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PUBLIC COMMENT

From: Ann Katzenbach PO Box 1247
Patagonia, AZ 85624
520-394-0098
annmkat@gmail.com

To: Coronado National Forest
300 W Congress St.
Tucson, AZ 85701

Arizona Minerals' project on its private land already has clear negative impacts. To enlarge the scope of this drilling would add to the pollution, noise, destruction of natural habitat, traffic, safety, erosion, water use, fire hazard, and be yet another mining project in an area filled with potential and on-going environmental degradation.

I live on Harshaw Road. When I built my house here four years ago, it was a quiet country byway. These days it is a commercial highway. Pick up trucks, water trucks, fuel trucks, heavy equipment of every description, 18-wheelers go up and down starting at 5 a.m. This road is part of the Arizona Trail! It is a school bus route. The speed limit is 25 miles an hour. I would say the average speed of the trucks is 40. Law enforcement has ignored our requests for better speed enforcement. There is no shoulder and the road was not built to carry heavy equipment. It is falling apart. To imagine more of this kind of traffic, should the project spread onto Forest Service land is a true nightmare for all who live nearby or use the road.

Who pays for the repaving of Harshaw Road? Probably my tax dollars.

Abandoned mines are an on-going problem in the Patagonia Mountains. Their toxins leak into the local watershed and remediation has done little to stop this. The last attempt washed away this summer with the first heavy rains. So, our water quality is already compromised.

1. You should evaluate how the Taylor deposit drilling will affect the quality of Patagonia's water.

2. You should evaluate the effect of how the volume of their water use will impact the town's water supply. They are already taking thousands of gallons of water from our aquifer.

3. Cattle on Forest Service land are exposed to mine runoff, both from old mines and from current drilling. Does this effect the quality of the meat they provide? This should be analyzed. If nothing else, the cattle should be taken off the land.

Arizona Mining's current drilling project on private land is an affront to all of nature. They have cut down trees, moved tons of dirt around, and the noise and nighttime light compromise a wide area where wildlife live and move about. It's impossible to know how much this 24-hour assault impinges on wildlife, but it certainly does. Widening the scope of the drilling can only multiply the harm being done.

1. Please evaluate to what extent this constant bombardment of noise and light affects wildlife.

2. Endangered species live and move through this area. "Endangered" is not a word to be taken lightly. Please evaluate the affect of this project on the Mexican spotted owl, the yellow-billed cuckoo, jaguar, ocelot and lesser long nosed bat.

3. The lights are incredibly bright. Please check with the local observatories to see if the dark skies that they need are being compromised. There are multi-million dollar investments in these buildings and telescopes.

Patagonia is beloved by birder, hikers, hunters and campers. I work at the Visitor Center and have had visitors who drive out Harshaw Road or attempt to walk or drive at Flux Canyon (Arizona Mining has blocked their part of the road there) ask me what is going on. They ask why there are so many more pickup trucks in town. They are upset to think that mining is taking place in these mountains. One couple told me that they were greeted by an armed guard when they approached Arizona's Mining's gate. The economy of this small town is fragile and largely dependent on tourism. The current mining activity discourages tourism. More mining will have a wider impact.

It has been upsetting to see what Arizona Mining is doing on its private land. They are making a mess, creating a nightmarish environment for wildlife, abusing roads, using vast amounts of water, aggravating an already over-mined area that needs remediation, not more abuse. It would be a terrible mistake to permit them to enlarge the scope of their drilling. You have the ability to say "NO!" Please do.

Ann Kutenfas