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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to bring your attention to the amount of people who live in close proximity to this proposed drilling operation. There are 3 Communities, Duquesne, Washington Camp & Lochiel, as well as at least 16 Ranches down in the Valley. Because our address is Patagonia, many organisations & agencies fail to realise just how many people live up here. There are 17 inhabited homesteads in Duquesne & Washington Camp, including an Internationally recognised Observatory & an amateur Observatory & 7 homesteads in Lochiel, including a newly planted Vineyard.

Many of these properties have boundaries that adjoin the San Raphael Project, so any future mining could come to within yards of their house. This surely is unacceptable.

Our entire way of life up here would be irreversibly changed should this Mining company find minerals & apply to dig an Open Pit Mine. The astounding beauty of this unique & unspoilt area would be destroyed forever.

Instead of enjoying the stunning view of the San Rafael Valley as it sweeps towards the distant majestic Huachuca Mts, we will be looking into a deep, ugly hole in the Earth.

Instead of breathing the pure, clean air of this area, we will be choking on exhaust fumes, dust & whatever toxic chemicals that are churned out of the ground.

Instead of enjoying the darkness & clarity of a night sky unpolluted by light, we will be blinded by spotlights. Our roads will become highways blocked with mining traffic & trucks transporting ore.

Many people, especially in Duquesne have put their life savings into building homes which they have retired to. Choosing this area for its pristine beauty, peace, quiet & remoteness. Now we have Barksdale who plan to bring an Open Pit Mine to our doorsteps. All our properties will become worthless, unsaleable & it will no longer be a pleasure to remain in them ourselves. Our health will be threatened, our watershed drained & the very Earth poisoned as no modern mining methods live up to their promises of no leakage of toxic minerals etc.

The Fauna & Flora so abundant in the area, so many endangered species & migrant birds will leave. I also draw your attention to Barksdales POO, page 12, section D, scenic views.

The proposed drill sites & access roads are not located in the view shed of any nearby (ie 5 miles) CNF Trailheads, Campsites, Natural areas or Wilderness areas.

However, they are in full view of 6 homesteads in Duquesne & 1 in Washington Camp, plus most of the Ranches in the Valley. As all 5 sites are situated on 2 high promontories it is hard to miss them from miles around!!! Are they not situated amongst thousands of acres of "Natural Area"?

This project must not receive a Categorical Exclusion. It must be made to go through a thorough Environmental Process. This present application is only the tip of the Ice Burg. The San Antonio Project as a whole covers over 6,000 acres so they will without doubt be presenting more POO's in the future for more drilling.

I have read the FS website & your mission is to sustain the health, diversity & productivity of the Nations Forests & grasslands, to meet the needs of present & future generations. You support nature in sustaining life.

Your values are service to each other, the American People & the Planet.

Conservation...Protection where necessary, Preservation where appropriate, Restoration when needed & wise management for multiple use & enjoyment always.

Please protect this unique & amazing area.