
From: Molly Molloy [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, April 19, 2026 1:25 PM
To: FS-objections-southwestern-regional-office
Cc: Molly Molloy
Subject: CNF Hermosa Critical Minerals Project

I am writing with continuing concerns about the South32 Hermosa Mine EIS, especially water issues, and the potential contamination of this fragile area and its groundwater. No one knows how long the limited groundwater will be available to be pumped so far before the surface - especially at such a rate. I will include a few suggestions on how to monitor and mitigate the potential water pollution.

As someone who has enjoyed birding and hiking in this area for thirty years, I am worried about this proposal and its effects on this fragile ecosystem and its plant and animal life.

First of all, I do appreciate the EIS stating that there will be wildlife crossings, that light pollution will be minimized, and there will be a co-locating of the power line and access road to reduce habitat fragmentation.

WATER:

The Flood Analysis does not include the storm runoff, which will not be able to be absorbed since the ground will already be wet, and there is a small amount of sediment. This will increase the water, and its contaminants, flowing downstream to Harshaw Creek and the city of Patagonia, which has only this groundwater for its source of drinking water. This should prompt evaluation of the extreme amount of water that this project could potentially need or use.

MONITORING AND MITIGATION

1. The current permits require testing every 90 days, clearly unsatisfactory as pollutants could be flowing unchecked for months. The EIS states there will be "voluntary monitoring" in addition. This needs to be clarified. There should be more frequent and transparent testing of treatment plant discharge to Harshaw Creek, under it, and down to the town of Patagonia to protect the groundwater they rely on. The whole area, including the Patagona Sonita reserve should be considered and protected.
2. It is vital to have compliance wells, which are not included in the permit. This would give early warning to contaminants in the groundwater system. Three such compliance wells are required, according to the experts.
3. Air and light pollution should also be monitored frequently.

Please remember that cleanup of contaminants is very hard to do, very expensive, and time consuming. It can take decades. It is better to prevent as much pollution as much and as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

Molly Molloy

