

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/7/2024 4:23:03 AM

First name: Evan

Last name: Fitzpatrick

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello, in regards to South32's proposal for the use of Forest Service land to expand their mining and processing operations, the areas which should be considered for further research are:

*Water displacement & Quality - With the plan to use these "rapid infiltration water basins" removing such a volume of water from one area and rapidly reintroducing it will create impacts on the environment, wildlife, and the human residents.

oPlease research how that increase of water influx to the proposed areas will affect what plants will grow in those areas, the how that will affect the wildlife - bringing in other possibly invasive species, pushing out the native species, causing overpopulations of some species - ie mosquitos from large bodies of water (the drainage areas).

oWhat metals, minerals, etc could be added to the water via tailings, equipment, road, or building runoff (from rain) that will change ecosystems downstream?

oHow will the additives in the water from this operation affect the cleanliness of the water in Patagonia lake for swimming, fishing, and camping activities?

*Noise Pollution - the additional human activity via equipment, transportation, increase in people (ie employees) will increase the unnatural volume of noise into the area.

oPlease look into how this may affect the wildlife that lives in the area, migrates through the area, and how this may possibly affect the current human population - directly by additional noise around their homes, indirectly by wildlife being pushed away from that zone into the Patagonia residential areas.

*Air Quality - Dry tailings deposits will become airborne particulates.

oHow will this affect the human population of Patagonia and surrounding areas, and the wildlife?

oHow will the increase of trucks, heavy machinery, and possible fumes from processing plants affect the immediate surrounding air quality, and what paths will the seasonal winds move those pollutants?

*Weather - We have seasons of high heat, and winds.

oHow will these proposed facilities, dry stack tailings, and water displacement areas be affected by high temperatures, long dry seasons, and sudden gusts of wind?

oDuring the monsoon season, how will those areas be affected by a sudden downpour of heavy rain, along with high winds and lightening?

oWill the clearing of areas needing for buildings, roads, and the rapid infiltration water basins affect how the rain water drains into its' natural channels?

oWill there already be so much additional water flow that the ensuing floods will affect the town of Patagonia, and even other areas of human development and residence?

oWill the additional flood water from the monsoon rains become increasingly destructive to the plants, washes, and river banks?

*Power usage - Will the additional facilities proposed on the requested Forest Service land bring even more of a strain on our power grid?

oHow will the need for additional power for these facilities affect the surrounding communities?

oWill additional power sources need to be built in the surrounding areas to support this project?

*Wildlife - The Sky Islands are a magical wildlife area with many ecological zones.

oWe have the second largest number of Hummingbird species that migrate through this area, along with hundreds of other species of birds that migrate through or permanently call this place their home.

oHow will all this increase activity (especially the air quality) affect those species in their migratory patterns?

oHow will the additional traffic from trucks and employees, air quality, noise pollution affect tourism for Birding, and Hiking?

*Traffic & Buildings - Adding so many vehicles on the roads brings up many concerns.

oHow will this impact the current traffic using those roads? Adding more trucks brings in increased risk of accidents to people, and increased possibilities of hitting animals.

olf this increases the "roadkill" amounts, how will that affect the predators who feed on those prey animals - will there be increased predation to local farms, ranches, and pets?

oHow will the increased trucks & heavy machinery lights (at night) and lights from the facilities affect the observatory on Mt Hopkins?

oWill our quality of the starlit evenings be obscured by the addition of light, exhaust, and other possible airborne pollutants?

Thank you for your research and consideration into these thoughts.