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First name: Joy
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed quartz mining expansion in the Ouachita National Forest. My objection is based on a clear inconsistency in land management regarding environmental protection and public land use.

For several years, residents and families in this area have been prohibited from riding ATVs or UTVs on the south side of Highway 298. The justification provided for this restriction was the prevention of soil erosion and the protection of "fragile" land. This has directly impacted the recreational opportunities for our local children and community members.

If the Forest Service believes the land is too delicate to sustain the impact of an ATV, I must ask: how can it possibly sustain the impact of commercial mining? Open-pit mining involves total vegetation removal, heavy machinery, and blasting, which causes far more severe and irreversible damage than recreational vehicle use.

If the land is indeed robust enough to withstand the environmental impact of a commercial mining operation, then the current restrictions on local families enjoying the land through ATV riding should be reconsidered. If it is not, then this mining proposal must be denied to prevent irreversible damage to our irreplaceable public lands.

Sincerely,
Joy Pickering