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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Stephanie Negretti, I live in Arlington, VA, but lived in Tucson in the late 1990's as a student at the University of Arizona. My brother and his family resided in Sahuarita until 2020 and now live in Phoenix, so I visit the area often. In 2022 I visited the Circle Z Ranch (located just South of Patagonia, AZ) for the first time to attend their Women's week, and I've visited yearly since (and finally brought my whole family this past Spring)! While I reside on the East Coast now, my soul belongs in Arizona and the area around Patagonia is a treasure that should be protected.

Of particular concern to me is the Permanent Access Route and the High Power transmission line that is proposed in the Mine's plan of operation.

This route, if allowed, could foreseeably have a huge impact to the Circle Z Ranch's horseback riding opportunities onto CNFS lands. The routes would transect 10 of the ranches established trails that have been in use for years, trails that are permitted under their Special Use Permit. The ranch would no longer be able take their guests out onto this small strip of land, which would significantly and directly affect their ability to continue to offer outstanding horseback riding onto adjacent forest service lands.

This route would also indirectly affect the Ranches adjacent conservation lands, as more than half of the ranch riding trails would be in the visual and sound fields of this route. This would foreseeably cause significant visual pollution, a disturbance in our enjoyment of the pristine and expansive vistas that are so rare in the world today. As a business owner myself, I do understand that the Mine desires the most cost effective solutions, but living in Shenandoah region, I have seen first hand how mining operations left unchecked can have devastating consequences on the landscape for generations to come. Let's slow down and consider solutions that are the best and safest for the collective area.

I ask that the Forest Service conduct an analysis of the impacts of the Permanent Access Route and High Power transmission line on the tourist business the ranch brings to this area, the elimination of their riding trails, and on the potential for visual pollution and disturbances on the UNFS land and the Ranch Conservation Lands.

It is my understanding that there ARE viable alternatives to the proposed routes that the USFS can mandate be considered. Using the already established FS road 49 to Lochiel would not have the significant impacts that the proposed route would have. Also, an alternative to the visual pollution caused by the High Voltage transmission line is the burying of that line, or the requirement to bring the power in from the east as opposed to from the south.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns

Stephanie Negretti