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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to voice my strong support for the proposed 20-year mineral withdrawal of 3,739 acres in the Hassayampa River Riparian Corridor. This area is a critical ecological and recreational resource that must be protected from the devastating effects of mining activities.

The Hassayampa River is home to unique plant communities, such as Fremont Cottonwood and Arizona Walnut, and provides habitat for sensitive species, including the Mexican spotted owl, yellow-billed cuckoo, Sonoran desert tortoise, and numerous native fish, amphibians, and reptiles. Allowing mining activities to continue would jeopardize this irreplaceable habitat, disrupt the river's natural flow, and pollute water essential for both wildlife and human communities.

In addition to its ecological significance, the Hassayampa River is a valued recreational area for residents and visitors. With its swimming holes, hiking trails, and opportunities for birdwatching and nature photography, the river contributes to local quality of life and the regional economy. Preserving this area ensures that future generations can continue to experience and benefit from its beauty.

As someone who is a long time Prescott resident who grew up hiking the Hassayampa, I urge you to take decisive action to protect this area.

I encourage the Forest Service to expedite the environmental assessment process to minimize delays in implementing this withdrawal. Protecting the Hassayampa River Riparian Corridor aligns with the broader goals of conservation, sustainability, and community well-being.

Thank you for your time and for prioritizing the health of our public lands. I trust you will act in favor of this important withdrawal.