

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/2/2026 11:37:49 PM

First name: Josh

Last name: Taffer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: STATEMENT OF OBJECTIONS & SUBSTANTIVE COMMENT

As the oldest grandson of the family that owns approximately 2,300 contiguous acres stretching across both sides of Snowshoe Creek (Parcel Number: 0000710800), I am writing to submit our formal family objection to the scope, rushed timeline, and severe environmental deficiencies of the proposed Blue Copper Project (Project #303864).

We are not remote, theoretical stakeholders; we are a multigenerational family who will directly absorb the physical, environmental, and cultural impacts of this industrial expansion. Though my immediate family lives in Mississippi, our hearts and foundational values are rooted in this ranch. It is during our deeply cherished visits to this beautiful corner of Montana, under the guidance of my Mama and Papa, my aunts, and uncles, that I learned to appreciate the true meaning of cattle ranching, land stewardship, and wildlife conservation. My first flyfishing experience was on snowshoe creek.

Today, this property is where my own children are learning those same indispensable life lessons. Through our time spent together on the ranch, they have come to understand firsthand how vital it is to protect nature, look out for your neighbors, and respect the land. 4 generations have been taught traditional American values and appreciation.

Falcon Copper may dress this project up in sanitized corporate language, but for the families who love and steward this land, it represents 5 years of 24/7 industrial noise, dust, light pollution, toxic fuel risks, and severe fire hazards in a quiet mountain drainage where our family reconnects and our cattle graze.

Even though the subsurface mineral estate is separate, our Surface Rights and Water Rights are absolute. We demand that the U.S. Forest Service deny the current Plan of Operations based on the following direct threats to our land and legacy:

1. Severe Nuisance, Industrial Encroachment, and Zero Access Rights

Falcon Copper has no legal right to utilize our private 2,300 acres for staging, equipment storage, drilling pads, or transit. Because our land flanks both sides of Snowshoe Creek, the proposed 24/7 multi-rig drilling operation within our immediate vicinity constitutes an intolerable industrial nuisance. It directly destroys the quiet enjoyment and sanctuary of our family estate, devalues our agricultural operations, and disrupts the natural ecosystem we actively conserve. We demand that the USFS enforce a strict buffer zone excluding all industrial operations from our parcel boundaries.

2. Threat to Private Groundwater and Agricultural Wells

Our residential and ranching estate relies entirely on private groundwater wells. The proposal to extract 24,000 gallons of water per day from the already stressed Snowshoe and Carpenter Creek headwaters is an immediate threat to our senior water rights and the local water table. We fiercely object to Falcon Copper's attempts to manipulate water resources-including changing the use of local wells to industrial drill cooling-within a closed basin. Drilling 700 core holes directly into the water table poses an unacceptable risk of dewatering or contaminating the private aquifers that sustain our family and livestock.

3. Categorical Rejection of a Streamlined FAST-41 Environmental Assessment

It is unacceptable that the USFS is attempting to fast-track a project of this scale (127 drill pads, 41 miles of road use, new public land disturbance) via a streamlined 30-day Environmental Assessment (EA) with no agency-sponsored public hearings. The massive public turnout at the Avon Community Hall on June 26 proves that our

community demands transparency and due process. Under Article II, Section 3 of the Montana Constitution, we have a fundamental right to a clean and healthful environment, as well as a right to know and participate. We demand the USFS halt the FAST-41 fast-track and mandate a full, exhaustive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

4. Irreparable Damage to Wildlife and Wilderness Conservation

Our 2,300-acre property serves as a crucial, undisturbed sanctuary and movement corridor for federally protected species, including the grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and wolverine. The very conservation values our family has practiced and passed down through generations will be shattered by 24/7 industrial noise, heavy commercial trucks, and habitat fragmentation.

Calling this "exploration" does not change the reality: Falcon Copper gets the upside, while adjacent property owners, local ranchers, and public resources are left with the mess. "We'll clean it up later" is an unacceptable excuse for ruining the integrity of our land. We urge the reviewing agencies to deny this plan in its entirety to protect the future of the Snowshoe Creek drainage.

I remember as a young boy traveling with my parents and Mama as we rode across the west in search of a piece of property to enjoy. This piece that so many ranchers, and wildlife call home is at the precipice of disaster over a dollar. The bureaucratic laws that fast tracked this lie are the short sighted greedy decisions of those who live thousands miles away. Do the right thing. Your future generations depend on your promise to "Caring For the Land and Serving People."

Respectfully Submitted,

Grandson