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First name: Michele

Last name: Gisser

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Sierra Vista Ranger District

District Ranger, c/o Rick Goshen

4070 S. Avenida Saracino

Hereford, AZ 85615

Dear Ranger Goshen,

I am a resident of Patagonia, Arizona and I am concerned about the San Antonio drilling project in the nearby Patagonia Mountains proposed by the Canadian mining company, Barksdale. The Forest Service is granting the mining project a Categorical Exclusion, which by definition assumes no environmental impact whatsoever. I feel this is not the case and urge you to reconsider all the issues before drilling is allowed to begin, designating this 651 acre mountain land in need of an Environmental Assessment.

My reasons are (1) The road proposed to be used by Barksdale miners goes through a community and is not an industrial road. This same road is used by residents, ranchers, recreationalists and the Border Patrol. This open range where cattle roam as well as deer, bobcat, racoon, coatimundi, roadrunners and many animals that I see during my bike rides on it. The road is narrow and with many blind curves and is hazardous for a large volume of truck traffic. It will be dangerous, noisy, polluting the air and water. (2) The total water usage for the five drill holes (which Barksdale has not specified) and will draw down the water table for the residents of Patagonia especially in this time of drought. There has been no viable study as to how much water is available and hydrologist from the US Geology dept have stated there is no certain way to predict what is there. However it seems apparent that living in southern AZ during time of drought, that the water is precious and should be available to residents, especially those that have lived here for generations.

(3) This environment and bio-diversity are of paramount importance not only the eco tourist economy that has developed here but also recognized internationally as one of the hotspots for endangered animals and plants. There are several endangered plants and animals including the Yellow Billed Cuckoo and the Sonoran Tiger Salamander. Their existence would be negatively impacted by drilling. These endangered animals will be lost forever without a serious Environmental Assessment.