

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/13/2025 3:18:56 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Patricia M. Ellsworth. I was born in Prescott, AZ and currently live in Flagstaff, AZ. My middle name is Miller. I am the great-granddaughter of Sam Miller who was the youngest member of the Walker Party that came into the Prescott area in 1863. They were mountain men and gold seekers. Sam Miller discovered gold in Lynx Creek. Later, he and his brother, Jake Miller, homesteaded in Miller Valley, which is now part of Prescott. Over many years, I have spent quite a bit of time in the Prescott National Forest with my family. It is a special place for me.

I am also a freshwater biologist. I understand riparian areas and know what valuable ecosystems they are and the great diversity of life they support. I have introduced students to the Verde River north of Prescott and to the Hassayampa River Preserve in Wickenburg, AZ. The proposed withdrawal contains the only known location of the Lanceleaf Cottonwood-Arroyo

Willow Riparian Forest on the Prescott National Forest. The river corridor provides critical habitat for tiger salamanders, lowland leopard frogs, the Arizona toad, and the Mexican spotted owl.

The Hassayampa was heavily mined in the past, and few commercially viable deposits remain, so restricting future mining is not a negative impact to the economy. The withdrawal includes a portion of Prescott's Municipal Watershed Protection Area, established by the U.S. Congress in 1933. The withdrawal will help protect water quality for Prescott and the region. Indeed any pollution from mining, including the release of toxic metals, would flow downstream to the Hassayampa River Preserve, a lovely and much visited oasis in the Arizona desert.

I believe the time for mining on the Hassayampa River is over. It is now time to protect this marvelous natural resource for its important ecological values and for its outstanding recreational value for the people of Arizona.