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First name: Stephanie

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: While there are wildfires destroying communities and forests in Southern California, I'm out here wandering the wilderness in the Arizona sun with my dog and some binoculars. I do not take that for granted. The sole reason that I have called Prescott home for 14 years is because of the land and the pride we take in preserving it.

My name is Stephanie Griffin and I am reaching out in support of the Hassayampa River Mineral Withdrawal. Hundreds of miles of hiking and mountain biking trails adorn our forests and mountains. You can walk hours without seeing another human. The recreational opportunities here are second to none and I have traveled and recreated across the country in scores of towns similar to ours. None can compare to the access we have to the wilderness and the sense of freedom that brings. I can't imagine a day when I can't ride my bike through the pines to Froggie Falls, a favorite swimming spot for locals, or camp with friends at Wolf Creek. To threaten these opportunities is to threaten our identity as a community.

In addition to adversely affecting recreational access to this land, mining the Hassayampa riparian area will devastate rare and precious ecosystems for birds, frogs, salamanders, toads and trees that only live in this specific habitat. They've already been forced out once when this area was mined the first time. I believe it's time to let this area be wild and to protect it from King Midas.

When thousands of animals are forced to flee or die because of the wildfires thrashing California, we call that a "Natural Disaster." "A tragedy." Yet when thousands of animals are forced to flee or die because of a new mining operation, what should we call that? Collateral? Bad luck? A mining operation in the Prescott National Forest Hassayampa River region would no doubt be a very UNnatural disaster, devastating not only to the ecosystems and habitats of the Hassayampa River, but to the lifestyle and health of people like me, my dog Dottie, and our Prescott community as a whole.

During a moment in history where so much has gone wrong for our planet, let's try to make this one thing right. Please protect this land.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Sincerely,

Stephanie Griffin