

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/26/2024 4:55:34 PM

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Comments: I am submitting this letter in opposition to the proposed mineral withdrawal and recommend the NO ACTION Alternative provided in the Draft EA.

The purpose and need for this proposed withdrawal fails to show (present evidence) that existing management and existing rules and regulations (i.e., Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act, etc.) are not being effective in protecting the environment.

Further, the proposed mineral withdrawal is in conflict with the multiple use directive of the subject lands. This proposed action is ignoring the fact that the Forest Service has both a responsibility and an obligation to manage mineral resources in ways that meet the intent and direction of specific mineral laws and a multitude of other laws (on the federal, state and local levels) affecting management of the Nation's forests (and grasslands). In this instance, the Forest Service (managers and staff) are exhibiting an attitude (and belief?) that exploration and development of mineral resources are impacts to be avoided. In fact, mineral resource development is a valid management responsibility as directed by law and policy, and is crucial to meeting the (critical) mineral needs of our Nation and supporting a strong economy.

Overall, the Draft EA is inadequate, provides no clear scientific basis in defining the purpose/need for the proposed Administrative Withdrawal, and also fails to provide any analysis of alternative protections, as described in the Forest Service Manual, Withdrawals. (FSM 2761.4).

Finally, there are already existing mineral withdrawals overlaying all current recreational sites and water resources, which makes this proposed withdrawal redundant and unnecessary.

Sincerely,

Lee "Pat" Gochnour