings of the draft EA conducted by USFS. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Cindy Skillman | Cindy | Skillman | | 228 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | I am writing in support of F3's proposed mineral exploration project in the Jenny Gulch/Silver City area, and in support of the findings of the draft EA conducted by USFS. | Comment: Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action Process</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>2A vs ES</td>
<td>The Environmental Impact Statement is complete.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 200, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 200(a)(8) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FIS’s proposed to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>I’m supporting the No Action alternative.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>2A vs ES</td>
<td>The Environmental Impact Study is not completed.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 200, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 200(a)(8) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FIS’s proposed to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Amy about historical sites and artifacts being disturbed or destroyed by exploration operations: active mining operations begin, based on exploratory drilling, and artifacts will be lost forever.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. For the DRAFT EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. See DRAFT EA Section 3.4.1, which states: &quot;Due to the sensitive nature of information provided in the cultural resources report, this document is only able to be shared with appropriate agency and tribal steward and is exempt from public availability requirements.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. For the DRAFT EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. See DRAFT EA Section 3.4.1, which states: &quot;Due to the sensitive nature of information provided in the cultural resources report, this document is only able to be shared with appropriate agency and tribal steward and is exempt from public availability requirements.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Olson</td>
<td>Olson</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Statement of Project</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We need a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Mining operations may affect the local water supply.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 200, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 200(a)(8) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FIS’s proposed to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology/Technical Report, Section 5. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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</table>
Elk, turkey and other fish are discussed in the EA, Plan and Fish and Wildlife Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. An osprey nest is located approximately 0.3 miles southeast of the Project area. USFS established protection buffers for this species are Boreal Outside of the Project area. EA would adhere to Forest Plan Standard 2020 - Protect Known Raptor nests, as mentioned in Section 6.2-10 of Appendix D - Wildlife and Fishes Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drifiting of 165, 166, 167, and 168 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to bighorn sheep lambing.

The H-9 Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NAPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(a)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, use or minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated F3's EA to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

...complete text...
### Reasonable Alternatives

For a project to go forward, the project must have reasonable alternatives. The project must have alternatives that are economically and environmentally feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

### Regulatory Process: Alternatives Analysis

Alternatives analysis is a component of the project's environmental impact statement (EIS) and is required to fully address the project's impact on all resources. A regulatory process definition involves identifying actions as categorical exclusions or otherwise defining reasonable alternatives.

The regulations define certain actions as categorical exclusions. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. The project must identify actions as categorical exclusions, which requires preparing an EA. The Federal Code defines "categorical exclusions" as actions that have no significant impact on the environment.

### Regulatory Process: A vs B

When selecting between two reasonable alternatives, it is important to consider the project's impacts on all resources. The selection process involves determining which alternative is more feasible and will have the least impact on the environment.

The regulations define certain actions as categorical exclusions. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. The project must identify actions as categorical exclusions, which requires preparing an EA. The Federal Code defines "categorical exclusions" as actions that have no significant impact on the environment.

### Other Information

This appendix provides additional information and data related to the project. It includes summaries of the project's environmental impacts and description of the project. The appendix also describes the project's response to the EA and provides a summary of the project's impacts on all resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl and Roger Jones</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Libraries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>How will it impact the wildlife? What is the cost for the additional monitoring of wildlife in the area?</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - WILDLIFE and Fisheries Biological Assessment Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. If/2 would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USFS as part of the EA decision. If/2 will be required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Lunsford</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Oppinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am deeply concerned about the possibility of large scale gold mining operations in the Black Hills. I feel that it is imperative that an Environmental Impact Statement be initiated immediately.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Lunsford</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA vs NEPA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>In the foresight Service is aware of this compelling activity, I think it is imperative that an Environmental Impact Statement be initiated immediately.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR 1505, a proposed action may be classified in further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR Part 201(a)(9) identifies short term (1 year or less) minor, emergency, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. If/2's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (e.g., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated If/2's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist I/2 in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jake Sokol</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Water is a vital resource for all living organisms, mammals, fish, birds, plants, etc. The resource is limited and diminishing at a rapid rate. The drilling process appears to be benign, but is destroying. Almost any impact on potable water is critical on the reality that some potential damaging impacts may not be apparent to the detriment of a limited necessary life essential, water.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Terpignier</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Water is a vital resource for all living organisms, mammals, fish, birds, plants, etc. The resource is limited and diminishing at a rapid rate. The drilling process appears to be benign, but is destroying. Almost any impact on potable water is critical on the reality that some potential damaging impacts may not be apparent to the detriment of a limited necessary life essential, water.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Dox</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Oppinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Here is an example of an area where they allowed exploratory drilling, and now that precious metals have been found, have a larger problem on their hands. Why open a Pandora's box? I support the no action FJ/2 gold.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Tofte</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td>Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Tofte</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Oppinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Please consider the dry mineral resource for the mining industry to regard this project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Tofte</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 441 219 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 44 CFR 105.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. Ed Gavlen: The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cate Solum</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Oppinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>This is our water supply at risk. A200.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Gannett</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Oppinions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Please be advised that this will not be the future of the Rapid creek watershed. Potable and Liquid Clean are precious and the thousands of people who will be affected now and into the future if this all goes wrong should not have to pay the price in lost opportunity and destruction of such a special place.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
further to even Environme (EA) there are extraordinary proposed the EA may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated EA’s effort to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9(b)). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the project action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Debbie Banerjee 260 1 Other Statement of Project Scope An opposed to the Jenny Gulch-Gold Project that will threaten our water supply, wildlife, and recreation.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C: Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Debbie Banerjee 260 2 Regulatory Process EA vs ES We also need a full environmental impact statement.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 210.40(a), a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 210.40(b)(9) identifies short-term (i) water (ii) mineral, energy, or geophysical explorations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads or as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F1’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated EA’s effort to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9(b)). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the project action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
Organization | First Name | Last Name | Additional Information | Letter Number | Comment Number | Action | Actions | Resource | Comment | Response
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Charity Ouster | 265 | 3 | Regulatory Process | EA vs ES | Is there an EIS? No! Then do this! Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR part 212.4, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 210(a)(3) identifies short-term (3 years or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FED's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.
The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FED's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
Charity Ouster | 265 | 4 | Other | Statement of Project Option | Please STOP! This advance on the water quality of the Black Hills. Water is life and we all need a resource that is unsullied or contaminated. In the price of gold so important to the advancement of humanity? It is not and our water supplies do not need to be assaulted. I am against anything that even looks like it could harm our supplies.
Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.
Helen Camp | 267 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Option | Artistic regarding the Jenny Gulch Gold Project to express my preference for the No-Action Alternative.
Comment noted.
Helen Camp | 267 | 2 | Regulatory Process | EA vs ES | There should be a full Environmental Impact Statement should an option to move forward be approved.
Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR part 212.4, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 210(a)(3) identifies short-term (3 years or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FED's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.
The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FED's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
Sherry Ouler | 268 | 1 | Regulatory Process | EA Content | This project at the very least demands extensive environmental studies which have not been completed!
Comment noted.
Sherry Ouler | 268 | 2 | Other | Public Health and Safety | Would, several private homes and bedrooms (be adjacent to this area and built farms) directly affect the project. Should casings be surrounded. Black Hills is not to have drilling for gold in their backyards and all that would come with this type of activity.
Comment noted.
Culley Sain | 269 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Option | No oppose any drilling in the Platte, Jenny Gulch area
Comment noted.
Michael Brand | 271 | Other | Project Description | Proposed Action/Plan Revision | It is no recommendation that consideration of the application for gold exploration by F2 Gold, LLC, should be deferred until such time as the Black Hills National Forest Management Plan revision is completed.
The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2020. The updated date for completion is 2025. Once completed, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocations drilling sites out of MA-6.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.
Michael Brand | 271 | Other | Project Plan Revision | Proposed Action/Plan Revision | It is premature and appears to be an attempt to complete their exploration application prior to the Forest Plan revision process. Approving their application at this time would only add to the confusion to the future of gold mining and exploration under the Forest Plan.
The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2020. The updated date for completion is 2025. Once completed, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative C relocations drilling sites out of MA-6.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.
Michael Brand | 273 | Other | Project Description | Exploration drilling is proposed up to 1,000 feet will require drilling fluids. What is the chemical composition of the drilling fluids?
It is acknowledged that, in addition to water, it may also use industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clay and muds, or other natural and/or biodegradable additives, during drilling to make efficient and safety drill and sand bohles. Table 2-1 and Section 2.2.1 have been updated to more accurately depict this.
Michael Brand | 274 | Other | Project Description | Will the exploration wells be capped and if so, how will the casing be sealed to prevent migration of fluids?
See Table 2-1 of the Draft EA, where this is discussed.
Michael Brand | 275 | Other | Project Description | Support or opposition to offsite plans or disposal of fluids or cuttings?
See Section 2.2.1 of the Draft EA, where this is discussed.
Michael Brand | 276 | Other | Project Description | Noting up to 1,000 feet on 10" drill holes will make a large amount of drill cuttings. What is the plan for offsite disposal of the drill cuttings?
See Section 2.2.1 of the Draft EA, where this is discussed.
Michael Brand 270 7 Other Reclamation The “due diligence” has been completed on the company itself (if so, what were the results of the “due diligence” review? Since 73 Gold is an LLC, who would be liable for plugging and reclamation if 73 Gold were to default?)

Michael Brand 270 8 Other Reclamation The $20,000 bond offered to the State of South Dakota for plugging and reclamation is not in the amount that would be needed to plug and reclaim a single well pad. If 73 Gold, LLC, were to abandon more than a single well pad without reclamation, how has the liability for plugging and reclamation been addressed?

Michael Brand 270 9 Other Project Description Anti-plugging and reclamation are required sequentially by new exploration work are allowed? Plugging and reclamation should occur sequentially and not be delayed until the entire project is completed.

Michael Brand 270 10 Regulatory Process Forest Plan Revisions In light of the Forest Plan Revisions process that is being initiated (please strongly consider that this application should be delayed to allow the Plan Revisions process to proceed unencumbered by the obvious intent of 73 Gold, LLC, to find and define gold in the Jerry Gulch area.

Michael Brand 270 11 Regulatory Process A vs ES Federal regulators identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analyses and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(d)(1) identifies short-term (2-year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may incidentally repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. This proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess these potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated this proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed project likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Andrew Fountain 271 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion To someone who drinks water, baths with water, relies on water for my livelihood and identifies as a recreationalist, conservationist, and recluse, I am strongly opposed to exploratory drilling in the Rapid Creek watershed for these reasons:

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreational Technical Report - Section 3.

Andrew Fountain 271 2 Outside of Scope Mining Mining exists on a course of less pollution. There is a strong chance that if the withdrawing water for the Black Hills region's most populated area (Rapid City, Sioux, and the area from which the Black Hills were extracted, would increase; it will not be shocking populations of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and plants will decline in the region, and potentially become endangered or worse if we continue to extract their HOME. Yes, they say there are no underground springs in that area as of now. That could all change if mining was allowed.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. Section 3.

Andrew Fountain 271 3 Outside of Scope Mining The Black Hills National Forest is already heavily impacted due to logging, recreational use, and new housing developments. NEPA/EIS is left with those fragments of habitats, mining will only increase that. It will not be shocking populations of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and plants will decline in the region, and potentially become endangered or worse if we continue to extract their HOME. Yes, they say there are no underground springs in that area as of now. That could all change if mining was allowed.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report. Section 3.

Andrew Fountain 271 4 Other Statement of Project Opinion The Black Hills are sacred to Native American tribes who are the original caretakers. Mining is not only disrespectful to the caretakers, but it will have a physically negative impact on the area.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review.

Andrew Fountain 271 5 Outside of Scope Mining The economic benefits do not outweigh the potential negative environmental risk of the exploratory project does find gold mining.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review.

Andrew Fountain 271 6 Other Statement of Project Opinion The responsible and possible please; please do not allow exploratory drilling in Jerry Gulch.

Comment noted.

Stevie Holland 273 1 Regulatory Process EA Context The proposal at this very least demands extensive environmental studies which have not been completed?

The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the Draft environmental NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Comment noted.

Stevie Holland 273 2 Other Public Health and Safety Well, several private homes and condominiums line adjacent to this area and built here to enjoy the peaceful, quiet surroundings of the Black Hills, not to have drilling for gold in their backyards and all that would come with this type of activity.

Comment noted.

Stevie Holland 273 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion I am supporting the No Action alternative.

Comment noted.

Stevie Holland 273 4 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please show my opposition to this proposal for exploration.

Comment noted.

Sara Selk 276 1 Other Project Description The Jerry Gulch Gold Exploration Project Draft Environmental Assessment (hereafter referred to as "Project EA") summary excludes critical information about the overall size of the Project area. While several sections make mention of Management Areas (MA) in terms of the number of acres included in the Project area, there is no clear indication of the total acreage or size of the Project.

The Jerry Gulch Gold Exploration Project Draft Environmental Assessment (hereafter referred to as "Project EA") summary excludes critical information about the overall size of the Project area. While several sections make mention of Management Areas (MA) in terms of the number of acres included in the Project area, there is no clear indication of the total acreage or size of the Project.

Comment noted. The Project area, as shown on Draft EA Figure, is approximately 1,775 acres in size; impacts associated with each alternative are significantly smaller than this acreage.
Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 2 Regulatory Process Purpose and Need In Section 1.2, the Purpose of the Project ("to identify the geological resources located within the Project area") is clearly stated but is too narrowly defined. Clearly, the Purpose of the Project is to identify mineral resources for potential extraction (mining) and sale—not simply to determine if the resources are there. The "need" for the Project is not directly addressed. Instead, F3A indicates that the Need "relates to F3A statutory right to access its mineral lease areas for exploratory purposes.")

Comment noted. The purpose and need identified in the Draft EA meets 40 CFR 1500 and FSH 1500.15-40.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 3 Regulatory Process Purpose and Need F3A contends that the existence of statutory rights of mineral lease holders does not, in themselves, constitute a need to exercise those rights in specific ways or at specific times. Therefore, we conclude that the Need for the Project has not been stated in a manner sufficient to comport with 40 CFR 1500.15-40.

The Draft Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2022. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative B relocates drilling sites out of MA-B.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 4 Regulatory Process Forest Plan Revision F3A contends that given the current Forest Plan remains underway, this project should not be considered, much less allowed to proceed, until that revision process is completed.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 5 Regulatory Process Alternatives Analysis Additionally, the Project EIA identifies Alternatives which would require amendment to the current, outdated Forest Plan—a path that should not be considered or implemented during an ongoing Forest Plan Revision process.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 6 Regulatory Process Purpose and Need F3A contends that, considering the state’s indicated Purpose of the project considered above—that is, not only the identification, but the extraction and use of minerals from the Project Area—that the Project is in direct conflict with the stated Purpose.

The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential effects associated with exploratory drilling for each of the three alternatives. What this does with the material they extract is outside of the scope of the EA.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 7 Other Water Quality/Resource Management F3A states that, in addition to factors related to public and forest health, it is a critical water source only for the economic growth of South Dakota’s second largest city (Sioux Falls) as well as surrounding communities, but also for Ellsworth Air Force Base, west of Rapid City. As such, exploration and production of mineral resources in this critical and sensitive watershed area, due to its potential for ecological harm (including contamination of water supplies our communities depend upon) as well as disruption of well-known tourism and recreation area, presents a direct threat not only to the economic growth of the region, but also to the national defense.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources and discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 1 - soils, geology, and hydrology, technical report, Section 4.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 8 Regulatory Process Forest Plan Revision In the case of MA-B.4, mineral extraction is not an identified "opportunity/ activity." However, the Project EIA identifies 123 acres of the Project area falling within the MA-B.4, despite the fact that the activities described within the EA are prohibited from occurring within that area.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2022. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 2.3. Alternative B relocates drilling sites out of MA-B.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 9 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement) F3A contends that the Project EA does not demonstrate that the Project adheres to the laws and regulations listed in this section, including but not limited to those tied to protection of cultural and spiritual resources. Specifically, F3A states that the project requires a formal process of consultation and cultural resource surveys with impacted Tribal Governments, and the free, prior, and informed consent of impacted Tribal nations.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be affected was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and NHAO (July 26, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO confirming our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Consultation.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be affected was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and NHAO (July 26, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO confirming our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Consultation.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 10 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement) Cultural Resources Heritage Resource Management Section 3.6.5.10 states that, "An oral description of the adverse effects on historic properties has been made for Alternatives C, D, F3A were forwarded a copy of the cultural resources report on July 3, 2021 in a request for comment on the determination of effect." F3A strongly contends that forwarding a copy of a cultural resources report to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers does not constitute free, prior, and informed consent, nor does it suffice as a substitute for an archeological/cultural survey conducted by THPO themselves.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 11 Regulatory Process Alternatives Analysis Alternatives Analysis Section 3.4 1 shows that, ThPO believes the alternatives analyzed do not necessarily result in a further loss of the F3A’s statutory right to access its mineral lease areas. Instead, an Alternative A decision could point to any number of other known problems with the Project, the Project EIA, the other Alternatives presented in the Project EA, and/or the future of these Alternatives to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment, to cultural resources, and/or other established aims of the Management Areas contained within the Project boundaries.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 12 Regulatory Process Alternatives Analysis Further, although Project EIA indicates that the Agency does not appear to consider Alternative A as an actual alternative, "No Action Alternative is carried forward for further analysis in this document to serve as a basis to compare other alternatives against." F3A contends that no "basis" can be formed where the baseline of "no action" is not an actual choice or action the Agency is willing or able to make. If the alternative exists and is outlined in the Project EA (as is here), it is one that can be pursued against.

Dakota Rural Action Rebecca Terk 276 13 Other Statement of Project Opposition Dakota Rural Action contends that Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative is a mobilizing action for the Agency to take, and one that is well-supported by law, by the issues raised herein, and by our members and the community as a whole. Further, F3A contends that Alternative A presents the only acceptable alternative, and we respectfully request the Agency make a "No Action" determination on the 3 F3A’s Iron Gold Exploration Project.

Comment noted.
Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E. Soil, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E. Soil, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

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Organization | First Name | Last Name | Letter Number | Comment Number | Action | Resource | Comment
---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---
Josh Fahey | Josh Fahey | 278 | 4 | Regulatory Process | Direct Plan Revision | Direct Plan Revision | The current Forest Management Plan (published in 2003) prohibits this drilling. The Forest Service proposal to amend a Plan this already 16 years past its last revision, is unacceptable and negligent.

Josh Fahey | Josh Fahey | 278 | 5 | Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Management) | Forest Service has not met its legal requirements for Tribal Consultation. Not only did the agency fail to complete mandatory Tribal consultation during the drafting process on this project, they put the burden on Tribal officials to initiate requests on topics of cultural resources, sacred sites, and other issues that are mandated for consultation.

Josh Fahey | Josh Fahey | 278 | 6 | Water Quality/Supply, Fisheries & Wildlife | The Forest Service took no action to address the impacts of logging in the Black Hills, which will have a direct impact not only on water, but wildlife such as unique higher bison herds and an area's migration route will be negatively impacted.

Karla Pay | Karla Pay | 279 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Karla Pay | Supports the Drafts Joint Study project and support the "No Action" alternative.

Karla Pay | Karla Pay | 279 | 2 | Regulatory Process | Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement) | This consultation and protection of cultural resources are exempt.

Karla Pay | Karla Pay | 279 | 3 | Regulatory Process | EA Content | For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and the DFO (July 21, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO regarding our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Cara Marshall | Cara Marshall | 280 | 1 | Other | Statement of Project Opinion | Cara Marshall | Opposes the "Jenny Graham Exploration Drilling Project" to support the "No Action" alternative.

Cara Marshall | Cara Marshall | 280 | 2 | Regulatory Process | Environmental Period | Environmental Period | There will not be an extension to the Drafts EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (o) Opportunity to comment. (t) Time period for submission of comments – (i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Comments. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment will not be extended.

Cara Marshall | Cara Marshall | 280 | 3 | Regulatory Process | Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Management) | Forest Service has not held, as mandated by government rules and regulations, meaningful and thorough Government to Tribal Government Consultation in accordance with Executive Order No. 13607 on Indian Sacred Sites and Executive Order No. 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments for the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and the DFO (July 21, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO conforming with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Laila Marshall | Laila Marshall | 280 | 4 | Regulatory Process | 4.4 | Water Quality/Supply, Fisheries & Wildlife | Water Quality/Supply, Fisheries & Wildlife | Further regulations determine certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 218, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis. This is the Environmental Assessment (EA) or the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) only if there are extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 218(4)(b) identifies short-term (1-5 year) or less, minimal, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicle and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of road or right of way, and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which exist-existing roads that may require incidental repair to such roads for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. This proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may generally result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded by the EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official also may evaluate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has excluded the Draft EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to propose an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Laila Marshall | Laila Marshall | 280 | 5 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Outside of Scope | A land category's "disturbance area" will have negative impact on the highest bison breeding grounds. Other native wildlife in the area will be negatively impacted from the mining activity.

Laila Marshall | Laila Marshall | 280 | 6 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Outside of Scope | Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of any project alternatives on wildlife and fish is discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2-1: "Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnydale Gold Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season which should be obtained. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USGS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger." Also see Section 3.4 and Appendix D: Section 4.2, Table 4-1, Section 4.2.1, and Table 4-2. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternatives C in the Final EA to non-drilling of sites SPC-GSL, SPC-017, and SPC-019 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to bighorn sheep lambing.

Dylan BringHenly | Dylan BringHenly | 281 | 1 | Outside of Scope | Mining | Outside of Scope | Do not approve gold mining in the area due to the fact that many gold mining actions often do damage the land and pollute the water as well as their inability to take responsibility for the cleanup of the damage that they have cost so i support no action alternative.

The forest plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2021. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Table 2.3: Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of MA-4-2 to avoid the need for a Forest Service amendment.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and the DFO (July 21, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO conforming with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and the DFO (July 21, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO conforming with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

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Dylan Brings Project.

Gold Rob Bergmann 282 1 Regulatory Process

- Gold supports the NPSA process and would encourage UAVs to limit its scope to the actual project proposed when reviewing public comments.
- USFS has done a thorough analysis of F3 Gold’s proposed project in the Environmental Assessment.
- Many of the concerns highlighted in public comments during the scoping phase, as well as in published media accounts during this public comment period, are focused on impacts for works that is outside of the scope of F3 Gold’s request.
- F3 Gold would encourage the USFS to remove focus on the impacts identified in the draft EA for the project we have proposed and not to obstruct or delay in processing comments that are outside the scope of our project.

Comment noted.

Gold Rob Bergmann 282 2 Regulatory Process

- Gold has been an active participant in the NPSA process, working cooperatively with USFS on concessions and adjustments to the project to further enhance environmental safeguards and protections while also maintaining the scientific feasibility of our project from an independent data collection standpoint.

Comment noted.

Gold Rob Bergmann 282 3 Regulatory Process

- A Gold agreed to an EA in lieu of an EIS, but the process has not been conducted on a reasonable timeline and care should be taken to not add unnecessary delay.

Comment noted.

Gold Rob Bergmann 282 4 Regulatory Process

- A Gold opposed any attempts to extend the comment period for the draft EA beyond 30 days.

There will be no extension to the draft EA comment period. Please see the 56 CFR 218.25 regulations below that issues extensions and Environmental Assessments.

56 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and actions. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice.

C Environmental. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Comment noted.

Gold Rob Bergmann 282 5 Other

- Gold supports the draft EA findings and Alternatives.
- While temporary disturbances and effects were identified for several issues areas in the draft EA, there were no significant or long-term impacts identified for Alternative C. Furthermore, Alternative C includes specific project adaptations to minimize the potential impacts which were identified during scoping.
- We have reviewed the draft of a draft EA, and in review of that document and the analysis of F3 Gold’s project there, I am writing to express support for Alternative C to move forward based on the findings of the draft EA.

Comment noted.

Gold Rob Bergmann 282 6 Incorporate

- A Gold would like the USFS to clarify language in the draft EA, as it pertains to use of industry-standard drilling fluids.
- In the “Summary of Impact Mitigation Measures” section Table 2-1 (page 31 of the document), USFS notes “drilling would require water only” and “only fluids used for the project would be water, NaCl.”
- We think this language could be read to preclude the use of industry-standard drilling fluids such as bentonite-based muds, or other natural and/or biodegradable additives, which are used to more efficiently and safely drill boreholes. (Similar fluids are also used in the drilling of water wells).
- This language was not present in our submitted plan of operations.
- F3 Gold would like this language adjusted to accommodate industry-standard natural and/or biodegradable drilling additives, to match the language in Section 3.7.3.2.

Comment noted. Table 2-1 and Section 3.7.2.1 have been updated to more accurately depict this.
Brad Schneck 286 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please take no action on this and effectively shut down the exploration for gold in Jenny Gulch.

Davie Holland 284 1 Outside of Scope Mining We feel that every back home is proposing exploratory drilling that, if successful, would develop a gold mine within the watershed that supplies water to Rapid City.

David Holland 284 2 Outside of Scope Mining F3 Gold, LLC is not a mining company. They are an exploration and prospecting company. If and when gold is discovered, F3 Gold, LLC would pass the project off to another mining company. Therefore, we can't verify the track record of the mining company at this point. For example, does the mining company have a history of mining accidents or spills? It seems shady to me that the eventual mining company is not willing to put their name on the project during the development stages. Is it because they have a history of accidents and spills that would prevent the project from being approved?

David Holland 284 3 Outside of Scope Mining We feel that exploration of the lands both south and surface water from the watershed where the water supply is. One spill of the entire water supply could be contaminated. Is it really worth the risk? Can the mining company guarantee that they will never have an accident and will never contaminate the water supply? Of course its impossible to guarantee that accidents will never happen. The benefits of this project are not worth risking the safety of our public water supply.

David Holland 284 4 Outside of Scope Mining The aquifer that supply water to Rapid City are potentially rich with little to no filtering capacity. Therefore, a single accident by a mine could contaminate the aquifer and that contamination could reach the city water supply within a matter of months or even hours. And once contaminated it could take years to clean up to develop an alternative water supply.

David Holland 284 5 Outside of Scope Mining You should be allowed under the right circumstances, but it should not be allowed in this situation where it could threaten the water supply of Rapid City, the second largest city in South Dakota. It is not worth the risk to approve this application by F3 Gold, LLC.

Erik Harless 280 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion We need to let the Forest Service know a few days ago, but would like to add that I requested the Forest Service put the No Action option.

Erik Harless 286 2 Regulatory Resource KA vs ES Furthermore, I do not believe that the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment was sufficient and a full Environmental Impact Survey is necessary before writing a letter to check for a mining company to stop apart the Black Hills.

F3 Gold 283 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion F3 Gold's proposed work plan doesn't pose a threat to anything. They've been patient and gone through an exhaustive process that is supposed to be 12 months or less and has taken almost four years. The draft EA shows there are no potential harmful long term impacts from F3 Gold's project. Alternative C is an excellent example of how the process can work and demonstrates that F3 Gold has been patient and cooperative with the USFS in working to achieve the best possible outcome. Any continued delay is politically motivated and not based on science or fact. I hope that the USFS can follow the process, stick to the facts, and stand up for the science.

Jenny Gulch 287 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion No WAY !!!! Now to the proposed exploratory in the Jenny Gulch area.

Jordan Harrison 288 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Do we feel that we would risk the clear water needed for this entire wine, not to mention the impact to the ecosystem in the Jenny Gulch area, for potential gold and digging gold out of the ground boggles the mind. I am categorically opposed to this project and say you with all my heart and intellect to please stop it now.

Kathy Miller 280 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please stop the Jenny Gulch Project!!

Linda Bassen 280 1 Other Public Participation Activity This project threatens drinking water for Rapid City, Pine Ridge, Oglala Lakota, and rural homes.

Michele O'Toole 287 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion NOT WHAT I am not proposing the exploring in the Jenny Gulch area.

Response

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Response
for the DRAFT EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2011) and THPO (Oct. 2, 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Coordination is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1950-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Any potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the DRAFT EA, Appendix E: EURYX and Fisheries Biological Assessment, Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 2.3: Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnypee Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 15 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season. Should disturbance be observed, any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the discretion of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger. Also see Section 3.5 and Appendix D Section 4.2, Table 4–5, Section 4.1.2, and Table 4.2. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C to be in line with drilling of USFS G-06, B-07, and C-08 from May 1 to Aug 15 to further minimize potential effects to bighorn sheep lambing.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in this EA.

In addition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

**Jordan Bickel**

**Statement of Project Scope**

Draft is off should request an extension if we fully review the project proposal. It was insufficient for the 30 day comments to be made in the assessment.

**Comments:**

There will not be an extension to the DRAFT EA comment period. Please see the US Rule 108 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 210.25: Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments—(1) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (2) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

**William Hayford**

**Statement of Project Scope**

In our federal representative for the region I hope that you see the common sense in denying his permit to explore directly around one of our Critical sources of water.

**Jordan Bickel**

**Statement of Project Scope**

In our federal representative for the region I hope that you see the common sense in denying his permit to explore directly around one of our Critical sources of water.

**Statement of Project Scope**

We are aware of riparian property in Rapid City and in Silver City. Robert M. Bickel, and James G. Bickel, are strongly opposed to any mining in the Rapid Creek area above Priscilla reservoir without first completing the necessary studies to evaluate the impact of full-scale gold mining.

**Comment stated:**

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including bighorn sheep) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix D: EURYX and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

**Robert Bickel**

**Statement of Project Scope**

As an example, a thorough environmental impact study addressing the impact of full-scale mining must be completed before any exploration is allowed. If the environmental impact of full-scale mining would indicate that the mining should not go forward, there would be no reason to do any exploration.

**Comment stated:**

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including bighorn sheep) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix D: EURYX and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

**Robert Bickel**

**Statement of Project Scope**

We are aware of Riparian property in Rapid City and in Silver City. Robert M. Bickel, and James G. Bickel, are strongly opposed to any mining in the Rapid Creek area above Priscilla reservoir without first completing the necessary studies to evaluate the impact of full-scale gold mining.

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**Comment stated:**

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including bighorn sheep) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix D: EURYX and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

**Robert Bickel**

**Statement of Project Scope**

We are aware of Riparian property in Rapid City and in Silver City. Robert M. Bickel, and James G. Bickel, are strongly opposed to any mining in the Rapid Creek area above Priscilla reservoir without first completing the necessary studies to evaluate the impact of full-scale gold mining.

**Comment stated:**

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife (including bighorn sheep) and fish are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix D: EURYX and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.
Anna Ball 296 1 Regulatory Process Comment Period Required an extension – 30 days is not adequate time for public to review the 304 page draft Environmental Assessment document. The draft document is vague and will need clarification. This extension will allow us to get comments in a timely manner. We anticipate this process will be extended again.

Anna Ball 296 2 Regulatory Process EA Content The draft Environmental Assessment is vague and incomplete making it impossible for the public to be informed. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USDA streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical appendices that make an in-depth assessment of all the project information nearly impossible.

Anna Ball 296 3 Other Statement of Project Alternatives The project identified recreation, lake facility, wildlife, and the drilling water for potable/CSW use, internal vs private road, and tribal road construction. Comments noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives in water resources are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix A – Soil, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Table 4.

Anna Ball 296 4 Regulatory Process EA Content Requested that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be completed. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 2003, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 2003(b)(9) identifies short terms (1 year or less) instead, energy, or geopolitical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EAs is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR1506.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Anna Ball 296 5 Other Government to Government Consultation Tribal Project Tribal consultation and protection of cultural resources are incorporated.

Anna Ball 296 6 Other Publications & Other Info WestWard A unique bighorn’s sheep breeding area and migration route would be negatively impacted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix D – Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment (Biological Evaluation and Technical Report). See Draft EA Table 2.1: Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sanville Gulch-Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFWS Biological and District Range.” Also see Section 3.5 and Appendix D Section 4.2, Table 4-1, 6.2 Table 2. Additional restrictions have been added at the Bighorn C.1S outside of the window of June 1 to June 15 in order to minimize potential effects to bighorn sheep lambing.

Anna Ball 296 7 Regulatory Process EA Content The Forest Service must analyze at impacts of the project. It hasn’t done this.

Anna Ball 296 8 Other Informative Analysis Environmental Condition The project discusses impact on 13 lakes. It has not done this.

Anna Ball 296 9 Other Statement of Project Alternatives Poor use/not to proceed. Comment noted.

Carlson 297 1 Regulatory Process 304 page document only does it not have to be requested? All should be requeried for any mining in the Black Hills that affects the watered, the National forest, the animals and anyurgical land the indigenous peoples have.

Carlson 297 2 Regulatory Process Permit the Forest Service must examine the eighteen different standards of all the proposed activities. Minor Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 2003, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 2003(b)(9) identifies short terms (1 year or less) instead, energy, or geopolitical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

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The purpose of an EAs is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR1506.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Carlson 297 3 Other Statement of Project Alternatives Support the F3 Jersey Gulch-Gold Exploration Project and I support the ‘No Action’ alternative.

Carlson 297 4 Other Comment noted.
There will be no extension to the Draf EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 210 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 210.43 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (6) Opportunity to comment. (7) Time period for submission of comments—(c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment will be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (b) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR 202.6, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR 202.6(b) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geopolitical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. FIS's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action potentially will result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EIS if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated FIS's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (36 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no significant impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Ann Eads 299 3 Regulatory Process EA vs ES Forest Service, please complete the ES.

Jenny Ann Harjes 298 1 Other Statement of Project Purpose Briefly we are beyond concerned, we are fervently disturbed about the projected gold exploration project here in the Jenny-Gemith area. We are vehemently opposed to it as well.

Comment noted.

Commented Period Requesting Extension for public to review the 305 page EA documents.

Ann Eads 299 1 Other Statement of Project Purpose Reporting "No Action" on the F3-Gold Jenny Gemith Exploration Project.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.

Comment noted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Ignorance</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Generally, Big Rock Exploration strongly supports the expedited approval of the proposed project through Alternative C. Big Rock believes that the efforts put forth by FJ Gold to adjust project parameters to accommodate concerns related to the original proposed project represent an utmost good faith effort towards transparency, flexibility and environmental stewardship.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>The permitting process used to evaluate and regulate disparate exploration and mining actions must be commensurate to the action being proposed. Preliminary exploration drilling should be evaluated as a temporary limited impact activity, and not confused with the larger impacts of mineral extraction and mining. The permitting framework for each distinct action should reflect the anticipated physical, biological, hydrological and cultural impacts of that action only. This distinction is borne out in the acknowledgement of actions related to limited mineral exploration as categorically excluded from analysis under an EA or ES in Section 3.2.0(f) of Title 160B-15: NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT HANDBOOK, CHAPTER 30 - CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FROM DOCUMENTATION</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>There are many examples of both large (advanced and small Investigative early stage) exploration drilling programs throughout the United States that have been reviewed under EA. In nearly all of these cases, the determination of impact from the proposed drilling was found to be negligible and resulted in a finding of no significant impact. This should be considered precedent in the context of the termination of the same or similar action of drilling a borehole. Available NEPA documentation shows that when state and federal guidelines are met, there is no significant impact to this process.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>1. and its consequences have made every good faith effort to provide the flexibility and communicability in the design and proposed execution of this project to avoid conflict with sensitive areas and features of the region.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>In the attached table, in addition to water, 14 also allow industry standard drilling additives such as bentonite clays and fluids, or other natural and/or biodegradable additions, during drilling to more efficiently and safely drill and seal boreholes. Table 3.1 and Section 3.2.1 have been updated to more accurately depict this.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Summary of Impact Mitigation Measures – Alternative A – Table 2.1, doc pg. 74: “Drilling would require water only.” “Drilling fluids used for the project would be water, oil, fuel. This language is in direct conflict with Section 3.7.2.2, and capable readers to preclude the use of industry standard drilling fluids to more efficiently and safely complete boreholes. Such common fluids include bentonite clays and fluids, and other natural and/or biodegradable additives that are used in the drilling of water wells. The origin of this exclusionary language in the draft EA is not clear and is not present in the submitted Plan of Operations. Big Rock Exploration requests that this specific language be adjusted to accommodate industry standard natural and/or biodegradable drilling additives, so match the language in Section 3.7.2.2, noting otherwise activities to include drilling, drilling fluid, abandonment, etc.”</td>
<td>Test and associated information were added (to Section 3.3.2.3) in Appendix 4.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Rock Exploration, LLC</td>
<td>Gabriel</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Incorporate</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Discussion of Alternatives &amp; (if it) impacts on ground and surface waters – doc pg. 38. Speculation on the potential for oxygenated water used for drilling (e.g., municipal) to drive reduction of sulfides in mineralized zones, yielding oil changes of groundwater and release of iron, zinc and manganese.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proceeded action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B – Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>B TREE</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Allowing gold exploration limited mining 19th and 20th key poses a serious threat to the water quality and beauty of the area. Mining ALWAYS destroys the water quality in the surrounding areas and bring guilt is a great recreation area. Big Rock Exploration requests these examples and/or studies of this type of event occurring within the similar to the proposed drill program (e.g., still hole open for less than a month prior to abandonment) as well as physical scales to be included.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proceeded action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jor Sorella</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please do not approve this mining project. Please protect the Parks Scope – it’s our front provincial local resource.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proceeded action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ochoco</td>
<td>Addison</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We are not allowing any more mining in the Rapid Creek Watershed.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proceeded action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E – Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clackamas</td>
<td>Addison</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>Please extend the public comment period on this at black rock residents can voice their concerns and feedback.</td>
<td>Please do not allow any more mining in the Rapid Creek Watershed. Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice.</td>
<td>Clackamas. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rochelle Hagel 306 1 Outside of Scope Mining Maybe I should ask why a project that stands a very real chance of passing the water that boils and visitors rely on, that could very well create an environmental disaster is a beautiful recreation area, and that presents virtually no possibility of replugging the income streams that it could destroy, should be approved. Finally, everyone, who knows anything about how this stuff works, knows that the profits from mining in this area will flow out to corporate owners and stakeholders, not to Black Hills residents or even the larger body of South Dakotans who stand to lose quality of life and perhaps very much more for water if this source of water is rendered unusable.

Rochelle Hagel 306 2 Regulatory Process Comment Period Please extend the public comment window.

Rochelle Hagel 306 3 Other Statement of Project Scope MORE IMPORTANTLY, consider rejecting this proposal entirely.

East Anderson 307 1 Other Statement of Project Scope As a hiking resident, local resident, taxpayer, and lover of the Black Hills, I cannot imagine how to deny allowing gold exploration or mining in the area without authorization. The sacred hills are threatened enough already, and turning the risk of water contamination from these activities is just not worth it.

East Anderson 307 2 Other Project Description A Section 3.3.1.1, the EA identifies Management Areas (MAs) falling within the Project area and its various arrays within the project boundaries. I cannot find anywhere the total area of the proposed project.

Richard Belt 308 1 Regulatory Process Governmental Consultation (Tribal engagement) Section 3.4.1.4 the laws and regulations that apply to the proposed project. The EA does not demonstrate that it adheres to the laws and regulations listed in this section, especially those related to protection of cultural and spiritual resources. The taken attempt by the USFS to "consult" with the Tribes about it cannot be considered any kind of "Government to Government consultation as required by NEPA.

Richard Belt 308 2 Other Project Description A Section 3.3.1 the EA identifies 113 sites of the Project area lying within the project boundaries that I believe are not adequately described within the EA.

Richard Belt 308 3 Regulatory Process Correct Plan Revision However, the EA does not provide a complete list of all the project sites and their activities affected by those sites.

Richard Belt 308 4 Regulatory Process EA vs ES In my opinion, if the USFS were to require anything less than a full-blown ES, it would be an invitation to disaster, which you agency and the people of Western South Dakota cannot afford.

Federal regulators identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For CER part 220A, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 220A(b)(8) identifies short-term (1-2 years) or minor, mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also exclude a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3's EA to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Richard Belt 309 1 Regulatory Process EA vs ES For the safety of those that work, play, and live in the area — and all of those who rely on it for water — I would urge the Forest Service to complete a full Environmental Impact Statement in order to fully assess the risk of drilling to the forest, wildlife, recreation, and most importantly to our water. With the potential of years, or possibly decades, of harm should things go wrong, I believe it is worth extra time and effort to complete the full Environmental Impact Statement.

Federal regulators identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For CER part 220A, a proposed action may be excluded from further analyses and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 220A(b)(8) identifies short-term (1-2 years) or minor, mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

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The draft Environmental Assessment contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.
Wade Ellett 309 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion
For these reasons, I oppose F3's Jenny Gulch gold project and support the "No Action" alternative.
Comment noted.

Wade Ellett 309 3 Regulatory Process
Appropriately time the time to consider my objection — I will urge you to extend the amount of time available for public comment. The assessment is not a small document, and I believe it is important for people to have the opportunity to inform what is going on in the area.
Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 3.

Sissy Delman 310 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion
If completely opposed to this project due to the potential impact on ground water, the immediate impact on the river in the area should the project take place, and the fact that the public will not have access to the area while a private company seeks to profit. Therefore I respectfully request that this project, and any like it, be not permitted to commence.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 1 Regulatory Process AEA Content The Draft EA is thorough and comprehensive analysis of the potential impacts on public land.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 2 Regulatory Process AEA Content If the Draft EA has addressed all of the relevant issues as required by law.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 3 Regulatory Process AEA Content If the Draft EA has established a alternative to issue raised in the first public comment period.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 4 Regulatory Process Mining Act of 1972
Mineral exploration as accepted in the USG doctrine of multiple use.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 5 Regulatory Process AEA vs EL Requiring the applicant to outline the analysis for a single mining exploration as proposed, to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is entirely unwarranted.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 6 Regulatory Process AEA Content The bottom line, no significant impacts have been identified which are not addressed and mitigated by the suggested alternatives.
Comment noted.

South Dakota School of Mines Mark Bowron 311 7 Other Statement of Project Opinion Alternative 4 appears to provide the most reasonable and comprehensive reasonable to address the concerns of this temporary disturbance on the land.
Comment noted.

Mark Eisen 312 1 Outside of Scope Mining Understand the current applications for the exploration. I do not understand that this is a pre-work requirement for full scale mining, possible even open pit mining.
Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.

Mark Eisen 312 2 Regulatory Process Government Consultation (Trike engagement) It is true that there still exist no tribal consultations to date on this project? I applaud the approval of, any exploration permits with out A formalization to nation tribal consultation. It is clear that the tribe be included in these important decisions.
for the Draft EA, an inventory Heritage resource inventory of all areas to be affected was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2011) and NHO (October 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2011, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 14 and 6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1550.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Mark Eisen 312 3 Other Reclamation 100% of costs just in the Black hills cost of reclamation and cleanup up pursuant to the Clean Air Act, Local, State and National governments that the taxpayers have to subsidize these businesses in order to protect the viability of our communities. This cost effective practice of transferring cost of business from the private sector to the taxpayer is unsustainable. The insufficient insurance requirement amounts to another tax payer liability.
It is required to submit a reclamation plan to the Forest Service prior to authorization for project initiation in accordance with Forest Service Manual 4406. In addition, F3 Gold is responsible for submitting a reclamation bond to the Forest Service for the exploration project, with the bond amount determined by the Forest Service.

Mark Eisen 312 4 Other Water Quality/Water Supply This is a threat to our water, both surface and the aquifer.
Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 6.

Mark Eisen 312 5 Other Statement of Project Opinion Strongly urge you to reject the current exploration permits for the Jenny Gulch area and all further exploration.
Comment noted.

Evelyn Griesse 313 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion The Project CANNOT follow the mining anywhere near our watershed.
Comment noted.

Evelyn Griesse 314 1 Other Reclamation Scoping the project sites will disrupt ground cover, soil productivity, access, local wildlife habitat/movement/life patterns. Adequate reclamation/renewal can take years to accomplish.
Potential effects of all project alternatives on water and soil resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D - Wildfire and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.

Evelyn Griesse 314 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Water consumption (possible contamination &/or disruption of natural flow) will be impacted at the project sites & probably throughout the Jenny Gulch area.
Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology. Technical Report, Section 4.

Evelyn Griesse 314 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please reject the exploration project.
Comment noted.
Mining the potential impact on these resources may be minimal for prospective drilling operations; however, in the event that a mining permit were to be issued to another entity, everything would change: I feel it is imperative that the first stages of this project/expansion must be held to the highest standards to protect and maintain the natural resources in this area. Any commitments made by E3 in an exploration may not pass on to future development for mining operations, or simply may not be adequate.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

The threat of measurable damage outweighs any possible benefits.

Comment stated.

Bellevue Fork 318 1 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The impact on natural flows of all streams within the proposed project area due to mining operations, and the USGS Atlas of Water Resources in the Black Hills Area, South Dakota clearly indicates that interplay between Rapid Creek and the Minnelusa aquifer. That interplay means that contamination of the surface waters of Patolco Reservoir, upstream tributaries, and/or Rapid Creek, including by exploration and mining-related activities such as those proposed in this Project EA creates a contamination risk for my water supply, as well as that which supplies other residents of this canyon and the larger community of Rapid City.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6.

Bellevue Fork 318 2 Regulatory Purpose and Need In reviewing the Project EA, I am struck by lack of clarity of the definition of the Project or terms of total acreage, as well as lack of clarity in terms of the Purpose and Need for the Project. While the purpose is stated as investigatory and for the identification of minerals present, it seems clear that the actual intent or purpose is to locate those minerals for the purpose of extraction and sale. Narrowly defining the purpose in this way suggests a desire to block public participation and impact on the issues that this project rather obviously represents—including, but not limited to the very real potential for mining in a critical watershed in the central Black Hills.

Comment stated. The Project area, as shown on Draft EA figures, is approximately 1,737 acres in core, impacts associated with each alternative are significantly smaller than this area. The purpose and need identified in the Draft EA meets 40 CFR 1500 and 40 CFR 1505.

Bellevue Fork 318 3 Regulatory Purpose and Need Further, the stated need for the project is stated to be in "reestablish" to the (previously defined purpose, but the need itself is never clearly stated.

Comment stated.

Bellevue Fork 318 4 Regulatory Forest Plan Revisions The Future Forest Plan suggests that the Project Area may be a good place to establish a baseline for future research. If the Project Area is to be considered a baseline, it should be documented in the Project EA. The Site is defined by the Forest Service as a "Scored Site" suggesting the need for the Project Area to be documented in the Project EA.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2000. The anticipated date for completion in 2002. Until revision is complete, the project is being evaluated under the 2000 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan as amended, which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 3.2. Alternative C relocates drilling sites out of M&O to avoid the need for a future plan amendment.


Bellevue Fork 318 5 Other Statement of Project Alternatives Economic growth of this region is dependent not only on the quantity, but also the quality of water available for use, and as weekly dependent on our scenic and natural, natural beauty, wildlife habitat, and access to recreational areas—all of which are currently and dependent on the Forest Service. If the Project Area is to be scored, the Project Area may lead to a complete review of the recreational access of the Project Area.

Comment stated. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2001) and THPO (July 22, 2001) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2001, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1910-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 6.

Bellevue Fork 318 6 Other Water Quality/Water Supply Additionally,t the USGS Atlas of Water Resources in the Black Hills Area, South Dakota clearly indicates that interplay between Rapid Creek and the Minnelusa aquifer that contamination of the surface waters of Patolco Reservoir, upstream tributaries, and/or Rapid Creek, including by exploration and mining-related activities such as those proposed in this Project EA creates a contamination risk for my water supply. As well as that which supplies other residents of this canyon and the larger community of Rapid City.

Bellevue Fork 318 7 Regulatory Government to Government Consultation Tribal Engagement A particular, reference to NAGPRA and American Indian Religious Freedom Act would suggest that Tribal Consultation is warranted, and that Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) have made a full cultural resource survey of the site. However, Project EA literature indicates that THPOs have received only one letter without comment, which does not in any way fulfill the need for Consultation at a comprehensive cultural survey of the site.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2001) and THPO (July 22, 2001) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2001, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1910-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Bellevue Fork 318 8 Regulatory Watershed Analysis Interactions spelled out for the Project in Chapter 3 are not for inside Project EA. It seems to indicate that Alternative A is not, in fact, a valid option for the USGS, to select because "Alternative A does not meet the Project's purpose and need as it would negate its statutory right under the Mining Act of 1872 to access its mineral lease areas for exploration purposes." However, as stated previously, the Project's purpose is too narrowly defined, and its need is altogether undefined. Pull simply, a forest service non approval of this Project at this time with the limited alternatives offered in the EA does not constitute an absolute negation of E3's statutory rights.

N/A. Analysis must evaluate range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR 1508.14(f)(i) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technologically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, when applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives. The purpose and need identified in the Draft EA meets 40 CFR 1500 and 40 CFR 1505.

Bellevue Fork 318 9 Regulatory Watershed Analysis Would also add that the Act that Alternative A should failure and is considered to be a baseline for comparison means that it is a viable alternative. If it is not a viable alternative, then it cannot serve as a basis for comparison, and it is misleading in the extreme to include it in the Project EA at.

N/A. Analysis must evaluate range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR 1508.14(f)(i) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technologically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, when applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.
Rebecca White
318  10  Regulatory Process
Alternatives Analysis

Alternative B (oil and gas drilling) is, as previously stated, severely limiting, and so to fully consider or mitigate the worst of this Project's impacts, Alternative B or C represent viable options that protect and provide for economic growth or national defense.

Rebecca White
318  11  Other
Fisheries & Wildlife

An alternative that is affected by the Project is not mitigated by Alternative B or C is the impact on riparian breeding and nesting grounds that overfly this Project area.

Rebecca White
318  12  Other
Fisheries & Wildlife

Any proposal that shows potential to undermine this struggling population (of bighorn sheep) should be rejected.

Rebecca White
318  13  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

It is conclusively shown that the only viable alternative for the Jenny Gulch Sector Exploration Project.

Rebecca White
318  14  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

Statement of Project Opinion

Wildlife Any restrictions have been added to Alternative B (the Jenny Gulch Sector Exploration Project).

Rebecca White
318  15  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

We have identified a number of observable and past experience shows that mining operations public bodies of water, kill fish and make a area just plain ugly.

Kellen Willinger
319  1  Outside of Scope
Mining

We have identified a number of observable and past experience shows that mining operations public bodies of water, kill fish and make a area just plain ugly.

Kellen Willinger
319  2  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

We have identified a number of observable and past experience shows that mining operations public bodies of water, kill fish and make a area just plain ugly.

Levi Bulis
320  1  Outside of Scope
Mining

It is not a part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future will be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Levi Bulis
320  2  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

The Environmental Impact Statement that was submitted relies heavily on premises made by the company proposing the drilling, who has a stake in the area since their exploration is complete.

Levi Bulis
320  3  Regulatory Process

The Environmental Impact Statement that was submitted relies heavily on premises made by the company proposing the drilling, who has a stake in the area since their exploration is complete.

Levi Bulis
320  4  Regulatory Process

Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)

This activity is concerned by the public domain by the Forest Service in regards to its legal requirement for Tribal Consultation by putting the onus for initiating these discussions on the tribal officials instead of being proactive about it.

Levi Bulis
320  5  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

This activity is concerned by the public domain by the Forest Service in regards to its legal requirement for Tribal Consultation by putting the onus for initiating these discussions on the tribal officials instead of being proactive about it.

Bretton Odel
321  1  Outside of Scope
Mining

Understand that mining activities have changed over the years, but any sort of mining is a major water use activity.

Bretton Odel
321  2  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

Please be a source of protection for our entire community and for future generations to come by not allowing any exploration near our vital sources of water.

Robin Eggeling- Bagley
322  1  Other
Water Quality/Supply

There have been concerns about this project, not least that it impacts the water quality of Rapid Creek and Parrotta Resource, which is the source of drinking water for Rapid Creek and Ellsworth City.

Robin Eggeling- Bagley
322  2  Other
Mining

It is important to consider the harm this exploration could bring to the forest's wildlife and recreation opportunities as well.

Robin Eggeling- Bagley
322  3  Other
Statement of Project Opinion

It is not a part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future will be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix I - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dike</td>
<td>Commenter</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>To draw around, drilling to no more than 100 ft deep this various rock formations in the area proposed, no matter how confining the company is to prevent damage to underlying water basins being pictured and drilled, will only cause local with problems that it will?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dike</td>
<td>Commenter</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)</td>
<td>Previous in the Environmental Assessment is needed here in this case, along with necessary input from Indigenous tribes to whom this proposed area was ceded by the “Crown” Law of the Land GUR CONSTITUTION (Treaty of 1864) for the Draft EA, an intensive mitigation resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to the BLM (August 2, 2011) and to the SHPO (July 26, 2011) office for review and comment. A letter dated September 10, 2011, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.6 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. As an agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory directive. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Treaty. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Treaty. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gach Gold Exploration Drilling Project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dike</td>
<td>Commenter</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Soil, Geology, Hydrogeology, Geohydrology &amp; Soils</td>
<td>Includes: Soil, Geology, Hydrogeology, Geohydrology &amp; Soils</td>
<td>The role of investigating and developing, the large, raw project and the potential impacts associated with the project, especially to the Black Hills, is to be implemented. The project, as planned, involves mining activities in the process of mining and drilling for mineral resources, including water resources, and the potential impacts to the Black Hills in the area proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dike</td>
<td>Commenter</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>There is no discussion of presence and potential water issues that may arise during mining activities in the probable Project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek. Water will be the issue it if not underground cavern is present during drilling after (or before pressurized) water resources are drained and the water (resources) drains into the caverns; instead, there are potential for ins and hoped for compliance with any permit conditions and federal law and regulations to protect the Watershed. Thus, the Draft EA fails to address any water issues concern the impact to any part of the Watershed of aquifer and/or underground water resources remaining or draining due to drilling related, errors or agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>There is no exploration or analysis of any kind by F3 to focus on number of drill or directional drill lines in the Plan or the alternative C or, for Alternative C includes the underground water (and number of hours).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Geology, Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>Geology, Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>There is no discussion of impacts on potential water supply through various geological strata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>Geology, Geohydrology, Geochemistry &amp; Soils</td>
<td>There is no discussion of presence and potential water issues that may arise during mining activities in the probable Project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek. Water will be the issue it if not underground cavern is present during drilling after (or before pressurized) water resources are drained and the water (resources) drains into the caverns; instead, there are potential for ins and hoped for compliance with any permit conditions and federal law and regulations to protect the Watershed. Thus, the Draft EA fails to address any water issues concern the impact to any part of the Watershed of aquifer and/or underground water resources remaining or draining due to drilling related, errors or agreements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Processes</td>
<td>Public Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Public Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Public Agency Engagement</td>
<td>The purpose and need identified in the Draft EA meets 42 CFR 1500 and FSH 1500.13, 403,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>No significant impacts on any of the state’s resources are identified in the proposed project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
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<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>No significant impacts on any of the state’s resources are identified in the proposed project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>No significant impacts on any of the state’s resources are identified in the proposed project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>No significant impacts on any of the state’s resources are identified in the proposed project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce</td>
<td>Ellison</td>
<td>S32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>No significant impacts on any of the state’s resources are identified in the proposed project area and lower parts of Rapid Creek, Spear Creek, and Elkh Creek.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bruce Ellison 325 7 Regulatory Process Purpose and Need
�Alternative Analysis
Due to the narrowed scope of the analysis taken in the Draft EA, it is not considered an area of required NEPA analysis as well. Specifically, this narrowly defined "federal action" and "purpose and need" precluded detailed analysis of any other alternatives other than to accept F3's Plan of Operations, or alternatively, a slightly modified one, and thereby foreclosed reasonable consideration of alternatives, including the "no action" alternative or an exploration scheme substantially more limited in scope, location, sequence, with substantially greater environmental protection requirements and oversight.

Bruce Ellison 325 8 Regulatory Process Purpose and Need
�The "purpose and need" statement avoids the stated purpose of the exploration which is to approve a Plan of Operations for development of federal minerals by a private developer.

Bruce Ellison 325 9 Outside of Scope Mining
�The purpose and need of the private proposal is to remove gold or other minerals from public lands for sale in the global commodity market.

Bruce Ellison 325 10 Other Project Description
�The draft EA fails to conduct any sort of balancing of the proposed number of drill holes and/or number of drilling holes, or incremental drilling permitted from each well with potential environmental impacts.

Bruce Ellison 325 11 Regulatory Process Purpose and Need
�There is no definition of "federal action" provided for in the Draft EA. The Federal Resources and Management Act states "federal action" as "any action having the potential to affect the environment or public interest.

Bruce Ellison 325 12 Regulatory Process Project Description
�The stated goal of the draft EA to conduct operations in compliance with FS regulations is to really set no identifiable standards. Does F3 or the FS set the standards? The draft EA failure to describe how the FS will ensure that no impacts or only "minimal" impacts will occur.

Bruce Ellison 325 13 Regulatory Process EA Content
�What constitutes a "minimal" impact? Does F3 or the FS or the EA fail to determine what constitutes a "minimal impact"? There is no standard of "baseline" conditions set forth in the EA which would constitute a prohibited threshold.

Bruce Ellison 325 14 Regulatory Process Project Description
�If an exploratory drilling project is conducted, will it have a significant environmental impact? The draft EA fails to discuss the potential of a "minimal" impact on the environment.

Bruce Ellison 325 15 Regulatory Process EA Content
�An exploratory drilling project is conducted, with the potential to affect the environment or public interest, "minimal" impacts or not. The draft EA fails to discuss the potential of a "minimal" impact on the environment.

Bruce Ellison 325 16 Outside of Scope Mining
�Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review. The purpose and need identified in the Draft EA meets 40 CFR 1500 and FSH 100.15-40.

The purpose and need of the private proposal is to remove gold or other minerals from public lands for sale in the global commodity market.

Bruce Ellison 325 17 Regulatory Process EA Content
�The draft EA identifies that current conditions of the land, air, and water resources in the proposed exploration area be used as a "baseline" for evaluating impacts, the FS fails to establish what the detailed conditions for the respective parts of the area is to be impacted, yet also fails to consider any impact or "no action" alternatives.

Bruce Ellison 325 18 Other Project Description
�The project is defined as the potential impact of toxic and carcinogenic heavy metals and arsenic brought to the surface or introduced with surface water during the drilling process.

Bruce Ellison 325 19 Regulatory Process Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)
�The F3 proposal being a major waterfowl project, the FS fairly conducted consultation with the 13 Tribes which the FS is required by federal regulation to consult.

The purpose and need of the private proposal is to remove gold or other minerals from public lands for sale in the global commodity market.

NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR § 1508.1(a) defines "reasonable alternatives" as a range of reasonable alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, when applicable, meets the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

The purpose and need identified in the Draft EA meets 40 CFR 1500 and FSH 100.15-40.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Ellison</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Skills and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>Federal law states that the BLM is responsible for managing and protecting the surface of the Black Hills National Forest. However, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for managing and protecting the mineral rights under the surface of &quot;public lands&quot; including the National Forest. The draft EA does not reference any involvement of the BLM in the analysis conducted for the F3 project nor any effort by F3 to seek BLM approval to explore the mineral rights under the authority of the BLM, not the FS. BLM has jurisdiction over the ownership of mining claims below the surface, while the USFS manages surface rights. The BLM was included in the project scoping, was invited to the interagency scoping meeting in January 2020 and received notice of availability of the Draft EA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Ellison</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>The draft EA fails to include a serious analysis of the subsurface interference caused by exploratory drilling which will have no demonstrated use of the area. Potential project effects on recreation are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B, Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Ellison</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; Wildlife</td>
<td>A further fail in accountability and provide direction to operations to prevent substantial disruption of bag-normed sheep herds, as well as other assemblages wide throughout the area. Potential effects to wildlife (including bag-normed sheep) are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D, Draft Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Ellison</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Forest Plan Revision</td>
<td>The draft EA fails to reference how the current F3 plan has been under review and revision for a number of years and getting closer to fruition. There is no discussion of the revisions being contemplated and how or whether they would also have to be amended or ignored by the FS to ensure F3 parts to all or most of what it wants in most locations it wants to explore as a probable to large scale mining of this critical subsurface area. The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2023. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2000 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 3.3. Alternative C eliminates drilling one out of M8-8.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruce Ellison</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>All Current</td>
<td>A short, the draft EA is highly and naturally deficient in each of the areas it addresses. A new EA should be required following a more serious and sufficient NEPA analysis of the potential or likely impact of each part of F3's proposed project on any scale large scale destructive mining operations on the short and long-term human and other environment.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Whitlock</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Mining involves digging, I'm writing this note in opposition to the gold exploration in Lensy Gulch.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Whitlock</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>There’s no way they can move this area without altering the immediate Lensy Gulch area as well as everything downstream through Rapid City and out into the prairie.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Dill</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Not Black Hills have very abundant minerals. I live to visit them in my area, but please don’t authorize any new gold mining.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay Deff</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The aesthetic consideration of deposition is under threat from privations. Everything begins with mining. If it isn’t grown, it must be mined. If F3 has passed legal muster, then so be it.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage Nichols</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am a local resident of Rapid City, South Dakota and am writing here today to support the F3’s &quot;Genny Gulch Exploration Project&quot; and support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>329</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I’m going to be out of town for most of the month. If you do have time to look over the proposed, and the subtle nature by F3 indicates that they do not care what the residents—who will undoubtedly be negatively impacted by their project—think or feel about it.</td>
<td>There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please use the 30 CFR 721 regulations below处to discuss of唉rations and Environmental Assessments. 16 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (d) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sage Nichols</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>As introducing drilling into the sacred Black Hills, not only does it threaten the history of this land and benefit from the broken Laramie Treaty of 1868, the Forest Service has neglected to complete any kind of meaningful consultation. Ultimately forcing the Tribal Council to initiate these meetings.</td>
<td>The draft EA includes a comprehensive resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to USFS (August 20, 2021) and USFS (June 9, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SRPO concerning our recommendation. Sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the Draft Module 2 introduced the project, the USFS Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sage Nichols</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Forest Plan Revision</td>
<td>Really, it is also important to note that the current Forest Management Plan that was published in 2007, prohibits this drilling. The Forest Service proposed to amend this Plan that is already 18 years past its last amendment, is terribly negligent and fully unacceptable.</td>
<td>The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2023. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2000 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record. See Draft EA Section 3.3. Alternative C eliminates drilling one out of M8-8.2 to avoid the need for a Forest Plan amendment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>要览</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I wish to state that I am opposed to any gold exploration in the Black Hills of South Dakota.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Fisher</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am writing today to say No to the Gold Project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Fisher</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Home, please do not let the mining companies pollute our water and soil, in fact, we are in the Black Hills.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E: Water, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Albin</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>I am writing to strongly oppose gold mining projects and exploration in the Jenny Gulch - or for that matter – in any area that will ruin the quality of the water in Rapid Creek.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E: Water, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Taylor</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>I am totally against this project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Chandler</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Please find is well worth from an exploratory operation to a mining operation.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Chandler</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Briefly.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leah Borndorfer
335 1 Other Statement of Project Option
To a local Rapid City Citizen, a nurse, a public health advocate, and a recreationalist, soon-to-erew more, and just as a human being living on planet earth. I am greatly concerned about the idea of gold exploration or allowing any kind of extraction group to break the sacred waters around Patakus Reservoir.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreational Technical Report - Section 3.

Leah Borndorfer
336 2 Outside of Scope Mining
Mining is preparing the land and waterbing, not only physically in the warm of mining and its toxics by products, but emotionally and mentally in the loss of recreation and nature in the Patakus area.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future will be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreational Technical Report - Section 3.

Brad Evans
336 1 Other Statement of Project Option
"Exploratory" Drilling only leads us to ONE THING = more mining. It's not mine crassa 818 or mine new, we do more consider it - especially near the headwaters of our drinking water supply. NO NO NO. I'm a 5th-generation Black resident. We don't need more polluting mining jobs. Give our mother (SHA) a break!

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrological Technical Report, Section 3. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future will be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 1 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)
the F3 gold mining- friendly exploratory drilling project area is on the Dine and Blood Forte Locate Treaty Territory, without consent of the Sioux Nation System.

The Draft EA, alternative heritage resource inventory of all areas to be included is conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting only if further recommendations are submitted. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will be conducted to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 2 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)
tribal consultation needs to be held with the Aicikapola Tribe.

The sections 4.4 through 4.6 of the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be included is conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting only if further recommendations are submitted. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will be conducted to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 3 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)
The DRAFT - Environmental Assessment (EA) does not address Tribal concerns fully, Cultural, Water and Land issues and is beyond the scope of the EA.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be included is conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting our recommendation. See Sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will be conducted to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 4 Regulatory Process Draft EA
2.1b EA
the US Forest Service needs to perform a DRAFT - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) not a DRAFT Environmental Assessment (EA) due to narrow scope of Tribal concerns.

The regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 16 CFR 1002.604, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 16 CFR part 1002.604 identifies short-term (2 years or less) mining, energy, or geological investigations and their residential support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of roadstead, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites and other data-collection features. EIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EA’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be included is conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting our recommendation. See Sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will be conducted to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 5 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)
The Draft (SA) is not fully informing the public on Tribal lands.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be included is conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting our recommendation. See Sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will be conducted to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 6 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)
NHPA, NEPA EA and Executive Order 13007 on Protection of Indian Sacred Sites, remains impacts to cultural sites, a communal life and Native burial sites are not fully properly evaluated and protected.

See Draft EA Section 3.6.1, which states: "Due to the sensitive nature of information presented in the cultural resources report, this document is only able to be shared with appropriate tribal groups and individuals and is exempt from public availability requirements." Also see Draft EA Section 1.3.6, the Project is in compliance with Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites; Executive Order 13715 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (related Presidential Memorandums from 2004, 2009, and 2010); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended [16 USC 470n et seq.]; Protection of History and Cultural Resources (CFR)/BIA/2009, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and 49 CFR 18; American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, and USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Tribe Water Resources Department
Keto Red Cloud Sr.
337 7 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)
the proposed DRAFT SA has a narrow scope. there must be a comprehensive evaluation of impacts to Treaty rights, cumulative impacts, and impacts to medicinal plants and species of concern to the Tribes.

See Sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be included is conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting our recommendation. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will be conducted to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation. As an agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all Federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States statute, direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux Nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gold Exploration Drilling Project.
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<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apsaalooke Sioux Tribe Water Resources Department</td>
<td>Red Cloud Sr.</td>
<td>Keno</td>
<td>Other Regulatory Process</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Draft Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>EA vs ES</td>
<td>The potential for groundwater and surface water contamination is too great for a DRAFT - Environmental Assessment (EA) and requires a DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement in the NEPA Process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apsaalooke Sioux Tribe Water Resources Department</td>
<td>Red Cloud Sr.</td>
<td>Keno</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Agreement)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The proximity of proposed drilling pads to Pk 16a and nearby public lands threatens Indigenous cultural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apsaalooke Sioux Tribe Water Resources Department</td>
<td>Red Cloud Sr.</td>
<td>Keno</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Agreement)</td>
<td></td>
<td>The trust responsibility of the federal agency must be met in accordance to the treaty's and applicable laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apsaalooke Sioux Tribe Water Resources Department</td>
<td>Red Cloud Sr.</td>
<td>Keno</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Draft Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>EA vs ES</td>
<td>The proposed action may be elevated to an EA to assess potential environmental impacts. The Federal regulation identifies certain actions as categorical exclusions. 40 CFR part 212(a), a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if it is not reasonably anticipated to have a significant effect on the human environment. If the action falls within one of several identified categories, 36 CFR part 212(a)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geographic investigations and those incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. 40 CFR part 212(a), a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if it is not reasonably anticipated to have a significant effect on the human environment. If the action falls within one of several identified categories, 36 CFR part 212(a)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geographic investigations and those incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. 40 CFR part 212(a), a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if it is not reasonably anticipated to have a significant effect on the human environment. If the action falls within one of several identified categories, 36 CFR part 212(a)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geographic investigations and those incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action.</td>
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<td>Allen Orville</td>
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<td>188</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Olson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clifford Morin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>340</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Option</td>
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</table>

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix C - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 5. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 212(a), a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if it is not reasonably anticipated to have a significant effect on the human environment. If the action falls within one of several identified categories, 36 CFR part 212(a)(3) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geographic investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geographic investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. If it's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has not elevated EA to assess potential project effects. If the Federal EA to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.2). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action is likely to result in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dorothy</td>
<td>Manan</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>In addition to an incomplete and vague Environmental Impact Statement, the fact that not all potential impacts of the project have been looked at and analyzed is concern enough to support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical-exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 212-4, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 212.4(b)(2) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geopolitical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of new standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FV's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Strategies</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Mann</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>Believe it is important that a decision on the FJ Gold environmental assessment consider the obligations the U.S. Forest Service must address: first, as clearly stated in the draft EA, current federal mining law establishes a statutory right to access its mineral areas for exploration purposes. The EA was conducted by independent third-party contractor to provide an unbiased assessment of potential impacts from a wide range of resources within the Jenny Gulch Project boundaries. The recommendations reflected in Alternative C, the preferred alternative, have been endorsed by FJ Gold in cooperation with USFS. The Jenny Gulch Project is NOT a mining proposal, and hysterical public statements to the contrary, are not relevant to a finding of its significant impact.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry Strategies</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Mann</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>The Black Hills area has been explored for decades, very few individuals could find previous mineral exploration sites within the forest, and after FJ Gold's activities, very few will be able to identify evidence of such efforts.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry Strategies</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Mann</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Project Description</td>
<td>FJ Gold has cooperatively participated with the Forest Service to reach a science and engineering based conclusion to approve a thoughtful and effective plan of operation for exploration. The process has reached this stage of consideration after three years and significant cost. The opponents strategy of denial by delay undermines long standing practices of statutory interpretation and best practices standards.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry Strategies</td>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Mann</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Proposed Opinion</td>
<td>In all of the business proposals, title is if the forest - again the VST to issue a RNDI in a timely manner.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Strategies</td>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Proposed Opinion</td>
<td>We are against further mining in the Black Hills. We have already had enough environmental catastrophes such as water contamination, superfund sites, acidic tests drainage problems etc. The Rapid Creek drainage basin is definitely bad off for this kind of activity.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. The potential effects of exploratory drilling are discussed in the Draft EA and associated appendices.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Thorsteinson</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Proposed Opinion</td>
<td>All of the decisions that the Forest Service makes regarding land use should be one of the simplest. Do not permit this request. The Jenny Gulch area and the Rapid Creek watershed are critical for wildlife, recreation and public drinking water.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Thorsteinson</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>To allow a gold mine in this sensitive area is a tremendously bad idea. It runs contrary to the Forest Service vision of multiple use and would convert that area into single use</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Enlow</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Proposed Opinion</td>
<td>Support FV's Jenny Gulch gold project and support the &quot;No Action&quot; alternative.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 40 CFR part 210, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 40 CFR part 210.6(a)(8) identifies short term (2 years or less) mineral, energy, or geographical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require road-crossing travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FIS’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FIS’s proposed action to EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on wildlife and fish are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix D: Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/ Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreational resources are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix A: Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report - Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA. Appendix C: Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.
Draft EA

We would expedient in efforts to finalize the EAs and publish a decision upon completion of public input.

Kevin Ellbeck

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EAs to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare a environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Katherine Jacelich

The USFS relies on data from South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGF&P) who is responsible for bighorn sheep management state-wide. Lambing areas were delineated by the SDGF&P, provided in a ESRI shapefile in 2012 that included data from radio-telemetry collar locations and professional expertise of bighorn sheep managers that track sheep locations. Neither alternative has drill sites located in the SDGF&P-defined lambing area. However, additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of sites SPC-016, SPC-017, and SPC-019 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential impacts to bighorn sheep lambing.

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These edits are incorporated in the Final EA.

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Katherine Jacelich

The South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks (SDGF&P) has concerns that the Jenny Gulch and Exploration Drilling Project (proposed Draft EA, "Alternative C - Modified Proposed Action") permits avoidable impacts to bighorn sheep. Specifically, implementing the Proposed Mitigation Measures, only after bighorn sheep limits are observed, potentially disturbs the lambing activity the measure seeks to protect. Disturbance can be avoided by restricting exploration activities near the bighorn sheep area during the lambing period. We request BLM develop new Mitigation Measures that include exploration activity buffers for the bighorn sheep lambing area in the southern portion of the project area, considerations of bighorn sheep sensitivity to disturbance during lamb parturition and breeding, and practical bighorn sheep restrictions easily conveyed to everyone associated with the project.

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22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 8 Other

Biocides & Wildlife

Drilling within 500 ft of a known bat roost location should occur outside the pupping season (June 1 through July 31). Please identify how roost sites are identified.

22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 9 Other

Biocides & Wildlife

The EA does not address how bat hibernaculae will be determined and protected.

22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 10 Other

Biocides, Geohydrology, Soils, & Wildlife

The proposed for drill cuttings to affect air and water resources is discussed in Section 3.2.1.2 of the Draft EA, Appendix I. Soils, Geohydrology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.2.1.2. As noted in these sections, drill cuttings that contain mineralized rock would be buried on-site or disposed of off-site to mitigate this risk. Additional text has been added in Section 3.2.1.2 noting that this reworking and cutting occurs beneath the roose in the industry standard for low-sulfur cuttings management in the western U.S. When cutting the on-site hole the cuttings to be protected from erosion until vegetation is re-established. Should on-site disposal in this method not be feasible, off-site transport and disposal may be required in coordination with the USGS. The text has also been updated noting the role of biorosion in stabilizing and conferring trace amounts of sulfur-based lime.

22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 11 Other

Biocides, Geohydrology, Soils, & Wildlife

The EA evaluates cuttings including drill cuttings, materials used, and well sealing plans. Include the evaluation of drill cuttings for the peatonal, water, and energy resources.

22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 12 Other

Biocides, Geohydrology, Soils, & Wildlife

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22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 13 Incorporate

Water Quality/Water Supply

2.7.2 Groundwater (page 27): The EA identifies Deadbird, Mother, Muncey, Muncey, and Indian Harry as crystalline bedrock aquifers in the Black Hills and surrounding areas. These are not crystalline core aquifers.

22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 14 Other

Biocides & Wildlife

Appendix D: forest planning should provide high sheep, a Region 2 sensitive species. In addition to achieving a "no effect" determination by altering both Alternative C and the Applicants Mitigation Measures to maintain the viability of the bighorn sheep, the proposed project area DFF suggests restricting project access and other exploration activities in the southern project area during the lambing period between April 15 to May 31.

22 Game, Fish, and Parks

Dran Michaels

469 15 Other

Biocides & Wildlife

Data 4.1: Potential for Effect Notice: - The EA identifies a bighorn sheep summer use area is present in the southern part of project area A. A USGS Bighorn Sheep Range Shapefile and USGS Wildlife Restrictions Shapefile are used. Please describe contents of the USGS Wildlife Restrictions shapefile.

Seven Sageware

IG0 1 Other

Statement of Project Purpose

Our drinking water is too resembles for a private company to reuse with a Risk of the exploration project.

Chapbucher Profit

IG1 1 Other

Statement of Project Purpose

Strongly urge you to implement further reduction of the black fish. Though fishing any sponsor of any kind. Also in the location of one species superfluous on the threat from environmental impact of mining allows any benefits to the other party involved.

Leann

IG2 1 Other

Statement of Project Purpose

Fishing proposed in drilling or any mining, as its, or any other activity with drilling for that matter.

Jeni Howell

IG3 1 Other

Statement of Project Purpose

One has no issue with the exploration - seven kinds.

Jeni Howell

IG4 2 Outside of Scope

Mining

Did the cloud zone is not an issue. Please tell the company knows that fails will come out of the woodwork to stop this area suddenly illegid for the years.

Bandy Miller

IG5 1 Other

Statement of Project Purpose

Support the "NO DRILL!" alteration.

Bandy Miller

IG6 2 Outside of Scope

Mining

We keep fishing operation away from natural wildlife. Mining in this area is not overly much risk to Pardoe Ranch and the Rapid City area water supply.

Rollie Sablanen

IG7 1 Other

Statement of Project Purpose

It's a long time resident of the Black Hills and business oriented, I strongly oppose it a bighorn Sheep Gold project. Not only will this stupid project impede valuable farm and local region's only source for darts, also drinking water but it will also negatively impact tourism through the destruction of wildlife habitat and recreational use areas and roads.

Comment noted.

Dran Michaels

469 8 Other

Biocides & Wildlife

Drilling within 500 ft of a known bat roost location should occur outside the pupping season (June 1 through July 31). Please identify how roost sites are identified.

Dran Michaels

469 9 Other

Biocides & Wildlife

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Dran Michaels

469 10 Other

Biocides, Geohydrology, Soils, & Wildlife

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Dran Michaels

469 11 Other

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Dran Michaels

469 12 Other

Biocides, Geohydrology, Soils, & Wildlife

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Biocides & Wildlife

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Biocides & Wildlife

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There will not be an extension to the DRAFT EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (2) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220.6(a)(8) identifies short-term (3 years or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of temporary road, and use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FFS's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FFS's proposed EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (36 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

There is no legal basis for authorizing geophysical investigations on lands that will be impacted by the proposed project. This is a violation of the Forest Service's national policy or the existing regulations that dictate the EA process. The Forest Service has not properly determined the project effects or the need to prepare an EA. The Forest Service has not properly determined the project effects or the need to prepare an EA.

It is recommended that the Forest Service prepare an EA to assess the proposal. The Forest Service should conduct an EA to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

In conclusion, the proposed action is not part of the proposed action. The analysis activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project specific NEPA review.

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Organization: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Title: President
First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Killer
Role: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Action Resource Number: 360
Action: Draft Environmental Assessment
Process: Regulatory Process

**Comment:** The Tribe believes the Draft EA is inadequate, does not contain the legally required analysis of impacts from the Project, particularly to cultural and religious resources, and cannot form the basis for a lawful finding of no significant impact (“FONSI”).

**Response:** The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3A and 4D of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Organization: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Title: President
First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Killer
Role: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Action Resource Number: 360
Action: Draft Environmental Assessment
Process: Regulatory Process

**Comment:** The Tribe expresses disappointment that the U.S. Forest Service would issue a Draft EA without having completed the meaningful and good faith consultation with the Tribe that is required by NEPA, other laws, and the agency’s trust responsibilities. This lack of meaningful consultation is evident in the Draft EA’s dearth of understanding or analysis of cultural and religious impacts anticipated from the Project. The Tribe requests the U.S. Forest Service suspend all action on this Project until it has satisfactorily met its legal obligations to the Tribe.

**Response:** The following tribes were contacted as part of government to government consultation efforts that included concurrent to project scoping on January 26, 2021. Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Flandreau Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Western Shoshone Community, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe. To forest and government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 5, 2021 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2021 and the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 17, 2021. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in-person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 15, 2021. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to six Tribe entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 5-5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA.

**Comment:** The draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3A and 4A of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Organization: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Title: President
First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Killer
Role: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Action Resource Number: 360
Action: Draft Environmental Assessment
Process: Regulatory Process

**Comment:** The Black Hills are sacred to our people. In our Lakota language, we refer to the Black Hills as Pa’si Lakpa and we consider them “the heart of everything that is.” This Tribe is connected, now and forever, to protecting the Black Hills and preserving our land to our sacred lands.

**Response:** As an agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all Federal owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribe. Further consideration of the Sioux Nation’s desire to return of the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jicome Gulch Gold Exploration Project.

Organization: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Title: President
First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Killer
Role: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Action Resource Number: 360
Action: Draft Environmental Assessment
Process: Regulatory Process

**Comment:** The Oglala Sioux Tribe is opposed to all mineral exploration and mining in the Black Hills that would infringe on our rights under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 and other federal laws. The Oglala Sioux Tribe asserts that the United States should recognize that the Black Hills are not within the scope of the General Mining Law of 1872 and remove the Black Hills from all federal mining and mineral leasing laws. The Oglala Sioux Tribe has treaty rights to land, water, fish, wildlife, and other natural, cultural, and other resources in the Black Hills.

**Response:** As an agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all Federal owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribe. Further consideration of the Sioux Nation’s desire to return of the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jicome Gulch Gold Exploration Project.

Organization: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Title: President
First Name: Kevin
Last Name: Killer
Role: Oglala Sioux Tribe
Action Resource Number: 360
Action: Draft Environmental Assessment
Process: Regulatory Process

**Comment:** The Tribe has legitimate concerns that the proposed mineral exploration would interfere with our Treaty right and our use of sacred Pe’Ta Xa and other lands in the Black Hills.

**Response:** In the Draft EA, Table 2-2 and Section 3-A 10, Alternative C includes work having the following activities for the Black Hills: Public Health and Safety Technical Report.

**Comment:** The Oglala Sioux Tribe appreciates the dedication of the Forest Service in working on a draft environmental assessment on our lands.

**Response:** In response to the Tribal letter of intent as part of government to government consultation efforts that included concurrent to project scoping on January 26, 2021. Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flandreau Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Western Shoshone Community, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe. To government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 5, 2021 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2021 and the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 17, 2021. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in-person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 15, 2021. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to six Tribe entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 5-5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA.

**Comment:** For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3A and 4A of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
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Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020, and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 3, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in-person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 15, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 Tribal entities to re-initiate the Project and re-initiate consultation requests. On July 2, 2021, the Lowell Cultural Resources Inventory was certified mailed to OIT Tribal Historic Preservation Office which was delivered July 7, 2021. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.4 of Appendix G of the Draft EA. Consultations efforts are ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribes Consultation, Coordination and Collaboration. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA.

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For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and TPPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribes Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

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Dakota Sioux Tribe President
Kevin Elder

200 14 Regulatory Process

Government to

Government to

The Tribe previously submitted comments, dated January 17, 2021, on the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts the proposed Project will have on cultural and religious resources at the proposed exploration sites, if the Black Hills and religious and cultural practices at Pk. 17, yet there is no analysis in the Draft EA on the impacts on Pk. 17 and a component analysis of impacts to cultural, historical, and religious resources of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. The Draft EA instead relies exclusively on a limited Level I “records search” and “targeted site visits.” The Draft EA does not indicate what records were reviewed, who selected those records, or that any “targeted site visits” were performed by individuals qualified to identify and review impacts to Lakota religious and cultural resources. Not noted is the full depth of government to government consultation with the Oglala Sioux Tribe and had the Forest Service complied with existing laws and regulations, consultation began as soon as possible in the process, the agency would know that a scientifically competent survey is required, and that a simple record search and unsupervised “targeted site visits” are inadequate. It would also be aware of the tremendous religious and cultural resource impacts of this proposed project—impacts both within and beyond the four corners of the Project site.

Dakota Sioux Tribe President
Kevin Elder

200 15 Other

Statement of Project Opinion

Down the lack the required meaningful and good faith consultation by the Forest Service to date, the Tribe requests the agency immediately suspend work on the Project until full and government to government consultation has occurred. After that time, the agency should prepare a Draft IS for public and tribal review and comment.


Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020, by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 30, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 13, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 14, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to all Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letter, email, certified letter, and phone calls. This is described in Section 6.1.5 of Appendix B of the Draft EA.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report, which includes more specific detail that what is able to be disclosed in the EA, was submitted to SHPO on August 12, 2021 and THPO (July 20, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1300-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Collaboration.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman and Grand Chiefs Association
Rapid Plateau

200 1 Other

Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)

The Tribe is opposed to any activity in the Black Hills that would infringe on our rights under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 and other federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act (“NHPA”) and the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA").

As an agency, the USFS is responsible for administering and managing federal federal lands within the National Forest system, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States' statutory directive. Congress has not authorised the Forest Service to sell or address the land claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux Nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jensen Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman and Grand Chiefs Association
Rapid Plateau

200 2 Regulatory Process

EA Contain

The Draft EA is inadequate. It does not contain the legally required assessment of all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts from the Project; and it cannot form the basis of a lawful finding of No Significant Impact ("NSI").

The draft Environmental Assessment/Statement the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman and Grand Chiefs Association
Rapid Plateau

200 3 Regulatory Process

Government to

Government to

Consultation (Tribal Engagement)

The Tribe requests the USFS to request for full involved government to government consultation with the Forest Service concerning the Project and its impacts on the environment, land, water, fish, wildlife, natural resources, cultural resources, and traditional, religious, and cultural practices in the Black Hills. The Forest Service should suspend all further action on this Project until it has engaged in formal government to government consultation with the Tribe.

Comment stated.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman and Grand Chiefs Association
Rapid Plateau

200 4 Other

Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)

The Black hills are sacred to our people. In our sacred language, we refer to the Black Hills as Pakki Sapa and we consider them “the heart of everything that is.” The Tribe is committed, now and forever, to protecting the Black Hills and preserving our bond to our sacred lands. To the end, several of our Sioux Tribes recently purchased the sacred lands known as ‘Si’ the heart of the Black Hills.

As an agency, the USFS is responsible for administering and managing federal federal lands within the National Forest system, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States' statutory directive. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to sell or address the land claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux Nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jensen Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Chairman and Grand Chiefs Association
Rapid Plateau

200 5 Other

Cultural Resources (Heritage Resources)

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is opposed to all general exploration and drilling in the Black Hills that would infringe on our rights under the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 and other federal laws, and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe asserts that the United States should recognize that the Black Hills are not within the scope of the General Mining Law of 1872 and remove the Black Hills from all federal mining and mineral leasing laws. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has treaty rights to land, water, fish, wildlife, and other natural, cultural, and other resources in the Black Hills.

As an agency, the USFS is responsible for administering and managing federal federal lands within the National Forest system, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States' statutory directive. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to sell or address the land claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux Nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jensen Gold Exploration Drilling Project.
The Tribe has legitimate concerns that the proposed mineral exploration would interfere with our Treaty rights and our use of our sacred PF Sa and other lands in the Black Hills.

At an agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribe. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Galich Gold Exploration Critical Project.

A resolution in the Draft EA, Table 3-14, Section 6.2.4, alternative is included with best source-relation requirements for training areas within 10 km of a residence to minimize social effects. This is also discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix F—Draft Public Health and Safety Technical Report.

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultations efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1510-00 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

The following tribes were consulted as part of government to government consultation efforts that initiated concurrent to project scoping on January 4, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (Chairman’s Office); the Fission River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Tribe, Siksika Nation, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Northern Intermontane Region (Heritage Council).

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1510-00 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

The following tribes were consulted as part of government to government consultation efforts that initiated concurrent to project scoping on January 4, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Tribe, Siksika Nation, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Northern Intermontane Region (Heritage Council).

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1510-00 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
The following tribes were consulted as part of government to government consultation efforts that initiated concurrent to project scoping on January 6, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flathead Lake Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, Sisseton-Wahpeton Yankton Sioux Tribe, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe.

Government to government consultation was requested by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 30, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 17, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 13, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 30, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. On July 2, 2021, the Cultural Resources Inventory was certified mailed to Oglala Tribal Historic Preservation Office which was delivered July 7, 2021. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letter, email, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.2 of Appendix G of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1.200-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Collaboration. See Sections 3.3 and 4.6 of the Draft EA.

For the Draft EA, the cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The level of cultural resources inventory includes more specific detail of the project than what is able to be disclosed in the EA per Section 104 of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended. A Level inventory provided sufficient information to inform agency determinations on the potential for an undertaking's effect on identified historic properties as long as previous level I/II pedestrian survey inventories meet or exceed current standards. The report revealed that those previous inventories met South Dakota Guidelines for Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (1974), and South Dakota Code Law 1-15-1.1, of 2012 which were the standards at the time of the Level I Records search. The cultural resource report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with USD conclusions.

The Level I records review revealed that the entire project area has been covered by previous Level I cultural resources inventories. Twenty-five previously recorded, identified, and evaluated cultural resources are within the proposed project area. Targeted site visits were made to the two historic properties (BP09077 and BP09157) to review current conditions and assess potential effects of the undertaking on the integrity of these two historic properties within the defined area of potential effects (AOF). Results from the sites visits helped the USFS and Quality Services Inc. to recommend modifications to the proposed undertaking to avoid adverse effects on identified historic properties. USFS-issued modified project locations and routes and avoid adverse effects to those sites. These modifications are reflected in Alternative C.

The Tribe previously submitted comments, dated January 16, 2020, on the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts the proposed Project would have on cultural and historic resources at the proposed exploration sites, at 'PV 56' and historic and cultural practices at 'PV 9'. There is no analysis in the Draft EA on the impacts on 'PV 56' and no component analysis of any impacts to cultural, historical, and religious resources of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The EA instead relies exclusively on a limited level 'records search' and 'targeted site visits'. The EA does not indicate what records were reviewed, who selected those records, or that any 'targeted site visits' were performed by individuals qualified to identify and review impacts to Dakota religious and cultural resources. Had the Forest Service engaged in the required government to government consultation with the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and had the Forest Service compiled with NEPA requirements that consultation begins as early as possible in the process, the agency would know that a scientifically competent survey is required, and that a simple record search and unspecified 'targeted site visits' are inadequate. It would also be aware of the tremendous religious and cultural resource impacts of this proposed Project—impacts both within and beyond the four corners of the Project site.

The Tribe forwarded a letter dated January 16, 2020 to the USFS and the National Park Service expressing concern about the proposed Project. The letter sought to prevent the Project from proceeding in the Cheyenne River Basin in violation of the National Historic Preservation Act (1974), as amended, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (1974), as amended, which requires consultation with the tribes prior to any undertaking that may affect a facility determined to be a site of cultural significance. The Tribe and the Project area are within the Cheyenne River Basin, which was listed on the 119th Congress as a priority basin for the Great American Outdoors Act. The Tribe seeks to protect and preserve cultural resources in the Cheyenne River Basin, which are critical to the Tribe's cultural identity and survival.

The Tribe expressed concern that the proposed Project may negatively impact the Tribe's cultural and historic resources, including those that are traded by the use of Native American cultural practice and spiritual beliefs. The Tribe's concern is that the Project may impact cultural and historic resources, including those that are traded by the use of Native American cultural practice and spiritual beliefs.

The Tribe requested that the Forest Service and the National Park Service conduct a consultation with the Tribe before proceeding with the Project.

The Tribe further requested that the Forest Service and the National Park Service conduct a consultation with the Tribe before proceeding with the Project.

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<tr>
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<td>Harold</td>
<td>Frazier</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
<td>2022-07-01</td>
<td>The Public Comment Period Over: In our view, the NEPA process is fatally flawed.</td>
<td>There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 46 CFR 218.25 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended. The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Cultural Resources Heritage Resources</td>
<td>APRCA has legitimate concerns that the proposed exploration would cause a barrier to the physical, historical, cultural, and sacred sites and areas present in and around the proposed project area. These issues should be addressed through government to government consultation and full compliance with federal law, including Section 106 of NFHA as well as Executive Order No. 13177</td>
<td>See Section 1.4 Draft of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation. Also see Draft EA Section 3.4 and Appendix G, Section 3.5.</td>
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<td>Cultural Resources Heritage Resources</td>
<td>APRCA should retaliate your process because you did not consult with our tribal agencies. By Executive Order 13177, the USFS was required to undertake consultation with our Sioux Nation tribes prior to implementing the plan for review of the Jenny Gulch gold mine proposal. It is especially so since the lands as issue are treaty protected sacred lands. For the following tribes were consulted as part of government to government consultation efforts that entitled concurrent to project cropping on January 2021: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Fort Peck Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Nation Sioux, Shakopee Minnetonkan Sioux Community, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 30, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 15, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 36 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
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<td>Cultural Resources Heritage Resources</td>
<td>The 1868 Sioux Nation Treaty protects the Black Hills as part of the “permanently home” of the Great Sioux Nation. The Supreme Court held that Congress’s taking of the Black Hills was in violation of the Constitution and the Sioux Nation treaty rights in United States v. Sioux Nation, 448 U.S. 371 (1980). The US Forest Service should be mindful of this background when scoping its place for public meetings and consultations.</td>
<td>As an agency, the USFS Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest system, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory directive. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Nation. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Nation. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project. For the following tribes were consulted as part of government to government consultation efforts that entitled concurrent to project cropping on January 2021: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Fort Peck Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Nation Sioux, Shakopee Minnetonkan Sioux Community, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 30, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 15, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 36 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
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<td>President Carter, In Tribal Executive Order No. 13019 and directed Federal Agencies to develop consultation action plans through his January 26, 2021 Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships. USFS has a policy on Consultation.</td>
<td>For the following tribes were consulted as part of government to government consultation efforts that entitled concurrent to project cropping on January 2021: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Fort Peck Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Nation Sioux, Shakopee Minnetonkan Sioux Community, Standing Rock Hapatonka Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 30, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 15, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 36 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
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The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

See Sections 3.4 and 6.4 of the Draft EA for a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement. The EA is available for public review and comment.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. For 36 CFR part 216, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 216(b)(8) identifies short-term (1–year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The draft EA meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated the EA's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

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The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

See Sections 3.4 and 6.4 of the Draft EA for a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement. The EA is available for public review and comment.

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The purpose of an EA to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

For 36 CFR part 216, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 216(b)(8) identifies short-term (1–year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The draft EA meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated the EA's proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.
Oglala Sioux Tribe
Safety
Thomas Brings
362
3
Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)


Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 and by the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 31, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 11, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 11, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 14 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.4 of Appendix G of the Draft EA.

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1550-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Agile Sioux Tribe
Safety
Thomas Brings
362
4
Other
Project Description

The EA states there will be 42 drill sites but does not state how many holes will be drilled at each pad. Will there be directional drilling, fracking?

The number of holes drilled or acid-drill pad will depend on the findings in the field, with the average drill pad having one to two holes and some rising up to four holes. This has been clarified in Section 2.2.1 of the Final EA.

Exploration drilling involves drilling holes vertically and at an angle from the surface. That angle can vary between 0-90 degrees (vertical) and -90 degrees. Once the angle is set, the drill will remain at that angle until completion of the drill hole. Directional drilling that controls the direction of the boring during drilling (as commonly used in oil and gas developments) or horizontal drilling methods will not be used. Fracking is likewise not a method that will be used by this exploration drilling project.

Oglala Sioux Tribe
Safety
Thomas Brings
363
5
Other
Water Quality/Water Supply

State that appropriate consultations with our tribal relations were not undergone. This is a tremendous error on your part, as we are a state that promotes indigenous culture.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - 5.1, Geology, etc. Hydrology, Water Resources, Section 4.6.

Jenny Read
Safety
363
2
Other
Water Quality/Water Supply

Keep in mind that this area is part of Fakichai Reservoir which provides drinking water to Rapid City, Pennington County, and Elizabeth AB.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - 5.1, Geology, etc. Hydrology, Water Resources, Technical Section, Report 4.6.

Jenny Read
Safety
363
3
Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)

And foremost, the Forest Service has not met its legal requirements for tribal consultation. This clear tells me this project has not been thought out thoroughly and has overlooked the ramifications this project will cause to our people, our land, and future generations as a whole.

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1550-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Katey Staff
Safety
364
1
Other
Statement of Project Opinion

Would encourage the Forest Service to move forward with a FONSI for the Oglala 6th Project. It should be remembered the Forest Service and F have gone above and beyond reworking this project by performing an EA, mined exploration projects sometimes only require a categorical exclusion.

Comment stated.

Katey Staff
Safety
364
2
Other
Statement of Project Opinion

Apparition groups have pointed to many areas, which I find hard to understand. This is not a national security threat for Elbowfish water, their water already has issues from the air base’s past fire-retardant activities (PFAS, AFFF). Core drilling does not pose a threat to water quality, recreation opportunities, or wildlife. I see no significant impacts to black hills water quality every day due to the run off from erosion, leaking oil from cars in parking lots/streets and trash/cigarette butts from tourists. Baffling in communities which goes directly into storm drains and into our creeks. No exploration project comes close to that kind of direct impact on Black Hills water quality.

Comment stated.

Katey Staff
Safety
364
3
Other
Waste & Transportation

Exploration companies should leave forest roads/trails in better condition than when they start. This is a huge benefit to other trail users and helps to the Forest Service with their road maintenance program. I would encourage improvement of existing roads/trails.

Comment stated.

Katey Staff
Safety
364
4
Regulatory Process
Agency Engagement

Would recommend the staff to pose the findings of the public meeting field in January 2020 as a resource for the public who wasn’t able to attend.

The January 2020 meeting was not recorded. Information presented at the meeting is available on the project website.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentry</td>
<td>Shewfill</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Planning exploration drilling in this sensitive area makes absolutely no sense. The Black Hills provide a huge benefit to our states economy through tourism. Corporate greed shou...</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>Herrmann</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Forest Service should stop the &quot;no action&quot; alternative to this project.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin</td>
<td>Herrmann</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The lack of proper Tribal consultation and a forest plan that specifically discusses this project should result in the project not proceeding any further until an updated forest plan has been completed and adequate tribal consultation has occurred.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>Ackerman</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>It's true that we mined gold to enable us to pay our products in our modern society. The worth of the gold mined is measured in the value of the gold and the industry economic impact. There has to be a value subtracted from those measurements in dollars equal to or greater than the damage which will be done to the environment.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>Ackerman</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Mining is a temporary gain to the area. The scar left behind by heap leaching and surface mining is permanent.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Federal regulations define certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 16 CFR part 1504, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 16 CFR part 1210 (b)(3) identifies short term (2 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental activities that may require cross country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of road, standard road, or use with minor repair of existing roads in a categorized exclusion action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair or a reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. If EIS is proposed action this modifies the definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>CE 18-05</td>
<td>In the very best publicly release a thorough Environmental Impact Statements</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 16 CFR part 1504, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 16 CFR part 1210 (b)(3) identifies short term (2 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental activities that may require cross country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of road, standard road, or use with minor repair of existing roads in a categorized exclusion action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair or a reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. If EIS is proposed action this modifies the definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Federal regulations define certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 16 CFR part 1504, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 16 CFR part 1210 (b)(3) identifies short term (2 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental activities that may require cross country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of road, standard road, or use with minor repair of existing roads in a categorized exclusion action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair or a reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. If EIS is proposed action this modifies the definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haley</td>
<td>Friedt</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>We can't risk our water, bird, and community - it's not worth it.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori</td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>This project threatens the drinking water for Rapid City, Elkhorn tribal and rural communities.</td>
<td>Comment noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lori Wood 373 2 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement) AAs vs EIS
There was no tribal consultation or environmental impact statement of cultural resources.

See Sections 3.I and 4.I of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurrent with our recommendation. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Consultation.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220(d)(5) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental activity supports that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 3 miles of hard-surfaced road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. If it’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be eliminated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also evaluate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated EF’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR §1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no significant impact at the time of the decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Lori Wood 373 3 Other Fisheries & Wildlife A bright sheep herding area and migration route would be harmed

Potential effects to wildlife, including livestock, are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Draft Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological evaluation one Technical Report. See Draft EA Table 3. Drilling activities in the vicinity of Summitey Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 15 to avoid disturbance during the bright sheep lambing season should lambing be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the discretion of the USFS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger. Also see Section 1.5 and Appendix D - Section 4.2, Table B-1, Section 4.5.2, and Table A-3. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of days SPC-016, SPC-017, and SPC-019 from May 1 to June 15 to further minimize potential effects to bright sheep lambing.

Lori Wood 373 4 Regulatory Process EA Content The forest service must analyze all impacts of this project. It has not done this.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR §1508.1(c) defines, "reasonable alternatives" as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.

Lori Wood 374 6 Other Statement of Project Option Please show this down.

Comment noted. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to minimal exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands.

Aaron Olson 376 1 Other Statement of Project Option Am I an expert on Summitey Acres which is located on Summitey Gulch Road. I live on two of the properties in this area and I support the "No Action" alternative. The impact this would have on this pristine area would be devastating and irreversible.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.

Aaron Olson 376 2 Other Water Quality/Water Supply The potential for our well water to become polluted is very high. Our risk factors in this area are fractured which allows water to move with ease. When we get our summer thunderstorms or spring snow melt the moisture that’s absorbed into the ground finds its way to the bottom of my well in about 15 minutes. I know this because our well water will become cloudy for days before clearing up. How long will we have to stop using it? A percolation test of my water was done by a professional in the area and the results showed we have a high risk of contaminants from 3 Gold would affect our water. Contaminants from 3 Gold would also affect Jenny Gulch, Patsols Lake and Rapid City’s drinking water supply.

Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 - Soil, Geology, and Hydrology, Technical Report, Section 4.

Aaron Olson 376 3 Other Homes & Transportation Public Health & Safety This entire stretch of roadway is very limited as the brother city Road is a narrow and winding with only two lanes. Jenny Gulch Road and Sunnyside Gulch Road are even more restricted as gravel one lane roads at best. The large heavy vehicles are going to destroy our access and make it unsafe for the people using them.

Potential project effects on existing roadways are described in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Draft Access, Transportation, and Relocation Technical Report. This appendix also discusses EF’s responsibility for repairing any unexpected roadway damage, as well as relocation requirements.

Aaron Olson 376 4 Other Statement of Project Option Due to my concerns above which would affect my way of life I request a “No Action” rating. I do not support 3 Gold’s Jenny Gulch project.

Comment noted.

Aaron Olson 376 5 Regulatory Process EA Content I find the environmental assessment to be inadequate as it does not address my concerns.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signature</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arlene Chown</td>
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<td>376</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>(EA vs EIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niddielle Bahr</td>
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<td>375</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>Comment Period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niddielle Bahr</td>
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<td>375</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>(EA vs EIS)</td>
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<td>Blanding Rock Sioux Tribe</td>
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<td>375</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>(EA vs EIS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standing Rock Sioux Tribe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>376</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resources Heritage Resources</td>
<td>The project area coincides with the 1816 and 1868 Fort Sisseton treaty lands for Oglala Lakota. This project is within and environmentally and culturally sensitive area that also would have the potential to produce adverse impacts to preserved water rights of the Oglala Lakota bands; and specific adverse impacts to the all-inclusive environmental review treaty rights of Oglala Lakota within the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing Rock Sioux Tribe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>376</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>(EA vs EIS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

**O'Connor** meant Jr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Communication (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>An EIS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Only by making this administrative decision to proceed to an EIS can the tribes of Dacotah Sakowin have their issues addressed in the analysis section that would include Nation-to-Nation consultation which is lacking in the EA. The SREPC and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe requests and EIS for this Project and government to government consultation.

**Response:**

See Sections 3 and 4 of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220.6, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220.6(b)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FIP's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EIA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated the EIS proposed to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in "determining whether preparing an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the decision of. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

**O'Connor** meant Jr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Communication (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Understanding this process, it also states the consultation process with tribes. Both Section 106 consultation with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and government to government consultation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response:**

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220.6, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 220.6(b)(9) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. FIP's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EIA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated the EIS proposed to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in "determining whether preparing an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the decision of. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resource (Heritage Resource)</td>
<td>An EA to address tertiary claims include the following: the APPE, and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe maintains the position that the EA for this Project failed to identify the environmental effects on the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and Dakotah Sakowin Tribes, their cultural, religious, historical, prehistoric resources; buried, water, environment, and sacred sites. These resources are not only federal Trust Assets; trust measures they are protected by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1861 and 1868, Federal, law, and Executive Orders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response:**

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

**O'Connor** meant Jr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Communication (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>The EA failed to identify the locations of the tribes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response:**

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

**O'Connor** meant Jr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Lease Land</td>
<td>A core requirement of NEPA is that an agency decision maker must consider an adequate environmental analysis before deciding on a leasing, permit action or approval by determining a FONSI for the EA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response:**

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

**O'Connor** meant Jr.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Communication (Tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Cultural Resources (Heritage Resource)</td>
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</table>

**Response:**

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

**O'Connor** meant Jr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Number</th>
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<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Cultural Resource (Heritage Resource)</td>
<td>The SREPC and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in their review of the draft EA failed to see any indication that cultural resources or &quot;historic properties of religious and cultural significance&quot; have been identified by a certified Indian Cultural Resource Management firm (ICRM).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Response:**

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted but a qualified cultural resource management consultant. The report, which is more detailed than the summary included in the Draft EA was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of Draf EA. Government to government consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager
Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 10 Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribe-Engagement) Cultural Resources Heritage Resources
2.4 Cultural Resources. In the level I Records Search the document turns into a determination of effects letter, highly unusual to turn to Level I records research report into level II cultural survey report. By doing this BHNF updates their government to government consultation with Indian tribes. This action means an expectation by BHNF.
For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report, which is more detailed than the summary included in the Draft EA was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of the Draft EA. Government to government consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 15350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager
Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 12 Other
Cultural Resources Heritage Resources
2.4 Cultural Resources. This section is a honor and borderline uncanny. On one hand a level I Cultural Resource Records Search was conducted to identify; if any archaeological survey work done in one state area of the project footprint which will to 3C recorded cultural with only two sites were identified an eligible loss. On the other hand, the level I Cultural Resource report makes a recommendation “no adverse effect to historic properties” which is not warranted, only a Class III Archaeological survey would decide that.
For the Draft EA, a cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report, which includes more specific detail as to what is to be disturb in the EA, and was a Level I Records Review. A level I inventory provided sufficient information to inform agency determinations on the potential for an undertaking effect on identified historic properties as long as a previous Level II pedestrian survey inventory meet or exceed current standards. The report revealed that these previous inventories that South Dakota Guidelines for Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (2012), and South Dakota Codefied law 2-2A-111.5 of 2012, which were the standards at the time the level I records search. The cultural resource report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) by email for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with USFS conclusions.

Standing Rock Tribe

Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 12 Other
Cultural Resources Heritage Resources
The statement ‘letter project area has been covered by previous cultural resources inventories’ as referenced is misleading and is categorically false. It does not mention that the tribe, tribal areas, areas under the impact area which may be disturbed was covered by these surveys. The table in the EA references (6) surveys were conducted with in the entire area and the table doesn’t reveal any Indian CRM for in Native American individual have conducted any TCP surveys in any of the project area. Of the (62) surveys (12) archaeological surveys are conducted after the 1982 amendments to the NEPA, and (3) were prior to, provided that in 1982 the amendment once breathed provided Indian tribes to identify “historic properties of religious and cultural significance,” regardless of location.
For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report, which is more detailed than the summary included in the Draft EA was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of the Draft EA and adhered to the USDA Department Regulation 15350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager
Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 14 Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribe-Engagement) SHPO’s provides these sections of the OHRA 800 regulations as it appears the tribe of BHNF failed to comply with these requirements to be included in the EA.
Comment noted, the project is being developed in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Presrvation Act.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager
Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 15 Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribe-Engagement) Cultural Resources Heritage Resources
The SHPO continues if the FGI Gold Mining Exploration Project in permitted to go forward without consultation, and not addressing concerns of SARC and other tribes, a tribal CRM firm will not be able to conduct a survey in a timely manner; and what will be lost in consultation on the identification phase of survey requirements contained in 36 CFR 800.21(2) (16 & 20). The BHNF staff itself can prepare for consultation was initiated with THPO’s but have not provide any evidence to the contrary. At minimum, a letter A-035 signed off by tribal leadership and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (SHPO) should have been provided since the tribes have yet to conduct TCP surveys within the project area.
The following tribes were contacted as part of government to government consultation efforts that intended concern to project scoping on January 2, 2020 : Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Fort Berthold canoe Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Santee Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Spirit Lake Indian Reservation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Yakima Tribes.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager
Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 16 Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribe-Engagement) SHPO’s provides these sections of the OHRA 800 regulations as it appears the tribe of BHNF failed to comply with these requirements to be included in the EA.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager
Dremsy
Winter Sr.
3/16 16 Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribe-Engagement) SHPO’s provides these sections of the OHRA 800 regulations as it appears the tribe of BHNF failed to comply with these requirements to be included in the EA.

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offers for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3 and 4 of the Draft EA. Government to government consultation are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 15350-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

<table>
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<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Letter Number</th>
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</table>
| Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager | Timothy | Mentz Sr. | 367 | 17 | Other | Cultural Resources Heritage Resources | The draft EA does not contain any analysis of potential project impacts on the cultural, religious, historic-prehistoric resources, burial, and sacred sites of the SRA, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other Oglala Lakota. The EA document is silent on these concerns regarding SRA and other tribes have an association and interest in the Black Hills. | For the Draft EA, an intensive cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. Previous, recent, and current standard, Level II pedesetrian inventories of this area have been conducted for a variety of undertakings which have had previous requests for SRA and THP concurrence and were considered sufficient for assessment of the effects of the proposed undertaking on previously identified historic properties and cultural resources. The report, which is more detailed than the summary included in the Draft EA was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Government to government consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation. The level of cultural resource inventory reflects the use of a "look" through existing records review by identifying adequate level I cultural resource inventories within the proposed project's area of potential effect. This document does not use 36 CFR 800.4 to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Subject C6 Sec.36 CFR 800.4 provides agencies with program alternatives for anticipated and unavoidable adverse effects on historic properties of which the level I cultural resource inventory is part of the consultation process for the determination of No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The draft cultural resource inventory report was mailed to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers on July 1, 2021 for comment on potential historic properties and/or sacred sites within the project area.

The cultural resources report was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our conclusions.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager | Timothy | Mentz Sr. | 367 | 18 | Other | Cultural Resources Heritage Resources | Because of this decision by BHNF, these cultural, religious, historic-prehistoric resources, burial, and sacred sites have now been opened to potential destruction and will not be identified in any future cultural survey and cataloging to be included in the FES. | For the Draft EA, an intensive cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. Previous, recent, and current standard, Level II pedestrian inventories of this area have been conducted for a variety of undertakings which have had previous requests for SRA and THP concurrence and were considered sufficient for assessment of the effects of the proposed undertaking on previously identified historic properties and cultural resources. The level of cultural resource inventory reflects the use of a "look" through existing records review by identifying adequate level I cultural resource inventories within the proposed project's area of potential effect. This document does not use 36 CFR 800.4 to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Subject C6 Sec.36 CFR 800.4 provides agencies with program alternatives for anticipated and unavoidable adverse effects on historic properties of which the level I cultural resource inventory is part of the consultation process for the determination of No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The draft cultural resource inventory report was mailed to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers on July 1, 2021 for comment on potential historic properties and/or sacred sites within the project area.

The cultural resources report was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our conclusions.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager | Timothy | Mentz Sr. | 367 | 20 | Regulatory | Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement) | The SHP/stand on cultural resources outside of the APD, the SHP/A will identify potential impacts to protected historic sites and other tribes ownership of their cultural, religious, historic-prehistoric resources, burial and sacred sites that may be affected by the FES Golden Gulch Mining Exploration Project. | The level of cultural resource inventory reflects the use of a "look" through existing records review by identifying adequate level I cultural resource inventories within the proposed project's area of potential effect. This document does not use 36 CFR 800.4 to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Subject C6 Sec.36 CFR 800.4 provides agencies with program alternatives for anticipated and unavoidable adverse effects on historic properties of which the level I cultural resource inventory is part of the consultation process for the determination of No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The draft cultural resource inventory report was mailed to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers on July 1, 2021 for comment on potential historic properties and/or sacred sites within the project area.

The cultural resources report was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our conclusions.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager | Timothy | Mentz Sr. | 367 | 21 | Regulatory | Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement) | The SHP/A will identify potential impacts to protected historic sites and other tribes ownership of their cultural, religious, historic-prehistoric resources, burial and sacred sites that may be affected by the FES Golden Gulch Mining Exploration Project. | For the Draft EA, an intensive cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. Previous, recent, and current standard, Level II pedestrian inventories of this area have been conducted for a variety of undertakings which have had previous requests for SRA and THP concurrence and were considered sufficient for assessment of the effects of the proposed undertaking on previously identified historic properties and cultural resources. The level of cultural resource inventory reflects the use of a "look" through existing records review by identifying adequate level I cultural resource inventories within the proposed project's area of potential effect. This document does not use 36 CFR 800.4 to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Subject C6 Sec.36 CFR 800.4 provides agencies with program alternatives for anticipated and unavoidable adverse effects on historic properties of which the level I cultural resource inventory is part of the consultation process for the determination of No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The draft cultural resource inventory report was mailed to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers on July 1, 2021 for comment on potential historic properties and/or sacred sites within the project area.

The cultural resources report was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our conclusions.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager | Timothy | Mentz Sr. | 367 | 22 | Regulatory | A Control | The purpose of the Act is to evaluate potential effects resulting from implementing proposed plans and applications related to the FES Golden Gulch mining proposal to facilitate the decision-making process to approve, approve with modifications, or stop the proposed project or project components based on evaluation of the expected impacts, and the event possible, minimal or avoid environmental impacts. This is unclear if BHNF even meets this threshold. | For the Draft EA, an intensive cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. Previous, recent, and current standard, Level II pedestrian inventories of this area have been conducted for a variety of undertakings which have had previous requests for SRA and THP concurrence and were considered sufficient for assessment of the effects of the proposed undertaking on previously identified historic properties and cultural resources. The report, which is more detailed than the summary included in the Draft EA was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Government to government consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

The level of cultural resource inventory reflects the use of a "look" through existing records review by identifying adequate level I cultural resource inventories within the proposed project's area of potential effect. This document does not use 36 CFR 800.4 to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Subject C6 Sec.36 CFR 800.4 provides agencies with program alternatives for anticipated and unavoidable adverse effects on historic properties of which the level I cultural resource inventory is part of the consultation process for the determination of No Adverse Effect on historic properties. The draft cultural resource inventory report was mailed to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers on July 1, 2021 for comment on potential historic properties and/or sacred sites within the project area.

The cultural resources report was submitted to SRA (August 2, 2021) and THP (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SRA concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4 of the Draft EA. Government to government consultation is ongoing until publication of the final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Communication Manager

Timothy Mentz

Environmental

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actions
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Impact

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proposed

The proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion may be evaluated to CE to assess these potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated FS’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion may be evaluated to CE to assess these potential effects. If the action analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, President
Scott Herman

277 3 Regulatory

Regarding to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement)
Cultural Resources
Heritage Resources


Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and the Black Hills National Forest. The Draft Environmental Assessment and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are provided concurrently for the Yankton Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and the Oglala Lakota Nation.

Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and the Black Hills National Forest. The Draft Environmental Assessment and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are provided concurrently for the Yankton Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and the Oglala Lakota Nation.

The following tribes were contacted as part of government to government consultation efforts that initiated concurrent to project mapping on January 4, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flathead Lake Band of Lake Superior, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Tribe, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Teton Sioux Tribe, and the Oceti Sakowin Camp, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and the Black Hills National Forest. The Draft Environmental Assessment and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are provided concurrently for the Yankton Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and the Oglala Lakota Nation.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, President
Scott Herman

277 5 Outside of Scope

Mining

The Secretary of the Interior must be involved in any NEPA evaluation of mining in the Black Hills, which are under continuing treaty dedication to the Great Sioux Nation as the permanent home of the Lakota—Nakota— Dakota Oyate. Moreover, BLM claims to manage the mineral assets in the Black Hills, and BLM was not involved in this process. The Siouan Nation Tribes were not consulted appropriately before the project was put forward. As part of our Tribal Historic Preservation Officers were not consulted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. For these additional reasons, the NEPA Public Comment and Consultation Process must start now.

The BLM has jurisdiction over the ownership of mining claims below the surface, while the USFS manages surface rights. The BLM was included in the project scoping effort, was invited to the initial scoping meeting mapping in January 2020 and received notice of availability of the Draft EA. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. As an agency, the USFS Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Siouan Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribe. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands in a manner for deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

The BLM has jurisdiction over the ownership of mining claims below the surface, while the USFS manages surface rights. The BLM was included in the project scoping effort, was invited to the initial scoping meeting mapping in January 2020 and received notice of availability of the Draft EA. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. As an agency, the USFS Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Siouan Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribe. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands in a manner for deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. The letter dated September 17, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 14 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 13151-02 (Tribal Coordination, Consultation and Cooperation, 101001, and 002).
The following tribes were represented as part of government to government consultation efforts that initiated concurrent to project scoping on January 1, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Rapopo Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flathead Lake Sainte Pierre Sioux, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shakopee Dakota Nation, Sioux-Waxahactun Sioux Tribe, Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe.


On April 16, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 5.5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting on our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1351-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.


For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting on our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1351-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting on our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1351-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.
An intensive cultural resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. Previous, recent, and to current standard, level III pedestrian inventories of this area had been conducted for a variety of undertakings which have had previous requests for SHPO and THPO concurrence and comment were considered sufficient for assessment of the effects of the proposed undertaking on previously identified historic properties and cultural resources. The Cultural Resource Inventory report, which is more detailed than the summary included in the Draft EA, was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) office for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with the forest's conclusion of No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. The BLM made multiple attempts in 2020, 2021, & 2022 to request formal government-to-government consultation with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. However, to date (07/02/2022), the BLM has received no response from the tribe.

As the BLM believes the proposed Project would have significant impacts on tribal cultural resources as well as tribal religious and cultural practices in the Black Hills and at FH Sa. Without full and robust government-to-government consultation with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and other affected Sioux Nation Tribes, there is no way USFS can adequately assess the significance of cultural resource impacts. Let alone make a finding that the proposed Project would have no significant impacts on such cultural resources and on the cultural and religious practices at and around the site.

For the following tribes were consulted as part of government-to-government consultation efforts that intiated concurrence to project scoping on January 6, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flathead Sainte Sioux Tribe, Lower Brulé Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa & Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Santee Sioux Nation, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.


Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 6, 2020 and by the Oglala Lakota Nation on January 7, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Lakota Nation requested to person-to-person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Lakota Nation determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 13, 2020. However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic and associated shutdowns, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and early 2021. On April 30, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letters, emails, certified letters, and phone calls. This is described in Section 5.5 of Appendix G of the Draft EA.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 3550-002 Tribal Consultations, Coordination and Consultation.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 212(a), a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 212(a)(3)(i) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3’s proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may reasonably result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated F3’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in “determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact” (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts; if the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 3550-002 Tribal Consultations, Coordination and Consultation.
Aubrey Lee 378 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion It is important for US-based miners to develop resources of the critical metals and minerals needed to supply the green economy. American citizens deeply need. In addition to gold, it is believed that the Black Hills could provide significant deposits of other critical and strategic minerals that are crucial for high-tech manufacturing and national defense in the US. The company believes in its responsibility to environmental stewardship and they’ve viewed their part in the EA as an opportunity to pave the way for responsible exploration of the key materials we need.

Comment noted.

Aubrey Lee 378 3 Other Statement of Project Opinion Aubrey Lee and a group of mining, hydroelectric, and environmental organizations collaborated to design a natural resource project that fulfills the goals of both entities. The Great Northern E&L commits to its dual focus of environmental stewardship and the ability to improve their position throughout their drilling campaign and believe their minimization measures are sufficient and reasonable.

Comment noted.

Aubrey Lee 378 4 Other Statement of Project Opinion Support the findings of the EA and Alternative C. as described in the draft EA.

Comment noted.

Larayn Briceno 379 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion This past needs to be abandoned to continue the natural beauty of the Black Hills, turning into only a recreational area but also a primary source of drinking water is beyond absurd. This area is vitally important to my family who has lived there for several generations. I vehemently oppose this project.

Comment noted. Additional project effects on recreation are described in the draft EA Appendix B, Draft Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report, Section 3.3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.

Larayn Briceno 379 2 Regulatory Process Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement) Support the Draft Environmental Exploration Project and we trust that you will select the No Action alternative and halt the plan of operation for Jenny Guld Gold.

See sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. The Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. As an agency, the US Army Corp of Engineers is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Guld Exploration Drilling Project.

The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2025. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record.

Black Heart Society Faith Spotted Eagle 380 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion We write in re. regard to the extreme opposition of the Brave Heart Society who are grandchildren to the Draft Environmental Assessment of the F3 Jenny Guld Exploration Project and we trust that you will select the No Action alternative and halt the plan of operation for Jenny Guld Gold.

As an agency, the US Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States' statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Guld Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

Comment noted. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right-to-roam exploration claims rather than individual or corporate holdings on federal lands.

Black Heart Society Faith Spotted Eagle 380 2 Other Cultural Resources / Heritage Resources In a meeting under our traditional management of the Black Hills and the Yankton Sioux Treaty of 1868, we will be shifting our position on the proposal of Jenny Guld Gold.

At the time of the Treaty of 1868, the United States' authority over the lands was transferred to the Yankton Tribe. This agreement is supreme over any recognized treaty referred to in this correspondence. The Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands, and Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Guld Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

Comment noted. The Joint Review Authority (JRA) is constituted by the Forest Service and the Yankton Sioux Tribe.


We are further justified when we review the environmental justice guidelines that the Forest Service has been asked to abide by the Blake Administration, which will be voided if the project is approved without any consultation with our tribe.

See sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. As an agency, the US Army Corp of Engineers is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation's desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Guld Gold Exploration Drilling Project.

Comment noted.

Black Heart Society Faith Spotted Eagle 380 4 Other Cultural Resources / Heritage Resources In letters we ask you to respect our request in a sensible human being manner. If not, this issue will be intensified and we will be present to stop this type of appearance in our sacred lands of the Black Hills.

Comment noted. Draft EA an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See sections 4.4 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Serra Club Suzanne Sullens 381 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion We downstream residents of the proposed project area, we oppose the F3 project and support the No Action Alternative.

See sections 3.3 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning with our recommendation. See sections 3.3 and 4.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 5.3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on recreation are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation

Serra Club Suzanne Sullens 381 2 Other Statement of Project Opinion We support the F3 project because it is important to the environment and the health of the Black Hills.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USEPA streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA (direct, indirect), and cumulative effects are discussed in detail in the technical reports and summarized in the EA document.

Comment noted.

Serra Club Suzanne Sullens 381 3 Regulatory Process 4A Consent The EA is insufficient in its scope and statement of potential risk.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USEPA streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA (direct, indirect), and cumulative effects are discussed in detail in the technical reports and summarized in the EA document.
The proponents of the project have been providing inaccurate—even misleading—information in their public appearances and on their website. Either they are vastly ignorant of the operation of the watershed, the source of community water, or the structure of the watershed and the aquifers it contains, or they are deliberately misleading the public with their assertions that the project will not extract water from Rapid Creek. Where does that city water come from? The Rapid Creek watershed is the sole source.

Comment noted. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional project-specific NEPA review.

Rapid Creek is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

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The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official may determine the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess these potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Services has elevated EA's to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

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The project is temporary, as it is anticipated to last one year from start-up through restoration; as such, cumulative effects are discussed in this context. Past and ongoing forest and recreation management activities, such as timber sales, prescribed fire, grazing and pasture allotments, and road and trail construction, have contributed to the Project area's existing landscape. Cumulative effects are discussed in Section 1.10 of the EA, as well as within each technical report appendix that is included as part of the EA.

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The combination of pine beetle infestation, fire, cropland and volcanic damage, logging, and expansion of trails since the mid-1990s calls for a much more thorough consideration of the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of all these events on the Rapid Creek watershed, of which Jenny Gulch and Falls Reservoir are prominent parts.

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The Forest Plan revision process commenced in October 2021. The anticipated date for completion is 2023. Until revision is complete, this project is being evaluated under the 2006 Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan (as amended), which is the current plan on record.

Forest effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 – Soil, Geology, and Hydrology: Technical Report, Section 6. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Forest project effects on access, transportation, and recreation are described in the Draft EA, Appendices A & D, Access, Transportation, and Recreation: Technical Report, Section 3.3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix 4 – Soil, Geology, and Hydrology: Technical Report, Section 3.

See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1050-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultations.

The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects. A categorical exclusion action may be allowed to EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also evaluate a categorical exclusion action to EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated EA to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA to assist in "determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact" (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

There will be no public hearing in the Draft EA, comment period. Please see the 40 CFR Part 1508 regulations below that will address environmental and Environmental Assessments. 40 CFR 1508.23 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the notice. (d) Extent of the time period for opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

An agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the lands claim issue of the Sioux Tribe. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribe. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Jenny Gold Exploration Drilling Project.
The following tribes were contacted as part of government to government consultation efforts that initiated concurrent to project scoping on January 1, 2020: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Flathead Lake Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Mandan Hidatsa Arikara Nation, Northern Arapaho Tribe, Osage/Black Warrior, Plains Cree Nation, Siksika Nation, Santee Sioux Tribe, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Yankton Sioux Tribe.

Government to government consultation was requested by the Yankton Sioux Tribe on January 1, 2020 by the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on January 16, 2020 and the Oglala Sioux Tribe on January 17, 2020. The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe requested in person government to government consultation. The USFS responded in writing to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and the Oglala Sioux Tribe determine consultation meeting dates in letters mailed March 13, 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions, government to government consultation was not possible for most of 2020 and until 2021. On April 14, 2021, the USFS distributed another mailing to 16 Tribal entities to re-engage on the Project and to re-initiate consultation requests. Engagement efforts for consultation have included correspondence by letter, emails, certificates and phone calls. This is described in Section 3.5 of Appendix B of the Draft EA.

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices by mail for review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO commenting with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the Draft EA. Consultation efforts are ongoing and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1530-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Robert Tyng Hawk

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Regulatory Process
Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)

The Forest Service must also comply with Executive Order 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. E.O. 13175, requires the Forest Service to "ensure that the views of tribal officials," prior to approving the plan of operation for Jenny Gulch. However, the EA indicates that letters were sent out by the Forest Service and the Yankton Sioux Tribe responded that it is not consultation on Jenny Gulch, but that no consultation has occurred. The Forest Service has failed to consult with the Yankton Sioux Tribe on Jenny Gulch as required by E.O. 13175. The plan of operation must be denied.

The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. The NEPA consultant directed by the USFS prepared the project at the January 16, 2020 public information meeting. Representatives from the U.S. Forest Service and the NEPA consultant (Bec Engineering Inc) were available to the project. The public was given the opportunity to comment on the project during the scoping period that followed the public information meeting, and scoping comments were accepted up to the publication of the Draft EA. The public review and comment period for the Draft EA also allowed the public an opportunity to comment on proposed project impacts. Information related to scoping and the Draft EA are available on the project website.


There will not be an exemption to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss watercourses and Environmental Assessments.

6 CFR 218.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (b) Time period for submission of comments. (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the notice.

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The Draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. The NEPA consultant directed by the USFS prepared the project at the January 16, 2020 public information meeting. Representatives from the U.S. Forest Service and the NEPA consultant (Bec Engineering Inc) were available to the project. The public was given the opportunity to comment on the project during the scoping period that followed the public information meeting, and scoping comments were accepted up to the publication of the Draft EA. The public review and comment period for the Draft EA also allowed the public an opportunity to comment on proposed project impacts. Information related to scoping and the Draft EA are available on the project website.


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Organization: Carova
Letter Number: 3
Response: Hand-delivered comments received by the BLM must be postmarked by 18:00 (ET) on October 25, 2021. Electronic comments should be submitted to BLM via email at BLMNHFSWES@BLM.GOV. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior is required to review timely. Notice should be received by 18:00 (ET) on October 25, 2021.

Department of the Interior
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20201

Attention: Environmental Analysts

Dear Ms. Traylor and Mr. Mayor,

We refer to your comments dated July 30, 2022, for the Draft EIS for the Forest Service's project titled "Drilling of existing wells and exploration of new potential locations." This Draft EIS includes the assessment of the Draft EIS for the project titled "Drilling of existing wells and exploration of new potential locations.

In response to your comments, the BLM has developed the following responses:

1. We agree that additional information is needed to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed drilling activities. We will provide additional data on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed drilling activities.

2. We understand your concern about the potential for increased traffic during the project timeframe. We will work with local communities to minimize the impact of increased traffic.

3. We will work with local communities to ensure that the project does not have adverse impacts on cultural resources.

4. We agree that additional data on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed drilling activities is needed.

5. We will work with local communities to ensure that the project does not have adverse impacts on cultural resources.

We appreciate your comments and look forward to working with you to ensure that the project does not have adverse impacts on cultural resources.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Environmental Analyst
Department of the Interior
Office of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20201
Carla Marshall 386 8 Other Statement of Project Opinion Who will the Forest Service cater to? The American people who come to the Black Hills Forest to enjoy the land, water and wildlife, and save sites, or, these instruction-inductors that will see their (Incline) to the horrible bidder and eventually this area will up with a huge open pit gold mine. Therefore, I choose the "No Action" Alternative.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Carla Marshall 386 9 Outside of Scope Mining EXPLORATION LEADS TO LARGER-OVERSEXTRACTION INDUSTRIES THAT PRODUCE TOXIC WATERS.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Carla Marshall 386 10 Other Public Health and Safety Mining is part the proposed project. The EA states, "No hazardous materials or toxic substances are used to conduct the proposed project." Then in the next sentence, which concludes the first sentence, you say "The only hazardous materials utilized for the proposed project are - and you list a few of hazardous and toxic petroleum products, most are liquid and will reach into the soil." If yes, you will provide Petroleum products specific spill kits will be available at all sites where petroleum products are stored or utilized; however, they do not give specifics to what is contained in that "Spill Kits." Are they prepared for a major spill disaster if one should occur?

It is acknowledged that, in addition to water, it may also use industry standard drilling additives such as boron salts and muds, or other chemical/white biodegradable additives, during drilling to more efficiently and safely drill and seal wells/trenches. Table 2-2 and Section 2.3.2.1 of the EA have been updated to more accurately depict this.

Carla Marshall 386 11 Incorporate Public Health and Safety In a music article, it says they will use "Biodegradable Lubricants". Are the the EPA rules and regulations on using these "New" types of hydraulic oils. Are the "Biodegradable Lubricants" approved for use in Service areas, or, in the Water Districts.

As noted in Table 2-1 of the EA, all fluids and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.

Carla Marshall 386 12 Other Public Health and Safety Are any specific and/or specific additives that are determined to be toxic to wildlife how much.

As noted in Table 2-1 of the EA, all fluids and oils would be stored in appropriate containers or tanks with secondary containment to minimize any spill hazards.

Carla Marshall 386 13 Incorporate Water Supply Draft EA section 2.7 of the draft Appendix A: Water, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 2 have been updated to remove the reference to key affects to the municipal watershed. As noted in the EA and Appendix C: Water, water would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced directly from Rapid Creek or other local surface waters.

Carla Marshall 387 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion Please deny EA Gold's request for water.

Comment noted. F3 would be required to comply with any environmental compliance requirements issued by the USFS as part of the EA decision. In addition, F3, F2 is required to comply with all environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project.

Arlene Butler 388 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion want to be recorded as no record as totally completely opposed to the proposed EA- proposed due to Gold's gold project and any similar type project.

Comment noted.

Arlene Butler 389 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion I am strongly opposed to permitting the gold exploration to take place near Pactola Reservoir.

Comment noted.

Arlene Butler 389 2 Outside of Scope Mining Mining has left a tragic history of changes/ lashed good for many years in the area.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Karen Ellison 390 1 Other Statement of Project Opinion support Alternative A: No Action. The wildlife, plants, geology, water, ecosystem, and other similar should remain undisturbed.

Karen Ellison 390 2 Regulatory Issues Comment Period 30 days to remove near enough time for the public to review and comment on these 2021 Edition. Not all the pages are searchable, which makes it much more difficult to analyze.

There will be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please review the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments.

36 CFR 218.45 Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Extensions. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Karen Ellison 390 3 Regulatory Issues Government to Government Consultation (Tribal engagement) No details are provided about tribal consultation status. Perhaps the details are present but a summary of what's been done so far is not even included. In any case, the consultation should be complete because an accurate EA cannot be made without it.

For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and TIPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO occurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1330-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.

Karen Ellison 390 4 Outside of Scope Mining Although EA states repeatedly that mining is not part of the proposed action, the only reason for exploration is that F3 hopes it will lead to mining. It is preposterous to consider gold mining near Rapid Creek or Lake Pactola, or any body of water for that matter. Gold mining in Lead has resulted in a world full of pollution.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.

Karen Ellison 390 5 Other Statement of Project Opinion mining will review maps or facts concerning the surrounding area or its residents human, animal or plant.

Comment noted.

James Preston 392 1 Outside of Scope Mining Water careful/review examining the issue of hard rock mining within Rapid City, Box Elder, and Ellsworth Airforce Base's only water supply in the watershed. It is another the economic risks of pursuing a project like the Iron-Gold F3 Gold Exploration Project for outweigh any benefit that would be gained by a small number of equity owners of F3 Gold.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E: Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report.
James Preston 392 2 Incorporate Underwater Quality/Water Supply The water lubricated for these drills will be pulled from aquifers that support numerous homeowners in and around Silver City. If that is the municipal water source they use and defective to lubricate their drills, then that is still a fair reach but that water is lost in our watershed and that argument should be omitted from discussion immediately.

Any water used for the drilling would be sourced from an approved municipal or industrial source; no water would be sourced from Lapidus Creek or other local surface waters. This has been clarified in the Section 3.7 of the Final EA and Appendix - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

James Preston 392 3 Outside of Scope Mining Putting any type of mineral hard rock mining above our state, state water source is irresponsible at least. There is no reason for this company to engage in industrial drilling if they are not going to turn around and sell the claim to the next highest bidder. This is obvious. The fact that it's not come out and say that, but COUNTERS that by stating "there will be no gold mining," then they must really think people out here are not paying attention or are plain stupid.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report.

James Preston 392 4 Outside of Scope Mining There is NO WAY a mining company can justify a comparison with the largest employers in the region: state and federal governments. This untruthful form propotions our entire way of life out here and should be viewed as what it is: an intentional threat.

Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands. As such, exploration is allowed on U.S. Forest Service lands.

James Preston 392 5 Either Statement of Project Scope Please, deny any permitting for the FJ Project and consider my comments as a vote for NO ACTION.

Comment noted.

James Preston 392 6 Regulatory Processes Comment Period EA vs ES We must be allowed all the flurry and provide real argument within the much-needed process that should exist prior to LESS time for comment and even a further Environmental Impact Survey instead of an Environmental Assessment (particularly since none of the proposed FJ drill sites rest within the riparian zone).

There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 218 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 218.41 - Comments on proposed projects and activities, (a) Opportunity to comment, (c) Time period for submission of comments — (c) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the notice.

Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 218, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 218.42(d) identifies short-term (1-year or less) mineral, energy, or geopolitical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geopolitical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. FJ's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.

The regulations indicate that if the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be elevated to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EIS if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated FJ’s proposal to an EA to assess potential project effects.

The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (36 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, it would be documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.

Ashley Preston 395 1 Either Statement of Project Scope As a resident and graduate from the school of Miners in Rapid, I vehemently oppose this drilling project. Please, do not allow this unnecessary project to proceed and please NO ACTION.

Comment noted.

No name included 396 1 Either Statement of Project Scope Do not want any of this to proceed. To be a private company to come in and pollute the water is a deliberate plot to go against the people. This company does not want to be held accountable for the drilling. We must now be responsible for the drilling.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report.

Jesse Anderson 396 1 Either Statement of Project Scope As we believe we should say "NO" to FJ Gold Projects.

Comment noted.

Kaiser Letter/Letter 1 397 1 Outside of Scope Mining Brent Kaiser, Angela Johnson, Amy Green, Gaili Shaw Letter 1A outside of scope mining within the forest service.

Comment noted. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands.

Kaiser Letter/Letter 1 397 2 Outside of Scope Mining Brent Kaiser, Angela Johnson, Amy Green, Gaili Shaw Letter 2A outside of scope mining within the forest service.

Comment noted. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report.

Kaiser Letter/Letter 1 397 3 Outside of Scope Mining Brent Kaiser, Angela Johnson, Amy Green, Gaili Shaw Letter 3A outside of scope mining within the forest service.

Comment noted.
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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Comment noted. Potential effects to recreation, wildlife, and water resources are discussed in the Draft EA and the following appendices: Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation; Appendix D - Draft Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report; and Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report.

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<th>Action Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form Letter 2</td>
<td>Trish Anderson, Chloe Brandsrud, Seth Brandsrud, Mary Gustke, Lena Hewerlin, Gail Hines, Russ Johnson, Jon Johnson, Mary Kelly/Curt Pochert, Kris Wurks, Betty Turrill, Sandra Thaden, Susan Baker, Ellen Riedel, Mary Everson, Kaylee Hildig, Connor Hildig, Tom Katas, Padi Koals, Sandra Olsen, Pat Giegenmeier, Kelly Thomas, Ellen Thomas, Calvin Busch, Floyd Butler, Mira Fay, Chelsea Frenkle, Susan Hes, Suneetha Kurra, Wesley Morris, Nancy Morris, Mark Herrmann, Leonard Kerming, Linda Richard, Alissa Seys, John Trescot, Susan Centers, Suneetha Kurra, Wesley Morris</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Registration Process</td>
<td>EA Content</td>
<td>The draft Environmental Assessment is vague and incomplete, making it impossible for the public to be informed.</td>
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The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USFS streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical report appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA.
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
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<th>Additional Signatures</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chita Anderson, Chlo Brandsrud, Seth Brandsrud, Mary Guiter, Lars Hawniken, Gail Hines, Russ Johnson, Lars Johnson, Mary Kelly/Curt Fochsott, Kris Norman, Betty Terrill, Sandra Thiden, Susan Baker, Ellen Bastorf, Mary Owen, Kaylee Hildt, Connor Hildt, Tom Katz, Paula Kolda, Sandra Olson, Pat Shinneman, Kelly Thomas, Ellen Thomas, Caleb Bosch, Royal Butler, Memoi Fuy, Chelsea Forehead, Susan Hey, Samatha Kuru, Wesley Morris</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>2A vs ES</td>
<td>Request that and Environmental Impact Statement be completed.</td>
<td>Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 202, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 202(a)(3)(ii)(B) identifies short-term (1 year or less) mining, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low-standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geophysical investigations which use existing roads that may require incidental repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. For the proposed action this definition of a categorical exclusion action is high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has excluded F3’s proposal from an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<td>Gail Brandsrud, Seth Brandsrud, Mary Guiter, Lars Hawniken, Gail Hines, Russ Johnson, Lars Johnson, Mary Kelly/Curt Fochsott, Kris Norman, Betty Terrill, Sandra Thiden, Susan Baker, Ellen Bastorf, Mary Owen, Kaylee Hildt, Connor Hildt, Tom Katz, Paula Kolda, Sandra Olson, Pat Shinneman, Kelly Thomas, Ellen Thomas, Caleb Bosch, Royal Butler, Memoi Fuy, Chelsea Forehead, Susan Hey, Samatha Kuru, Wesley Morris</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Regulatory</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (tribal engagement)</td>
<td>Tribal consultation and protection of cultural resources are incomplete.</td>
<td>For the SST EA, an intensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) for 60-day (July 4, 2021) review and comment. A letter dated September 18, 2021, was received from the SHPO concurring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 4.4 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 2000-002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Fisheries &amp; WILDLIFE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raptor nesting sites and a bighorn sheep birthing area and migration route would be negatively impacted.</td>
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<td>Letter 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Cumulative Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Forest Service must analyze all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the project. It has not done this.</td>
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Potential effects to wildlife, including bighorn sheep, are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix D: Draft Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. See Draft EA, Table 2.7: “Drilling activities in the vicinity of Sunnyvale Gulch Road could be restricted from April 15-August 31 to avoid disturbance during the bighorn sheep lambing season; bighorn sheep migration route would be observed. Any potential restrictions would be coordinated and implemented at the direction of the USFWS Wildlife Biologist and District Ranger.” Also see Section 3.5 and Appendix D: Section 4.2, Table 4.2, Section 4.2.2, and Table 4.2. Additional timing restrictions have been added to Alternative C in the Final EA to limit drilling of sites SPC-016, SPC-017, and SPC-019 from May 1 to June 15 to further reduce potential effects to bighorn sheep lambing.
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<th>Organization</th>
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<th>Resource</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Letter 2</strong></td>
<td>Chace Anderson, Chloe Brandt, Seth Brandt, Mary Burke, Lisa Fawcett, Sad Hines, Russ Johnson, Jim Johnson, Mary Kelly/Cornichett, Kris Martin, Betty Nett, Sandra Tholen, Susan Baker, Ellen Bredahl, Mary Donvan, Kayce Hils, Ceramic Hils, Tom Kasay, Ruda Kula, Brenda Shio, Pat Smoak, Kelly Thomas, Ellen Thomas, Judy Beans, Ruby Baker, Willy F, Chelsea Brenchley, Susan H, Angie Hurts, Wes Weter, Wesley Morris, Nancy Morris, Mark Menne, Leonard Kooning, Linda Richard, Abigail Sipes, John Tricos, Susan Center, Samatha Hurts, Wesly Morris</td>
<td>North Letter 2</td>
<td>7 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Alternatives Analysis</td>
<td>Writing a choice between 42-DRilling locations and 47 DRilling locations is not including all reasonable alternatives. The Forest Service must include and analyze all reasonable alternatives to ES-Gold plan.</td>
<td>NEPA analysis must evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives. 40 CFR § 1508.2(a)(1) defines &quot;reasonable alternatives&quot; as a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, meeting the purpose and need for the proposed action, and, where applicable, meet the goals of the applicant. Under this definition, the draft EA has analyzed reasonable project alternatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North Letter 2</strong></td>
<td>Robert Johnson, Cara Hiram, Jim Llewelyn (submitted late), Lydia Garvey (submitted late), Jessica Stone (submitted late), Kathryn Reichard (submitted late)</td>
<td>North Letter 2</td>
<td>1 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Draft and Agency Engagement</td>
<td>EA vs ES</td>
<td>Writing to request that you release all information on proposed and actual gold exploration projects in the Mystic Ranger District and complete full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for each gold mining project. The Forests of Rapid Creek, the central Black Hills, Lakota cultural and treaty resources, Rapid City and Ellsworth Force Base are threatened by these projects, and full disclosure and complete consideration are imperative.</td>
<td>The Project and Project record and subject to the Freedom of Information act (FOIA); information can be gained through the formal FOIA process. Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 1506, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several identified categories. 36 CFR part 1506(b)(1) identifies short-term (3-10 year) mineral, energy, or geological investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may incidentally require minor repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data collection features. It's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action.</td>
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<td><strong>North Letter 2</strong></td>
<td>Robert Johnson, Cara Hiram, Jim Llewelyn (submitted late), Lydia Garvey (submitted late), Jessica Stone (submitted late), Kathryn Reichard (submitted late)</td>
<td>North Letter 2</td>
<td>2 Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)</td>
<td>Proposed gold mining projects require tribal consultation and serious consideration of the issues raised by the Lakota and other indigenous peoples in the region. Without full EA evaluation, these concerns will not receive the required &quot;hard look.&quot; The release of all information being withheld by the US Forest Service on current and proposed projects is a prerequisite to thorough ISS processes.</td>
<td>The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have insignificant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of no Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an ES. Potential effects of all project alternatives are disclosed in the EA.</td>
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<td><strong>North Letter 2</strong></td>
<td>Robert Johnson, Cara Hiram, Jim Llewelyn (submitted late), Lydia Garvey (submitted late), Jessica Stone (submitted late), Kathryn Reichard (submitted late)</td>
<td>North Letter 3</td>
<td>3 Outside of Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Historically, mining operations have harmed local wildlife and water in the Black Hills, and a former gold mine has been declared a Superfund site. If these were to be mining spill (usually cyanide, arsenic and other heavy metals), Rapid Creek would be polluted, and the aquifers would be polluted soon after. Concern over the potential harm that could be caused to Rapid Creek and its associated communities as old American Rivers to include it on the list of America’s Most Endangered Rivers® of 2020.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<td><strong>North Letter 2</strong></td>
<td>Robert Johnson, Cara Hiram, Jim Llewelyn (submitted late), Lydia Garvey (submitted late), Jessica Stone (submitted late), Kathryn Reichard (submitted late)</td>
<td>North Letter 3</td>
<td>4 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>On the Rapid City Council recently passed a resolution opposing gold exploration and mining in the Rapid Creek watershed due to the immediate threat they pose to our area’s economy and future. All of Rapid City’s water resources have their beginnings in Rapid Creek, and damage to the Creek could have permanent, widespread impacts. What’s more, the economy depends on tourists who want to continue fishing, boating, hiking, bicycling and photographing in a beautiful ecosystem that centers on the Rapid Creek.</td>
<td>Consent noted. The City of Rapid City’s resolution was evaluated as supporting criteria 3.7.7 of the Draft EA, Appendix F - Scoping Statements and Responses. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<td><strong>North Letter 6</strong></td>
<td>Barry Voor, Ray Varlande</td>
<td>North Letter 4</td>
<td>1 Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>After writing &quot;no&quot; to the &quot;no action&quot; alternative to protect our waterways. Water is life!</td>
<td>Consent noted.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>Kim Schartz, Andrea Schartz</td>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>This is a communication to the USFS to consider the health, environmental, and economic impacts that mining projects could potentially have on the lands and waters of the Black hills and surrounding areas in which we live and enjoy.</td>
<td>Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. Potential effects of all project alternatives on public health and safety are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix F - Public Health and Safety, and Section 8 - Public Health and Safety.</td>
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<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>Kim Schartz, Andrea Schartz</td>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulatory Process</td>
<td>Comment Period EA vs EIS</td>
<td>Are asking for an extension to be filed and no less than a full environmental impact study to be conducted.</td>
<td>There will not be an extension to the Draft EA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 210.40 regulations below that discuss extensions and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 210.25 - Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (c) Time period for submission of comments; (d) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (e) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.</td>
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<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>Kim Schartz, Andrea Schartz</td>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Irresponsible mining would have a significant and devastating economic impact of tourism destinations and outdoor water recreation areas were adversely affected.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on recreation are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report, Section 3.2.</td>
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<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>Kim Schartz, Andrea Schartz</td>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>What will become of the numerous osprey and bald eagles that call this place home and come back to the area annually to fish for their dinner?</td>
<td>Mining effects to wildlife, including bald eagles is discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Wildlife and Fisheries Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation and Technical Report. An osprey nest is located approximately 0.3 miles southeast of the Project area. USFS established protection buffers for this species are 600’ east/southeast of the identified nesting site. The Draft EA addresses the protection of this species.</td>
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<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>Kim Schartz, Andrea Schartz</td>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Please read lightly, I believe it is in the forced service best interest to include an analysis all reasonable alternatives to F3 Golf’s plans.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all project alternatives proposed on recreation are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix B - Access, Transportation, and Recreation Technical Report, Section 3.2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>Kim Schartz, Andrea Schartz</td>
<td>North Letter S</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outside Scope</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Mining proposed of this nature harms our clean water supplies, our health, natural ecosystems, natural beauty, recreation, agriculture and our quality of living. Mining proposed of this nature also has long lasting negative impacts on our watershed that are irreversible and poisons to our health and well being. Take a drive to Terry Peak near Lead and see the absolute destruction of the adjacent hills and natural ecosystem from ongoing scar mining.</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review. Potential effects of all exploration project alternatives proposed on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Stephen</td>
<td>Stephens</td>
<td>J.D. Opie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>Please do not allow any mining exploration above the Facko Reservoir, especially in the F3 Golf’s latest golf project. Do not let them ever get their foot in the door. I support the “no action” alternative.</td>
<td>Comment noted. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization

Morgan Falcone

Letter

late 1

Other

Letter Quality/Water Supply

Comment

My concern, however, is whether anyone can adequately account for the CONSEQUENCE of failure for this type of operation to close to such a precious resource to environmental requirements and conditions that may be issued in the other permits they are required to obtain before initiating the project. F3 Gold is required to submit a preliminary plan to the Forest Service prior to authorization for project initiation in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2800. In addition, F3 Gold is required for submitting a preliminary report to the Forest Service for the exploratory project, with the final amount determined by the Forest Service.

Response

Potential effects of all project activities on water resources are discussed in the Draft EIA, Appendix E - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology: Technical Report, Section 5. F3 Gold is required to be conducted by an environmental compliance review team and will be conducted by an environmental compliance review team. In addition, F3 Gold is required to be submitted to the Forest Service prior to authorization for project initiation in accordance with Forest Service Manual 2800. In addition, F3 Gold is required to be submitted to the Forest Service for the exploratory project, with the final amount determined by the Forest Service.

Morgan Falcone

late 2

Other

Statement of Project Opinion

would encourage you to complete a review of the existing superfund sites nationwide. I don’t think people planned to create these when they set about trying to achieve a goal.

Comment noted. The EA analyses the proposed Plan or Operation submitted by F3. A nationwide review of superfund sites is outside the scope of this project.

Morgan Falcone

late 3

Regulatory Process

A Honor

Please require the companies requesting this exploration to provide the consequence of failure study performed as part of this project, the people and area impacted and call for a public vote. If these studies have not been done, please require them to be completed. Please require them to demonstrate the risk of failure so that our Great Lakes can make an informed decision.

The draft Environmental Assessment follows the USES’s streamlined NEPA format and contains several technical appendices that provide an in-depth assessment of all the resources discussed in the EA. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporate holds on federal lands. Project proposers on federal lands are not subject to a vote. The purpose of the EA is to objectively describe potential effects of all project alternatives so the decision official may make an informed decision.

Morgan Falcone

late 4

Other

Statement of Project Opinion

Please consider allowing this exploration and eventual mining if they feel the gold they are looking for. Do not allow it anywhere that could impact our most precious natural resource. If there is even a small risk on paper, the consequence is too high.

Comment noted. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporate holds on federal lands.

Morgan Falcone

late 5

Regulatory Process

Consultation Period

The first time was made aware of public comment was on Oct 25, 2021 on the following news’s event. I thought the public comment closed Oct 24,2021 but evidently Oct 25,2021, two days earlier leaving an even shorter amount of time. I am respectfully requesting consideration of my comments sent Oct 25,2021. Please confirm whether or not they will be considered.

A legal notice announcing the availability of the Draft EIA and public comment period was published in the Rapid City Journal on September 23, 2021. Comments received after the October 22, 2021 Draft EIA public comment deadline will be considered and a response will be provided in the Draft EIA comments and responses appendix of the Final EIA. However, because the response was received after the formal 30 day Draft EIA comment period, this party will not have standing for objection per 34 CFR 218.5 which addresses who may file an objection. USES NEPA Planner Jessica liggers responded to this email with the following text: There will be an extension to the Draft EIA comment period. Please see the 36 CFR 220 regulations below that discuss extensions: Public Comment and Environmental Assessments. 36 CFR 220.21. Comments on proposed projects and activities. (a) Opportunity to comment. (1) Time period for submission of comments—(i) Comments on a proposed project or activity to be documented in an environmental assessment shall be accepted for 30 days beginning on the first day after the date of publication of the legal notice. (ii) Extension. The time period for the opportunity to comment on a proposed project or activity to be documented with an environmental assessment shall not be extended.

Morgan Falcone

late 6

Regulatory Process

Consultation Period

If there are appeal processes to file for truth, my comments are in line with the statement that many of the postmarked comments should be considered. Who can I reach out to? I am not satisfied with this answer! Would you recommend anyone within the Forest service as my state representatives?

This comment is in response to a follow-up email sent by Jessica liggers, NEPA Planner to comment 246. She responded as follows: The legal notice for the Trinity Back Gold Exploration Drilling Project Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was published in the Rapid City Journal on September 23, 2021, and serves the exclusive means for calculating the 30 day comment period. These regulations are found at 36 CFR 218.5, and prohibit the extension of the formal comment period on an Environmental Assessment (EA). Detailed and formal comments had to be received by 2:30 PM on October 22, 2021, and mailed comments had to be post marked by October 22, 2021. In addition, hard delivered comments needed to be received by 6:00 PM, October 21, 2021. It is the sender’s responsibility to ensure timely receipt.

J. Black

late 1

Outside of Writing

what happens when they fail. Of course, I also don’t have the energy to enter the commenting process for Gold exploration.

J. Black is not part of the proposed action. Any existing activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project-specific NEPA review.

K.M. Conroy

late 1

Other

Statement of Project Opinion

I am Morgan Falcone. I was originally contacted by the state representatives to discuss the project.

K.M. Conroy, Forest Environmental Coordinator, discussed comments from Morgan Falcone on phone. Morgan Falcone sent an email with follow-up questions after the phone conversation. K.M. Conroy responded to Morgan Falcone’s email with the following email response: You are correct. Your comment that was submitted on October 23, 2021 will be received and a response will be provided in the appendix of the Final EA. However, because your response was received after the formal 30 day comment period, this party will not have standing for objection per 34 CFR 218.5 “Who may file an objection” If you have any other questions, don’t hesitate to contact me… K.M. Conroy.”

Comment noted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Warmanette</td>
<td>608-del 2 Regulatory Process 2A-ES ES</td>
<td>And they have not done the highest level of environmental analysis, which would be an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Federal regulations identify certain actions as categorical exclusions. Per 36 CFR part 220A, a proposed action may be excluded from further analysis and documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) only if there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action and if the action falls within one of several specified categories. 36 CFR part 220A(a)(9) identifies short-term (3 year or less) mineral, energy, or geographical investigations and their residential incident actions that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads as a categorically excluded action. The first identified example is authorizing geological investigations which use existing roads that may require incident repair to reach sites for drilling core holes and other data-collection features. F3's proposed action fits this definition of a categorical exclusion action. The regulations indicate that the Responsible Official (i.e., the Forest Service) determines the proposed action may potentially result in significant environmental effects, a categorical exclusion action may be excluded to an EA to assess those potential effects. The Responsible Official may also elevate a categorical exclusion action to an EA if a high level of public interest is anticipated. The Forest Service has elevated F3's proposed action to an EA to assess potential project effects. The purpose of an EA is to assist in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (40 CFR 1508.9). The Responsible Official will determine whether the EA analysis shows that the project would have significant impacts. If the EA analysis shows that the project would not have significant impacts, this would be documented in a finding of No Significant Impact at the time of decision. If the EA analysis determines the proposed action likely results in significant environmental impacts, the EA may be elevated to an EIS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin Ryan</td>
<td>408-del 1 Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Due to these reasons, SAY NO TO THE DRILLING IN OUR SACRED BLACK HILLS. Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3. The General Mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Diem</td>
<td>608-del 1 Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Oppose drilling by Paradise Reservoir. Save our water! Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence Ramer</td>
<td>508-del 1 Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>I realize that this is past the deadline for taking comments. I just wanted to voice my concerns for our precious drinking water... please do not allow this project to proceed! Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamie Hancock</td>
<td>608-del 1 Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Oppose drilling in Rapid City and I survive here because of that water. Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleen Kurtz</td>
<td>608-del 1 Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>We are not driven by land leases. Comment noted. The general mining Act of 1872 authorizes the right to mineral exploration claims that an individual or corporation holds on federal lands.</td>
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<td>Colleen Kurtz</td>
<td>608-del 2 Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>There are already tons of little mining claims in the area and they are destructive. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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<td>Colleen Kurtz</td>
<td>608-del 3 Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>The value of our area as far as recreation, tourism, and the beauty of living here cannot be replaced by destructive mining. I don't think the value could ever be equal. Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uma Bigelow</td>
<td>608-del 1 Statement of Project Option</td>
<td>Forest Service permits (SWPAH). You wonders have a duty and responsibility of the public’s Trust and faith that was placed in you, to make decisions that are in the best interests of the People who reside here in the Black Hills and the State of South Dakota. Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uma Bigelow</td>
<td>610-del 2 Water Quality/ Water Supply</td>
<td>The Aquifers that lie beneath the Black Hills are subsurface groundwater sources that MUST be protected NOW and the FUTURE. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uma Bigelow</td>
<td>610-del 3 Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>You are merely men and women with descent making power to prevent and protect. None of you can guarantee nor reverse irreversible contamination of Water Sources underground by drilling, chemical injection and Maria and below surface. This has our bad and deadly! Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix A - Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uma Bigelow</td>
<td>610-del 4 Outside of Scope Mining</td>
<td>The work being done by the People and the interested already suffer from depleted levels of arsenic lead and radioactive poisoning due to more than two thousand unapped uranium wells, enormous devastation environmentally from former and current gold mining operations that STILL create ongoing poisoning and contamination of our watersheds and underground waters that have never been cleaned up and cannot be cleaned up! Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
For the Draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2021) and THPO (July 2, 2021) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 16, 2021, was received from the SHPO concerning our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 3.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDA Department Regulation 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation. See Draft EA Section 3.4.1. Due to the sensitive nature of information presented in the cultural resources report, this document is only able to share with appropriate tribal entities and tribal and state entities from the State of Colorado. SHPO and the USNM are unable to share the information with the public. See Draft EA Section 1.3.4. The project is compliant with Executive Order 13177 Consultation and Coordination with Tribal Governments (period-related Presidential Memorandums from 2008, 2009, and 2013); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 USC 470 et seq); Protection of Historic Properties Act (36 CFR 60); Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and 49 CFR 10; American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; and USDA Departmental Regulations 1500-02 Tribal Consultation, Coordination and Consultation. Also see Draft EA Section 3.4 and Appendix E, Section 3.5.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft LA, Appendix E - Sox, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

Comment noted. Potential effects of all the project alternatives on water resources are discussed in the Draft EA, Appendix E - Sox, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.

In an agency, the USDA Forest Service is responsible for administering and managing all federally owned lands within the National Forest System, including the Black Hills National Forest, according to the United States’ statutory direction. Congress has not authorized the Forest Service to settle or address the land claim issue of the Sioux Tribes. Only Congress has the authority to transfer ownership of the Black Hills National Forest to the Sioux Tribes. Further consideration of the Sioux nation’s desire to return the lands is a matter of deliberation for Congress. Any potential impacts directly linked to treaty issues and land claims are beyond the scope of the Indian Gold Grab Exploration Project.

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Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Water Resources

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Additional Surname</th>
<th>Letter Number</th>
<th>Comment Number</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Water Resources</td>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>Ghost</td>
<td>j</td>
<td>4-3-10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regulatory Promote</td>
<td>Cumulative Assessment EIA Content</td>
<td>The cumulative impacts analysis in the EA is inadequate.</td>
<td>Cumulative effects are discussed in Section 3.10 of the EA, as well as within each technical report appendix that is included as part of the EA.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Water Resources</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Regulatory Promote</td>
<td>Government to Government Consultation (Tribal Engagement)</td>
<td>The USDI Departmental Regulation 1350.002 requires the Forest Service to consult with the Indian Nations of the Great Plains, and with “Tribal Organizations” – these organizations are comprised of officially designated members who represent their Tribe’s interests in organization with the USDI. Consultation is necessary to determine if there is a specific issue or policy area. That includes the Great Plains Tribal Water Alliance. The Forest Service consultation regulation require consultation with the Water Alliance prior to consideration of the Jenny Gulch proposal. That did not occur.</td>
<td>The USDI Departmental Regulation 1350.002 Conflict Resolution -Background and Policy, sections 1-8 states “Tribes” and makes no reference to Tribal Organizations with the regulation. The regulation states the following: A Tribe may seek conflict resolution through the USDI Office of Tribal Relations where: 1. A Tribe or its offices or agency engage with the industry or its offices or agency do not communicate or work cooperatively, or are not appropriately or adequately considering the needs, desires, or requests of the Tribe, or 2. of a Tribe believes the USDA, or its offices or agencies, should engage with them in consultation and the USDI has not done so.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Statement of Project Opinion</td>
<td>The Great Plains Tribal Water Alliance also expresses support for comments submitted by our member Tribes in opposition to the F3 Jenny Gulch Gold Exploration Project.</td>
<td>Comment stated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellsworth Air Force Base</td>
<td>Gary</td>
<td>Brundige</td>
<td></td>
<td>4-3-10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>The above on-site disposal is not practical and the reclamation plan does not adequately address restoration and mitigation for the following reasons: The site is located in the 100-year floodplain, and the area is subject to flood. The proposed disposal area is on the 100-year floodplain. As discussed in the meeting, the term “burial” is used in the EA, Plan of Operations, and the Reclamation Plan, with respect to any disposal in the area. Both of the sites, where they exist, do not have properties for protecting against the oxidation or migration of solids or leached contaminants from the proposed disposal area(s).</td>
<td>These impacts are discussed in Sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.1 of the Draft EA and in the Draft EA Appendix B, Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.1.2.2. As noted in these sections, drill cuttings that contain mineralized rock would be buried on-site or disposed of off-site to mitigate this risk. Drill cuttings and used water recovery are described in Section 2.2.1 of the Draft EA. Additional text has been added to Section 2.2.1 noting that thin spreading and buying cuttings beneath the top soil is standard for buried cuttings in the Western U.S. Buying the cuttings on-site allows the cuttings to be protected from erosion until vegetation is re-established. Should on-site disposal in this method not be feasible, off-site transport and disposal may be required in coordination with the USFS. The text has also been updated noting the role of benthos in sorting and confining trace amounts of sulfur-based minerals.</td>
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<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>For the draft EA, an extensive heritage resource inventory of all areas to be disturbed was conducted. The report was submitted to SHPO (August 2, 2011 and TPO (June 22, 2011) offices for review and comment. A letter dated September 30, 2011, was received from the SHPO inquiring with our recommendation. See Sections 3.4 and 6.6 of the Draft EA. Consultation is ongoing until publication of the Final EA and will adhere to the USDI Departmental Regulation 1350.002 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Consultation.</td>
<td>The USDI Departmental Regulation 1350.002 Conflict Resolution -Background and Policy, sections 1-8 states “Tribes” and makes no reference to Tribal Organizations with the regulation. The regulation states the following: A Tribe may seek conflict resolution through the USDI Office of Tribal Relations where: 1. A Tribe or its offices or agency engage with the industry or its offices or agency do not communicate or work cooperatively, or are not appropriately or adequately considering the needs, desires, or requests of the Tribe, or 2. of a Tribe believes the USDA, or its offices or agencies, should engage with them in consultation and the USDI has not done so.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>The project has provided no evidence that operations or restoration methods will protect against the oxidation or migration of solids or leached contaminants from the proposed disposal area(s). The proponents should address the means by which the migration of solids, liquids and other contaminants will be reduced, e.g., designed on-site containment, permitted CAD and methods, etc.</td>
<td>These impacts are discussed in Sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.1 of the Draft EA and in the Draft EA Appendix B, Soils, Geology, and Hydrology Technical Report, Section 3.1.2.2. As noted in these sections, drill cuttings that contain mineralized rock would be buried on-site or disposed of off-site to mitigate this risk. Drill cuttings and used water recovery are described in Section 2.2.1 of the Draft EA. Additional text has been added to Section 2.2.1 noting that thin spreading and buying cuttings beneath the topsoil is standard for buried cuttings in the Western U.S. Buying the cuttings on-site allows the cuttings to be protected from erosion until vegetation is re-established. Should on-site disposal in this method not be feasible, off-site transport and disposal may be required in coordination with the USFS. The text has also been updated noting the role of benthos in sorting and confining trace amounts of sulfur-based minerals.</td>
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<td>Reclamation</td>
<td>The Reclamation Plan does not address any mechanism to stabilize the disturbed areas (including temporary roads). There is no evaluation of the top soils/contaminants used/ability to establish and hold native vegetation, no seedling and mulching plan, and no follow-up monitoring plan.</td>
<td>The USDI Departmental Regulation 1350.002 Conflict Resolution -Background and Policy, sections 1-8 states “Tribes” and makes no reference to Tribal Organizations with the regulation. The regulation states the following: A Tribe may seek conflict resolution through the USDI Office of Tribal Relations where: 1. A Tribe or its offices or agency engage with the industry or its offices or agency do not communicate or work cooperatively, or are not appropriately or adequately considering the needs, desires, or requests of the Tribe, or 2. of a Tribe believes the USDA, or its offices or agencies, should engage with them in consultation and the USDI has not done so.</td>
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<td>4-3-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Water Quality/Water Supply</td>
<td>That the operator be required to develop and maintain specific pollution protection plans—this addresses the possibility that the regulatory authority might not require the operator to develop these plans.</td>
<td>The USDI Departmental Regulation 1350.002 Conflict Resolution -Background and Policy, sections 1-8 states “Tribes” and makes no reference to Tribal Organizations with the regulation. The regulation states the following: A Tribe may seek conflict resolution through the USDI Office of Tribal Relations where: 1. A Tribe or its offices or agency engage with the industry or its offices or agency do not communicate or work cooperatively, or are not appropriately or adequately considering the needs, desires, or requests of the Tribe, or 2. of a Tribe believes the USDA, or its offices or agencies, should engage with them in consultation and the USDI has not done so.</td>
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**Note:**

- **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Water Resources:**
  - Crow Ghost (j)
  - Letter Number: 4-3-10
  - Comment Number: 9
- **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Water Resources:**
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  - Letter Number: 4-3-10
  - Comment Number: 10
- **Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Department of Water Resources:**
  - Crow Ghost (j)
  - Letter Number: 4-3-10
  - Comment Number: 12
- **Ellsworth Air Force Base:**
  - Gary Brundige
  - Letter Number: 4-3-10
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  - Gary Brundige
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  - Comment Number: 3
- **Ellsworth Air Force Base:**
  - Gary Brundige
  - Letter Number: 4-3-10
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- **Ellsworth Air Force Base:**
  - Gary Brundige
  - Letter Number: 4-3-10
  - Comment Number: 5
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<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Iron-Cloud</td>
<td>416-late 1</td>
<td>Other Statement of Project Opinion Mining</td>
<td>Mining is not part of the proposed action. Any mining activity proposed in the future would be subject to additional, project specific NEPA review.</td>
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