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Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Oaks,

I am writing to urge the United States Forest Service to require a full Environmental Impact Statement for Falcon Copper's proposed Blue Copper mineral exploration project near Avon, rather than proceeding on the current Environmental Assessment.

I live outside Missoula and have spent years on these rivers as an angler. The Little Blackfoot is exactly the kind of cold, groundwater-fed system that native westslope cutthroat depend on and that, once compromised, does not come back. A project of this scale-roughly 11,000 acres, 120 drill pads, over 700 holes reaching local groundwater, and an estimated 24,000 gallons of water use per day, sustained around the clock for five years-warrants the most rigorous level of environmental review available, not the expedited path.

The current Environmental Assessment lacks the baseline information needed to understand the risks to water quality, groundwater, and the habitat this watershed supports, including ESA-listed species. Before any permit is granted, I ask that the USFS and Falcon Copper be required to:

1. Conduct independent modeling of groundwater, including how drilling would affect groundwater and ground-to-surface water connections.
2. Provide robust assurances that stormwater controls-accounting for historic rain-on-snow events at the 20-year and 100-year scale-will prevent sediment, drill fluids, and other contaminants from entering streams.
3. Provide a full assessment of the risk of acid mine drainage and the release of toxins such as arsenic, lead, and mercury into ground or surface water.

The Continental Divide Trail runs through part of this site, and the surrounding country is habitat Montanans place real value on. Expediting a five-year, around-the-clock exploration program under FAST-41 does not relieve the agency of its obligation to fully understand these impacts first. Without answering these questions and gathering this baseline data, the Forest Service should not permit this activity.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Yasser Ansari

Missoula, Montana