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Title:

Comments: As residents of the Duquesne community, I am writing to express my concerns regarding this proposed exploration drilling project in the San Rafael Valley. We purchased a house in the Patagonia Mountains in order to enjoy the outdoors, the clear skies free of light pollution and dust, and the quiet and peaceful environment. In the proposed plan, "scenic values" are considered from the perspective of "trailheads, campsites, natural areas and wilderness areas", but not from the perspective of residents. Our property, within 5 miles of the proposed drilling, overlooks the San Rafael Valley and the activity will likely be visible. Has the Forest Service considered the visual impact for the local residents? Also what is being done to mitigate the noise generated by drilling operations? Is there any limit to the noise that can be generated and how will this be enforced? How will the noise impact on local wildlife and hunting be mitigated?

Another primary reason we purchased our property was for astronomy and astrophotography. The proposed plan suggests that dust will be mitigated but is there any limit to the dust that can be put into the atmosphere and how will such limits be enforced? I am an amateur astronomer, but our neighborhood also hosts the professional operation of the Fairborn Observatory. I have spoken with Louis Boyd, manager of the Fairborn Observatory and he has expressed dust as a significant concern to his observatory's operations. Any environmental contamination would have a major impact on the local residents.

IC Exploration will be required to put up a bond to ensure that land reclamation is completed upon project completion, but the plan does not state the value of the bond they must put up. What is the value of this bond?

Our experience of local mining activity comes from making the drive between Patagonia and Duquesne on Harshaw. This drive has gone from being a gentle peaceful transition between city and wilderness to a glaring eye sore. I am sure Arizona Mining and South 32 had plans that sounded reasonable on paper, but the end result is obvious. When mining operations have run their course, it will be the Duquesne community that will have to live with the damage done to the environment and our property values.