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Comments: The Forest Service is proposing to approve surface use by Roca Honda Resources LLC on National Forest System lands near Jesus Mesa to support an underground uranium mine and water treatment plant on adjacent state and private lands. The most serious flaw visible on the face of the project notice is that both the NEPA Start Date and the Finding/Decision Date fields under Project Milestones are blank, meaning the public has no basis for knowing when scoping begins or ends, when a draft EIS will be released, or when a decision will be made. A NEPA process without published milestones is a process the public cannot meaningfully participate in.

Beyond the missing schedule, the notice raises several additional analytical gaps. First, under Project Overview, the notice confirms that the uranium mine itself is on state and private lands, not NFS lands, yet the EIS lead is the Cibola National Forest; the notice does not identify cooperating agencies or confirm that the EIS will cover the full connected action. Second, the project description contains no acreage, no disturbance footprint, and no description of what infrastructure is proposed, making it impossible for affected parties to frame substantive scoping comments. Third, the notice is entirely silent on groundwater, drinking water, and tribal consultation, despite the project being in McKinley County, New Mexico, where uranium mining has historically caused severe groundwater contamination and where Navajo Nation and Pueblo communities hold significant interests.

The old mines still have not been cleaned up and what about the native Americans that have lived here for millenia?

For all of these reasons, I ask the Forest Service to: (1) immediately publish a project schedule with firm NEPA milestone dates; (2) release a detailed project description including acreage and infrastructure scope before the scoping comment period closes; (3) identify all cooperating agencies and confirm that the EIS scope covers the mine and water treatment plant as connected actions; (4) conduct and document government-to-government tribal consultation before the draft EIS is released; and (5) publish a formal scoping notice in the Federal Register with a comment period of not less than 30 days and schedule at least one public meeting near the project area.