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First name: Erika

Last name: Young

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service Official,

I am writing to you regarding the Plan of Operations recently submitted by Solitario Zinc for Golden Crest Exploration Drilling, proposing to conduct exploratory drilling at up to 25 sites in the vicinity of Big Hill and south to the Limestone Plateau.

As a concerned citizen and ardent supporter of our public lands, I am troubled by the potential impacts this activity could have on our local environment and wildlife. Although I understand this operation is exploratory and does not currently propose mining, the ecological effects of drilling alone can be profound and lasting.

The proposed area is teeming with a rich diversity of wildlife, many of which are reliant on the land for their habitats. Disrupting these habitats could have serious implications for their survival and the balance of our local ecosystem. Furthermore, the area serves as an important passage for migrating birds and hosts a unique assortment of plant life, including rare orchids which could be irreversibly harmed or lost.

Additionally, the prospect of drilling poses significant threats to the local water quality and sources that many depend on, including both the human residents and the cattle who graze in these lands. Contamination or depletion of these precious water sources would be detrimental to the health and livelihoods of all who depend on them.

Our community greatly values the recreational trails that span this landscape, which provide invaluable opportunities for outdoor recreation and appreciation of nature. These trails are not only integral to our quality of life but are also a significant draw for tourism, contributing to our local economy.

Before any approval is granted for such a project, it is imperative that we take into account the full environmental, social, and economic impacts. I urge the Forest Service to conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate these potential effects and engage in a thorough public participation process.

As responsible stewards of our environment, we owe it to ourselves and future generations to protect and conserve these resources. I kindly request that you reconsider the proposed Golden Crest Exploration Drilling project in order to preserve the unique beauty and biodiversity of our beloved land.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your careful review of this project.

Sincerely,

Erika Young