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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear District Ranger Welker,

I am writing to oppose Project #63480 and urge the Forest Service to adopt the No Action alternative. As a Central Arkansas resident who runs and recreates in the Ouachita National Forest regularly, I can speak directly to what these lands mean - not only to me, but to the many people who choose to live here because of them.

Threats to drinking water. Several nominated tracts sit within the Headwaters Alum Fork Saline River and Lake Winona watersheds, which supply drinking water to much of Central Arkansas. The draft EA itself acknowledges that mining could raise sediment loads and water treatment costs. Damage to headwaters travels downstream.

Incompatibility with forest management designations. The project area overlaps Management Area 9 (Water and Riparian Communities) and Management Area 14 (Habitat Diversity). Open-pit mining, tree removal, and access road construction are fundamentally at odds with these conservation purposes.

Understated cumulative impacts. Eight tracts - even at the reduced 207-acre footprint - produce compounding effects on hydrology, habitat, and sedimentation that the EA treats too narrowly as short-term and localized.

Recreation and quality of life. The trails, streams, and forests of the Jessieville-Winona-Fourche district are a core reason Central Arkansans love living here, and a major driver of regional tourism around Hot Springs and Lake Ouachita. Industrial mining within these watersheds erodes the very resources that sustain our outdoor economy and our way of life.

The public benefit of speculative quartz extraction does not justify the lasting harm to water, habitat, and recreation on lands held in trust for all Americans. I respectfully urge the Forest Service to select the No Action alternative for Project #63480.

Thank you for your consideration.