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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I'm writing to express my concerns regarding the new quartz mining operations that are proposed in the Ouachita National Forest.

I've been a resident of Arkansas all of my life. I was born and raised here, and my family has lived in the Hot Springs area for decades now. The Ouachita National Forest is an area we frequented when I was a child. As an adult, I now take my husband and daughter there to visit and enjoy the outdoors. It's precious to us, as it is to countless other families.

I'm highly against seeing this land destroyed, seeing trees cut down, and the ecosystems ruined for the wildlife that lives there. Hundreds of animal species live in the Ouachita National Forest region, and at least 11 of those are endangered or threatened species. Those species will be displaced, and many will die due to this change. If a man woke up one morning to someone cutting down his house with heavy machinery without his permission, we can guess he would be loudly protesting and fighting to stop it. Those animals don't have a voice, and they don't get to protest.

With the increase of deforestation due to massive AI data centers being built, it's more important than ever to protect plant life. Humans depend on trees to survive, as we can't survive without oxygen. I read online recently that all 22 African countries bordering the Sahara Desert worked together to plant a line of trees stretching from coast to coast, to stop the spread of the Sahara Desert. If it is possible for other countries and governments to understand the importance of trees, why can't American leaders understand this? We should be planting trees. We should not be cutting them down to turn land that was once flourishing with life into a loud, destructive work zone where no living thing can survive.

The reasoning for this work is supposedly a high demand for quartz. However, no demand is higher for humans than food, water, and oxygen. We can't survive without these simple things. The human race is on a dangerous path of depleting this planet of all three. As a citizen of Arkansas, I don't get a vote in what happens in other states. However, I do not want to see this happening in my home state. If all of our natural areas are destroyed, can we truly call ourselves the Natural State? The people of Arkansas do not want this, and I can only hope that every opposing citizen I saw commenting online speaks out, as well. There were a multitude of comments. Please reconsider destroying our state to make money off of it's resources. We do not want quartz mining in Ouachita National Forest, or anywhere else.

"When the last tree has fallen, and the rivers are poisoned, you cannot eat money."