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Comments: I am writing to strongly OPPOSE the proposal for opening 300 acres of the Ouachita National Forest to quartz mining. As a public lands habitat biologist, I want to recognize how harmful and impactful mining activities would be to the wildlife that thrive in the Ouachita National Forest, some of which are endemic only to the region and found nowhere else on Earth. There are rare endemic salamanders, like the Ouachita Streambed Salamander, that would be negatively impacted by increased sediment from mining activities. The Ouachita National Forest also currently houses the largest population of red-cockaded woodpeckers in the state, and this project would cut a swath of damage in their habitat. Additionally, there would be grave impacts to our public water sources for drinking and recreation, and communities downstream who utilize Lake Ouachita, Lake Winona and the Saline River. People who call the Natural State home love their public lands because they have the opportunity to still enjoy unspoiled, quiet, and wild places that haven't been marred by human industry. Opening the National Forest to mining sets a dangerous precedent that public resources can be sold and used from private interests instead of being enjoyed and treasured by the public. I hope you will protect this valuable resource from private industry, and oppose the proposal for quartz mining in the national forest.