



Carolyn Shafer

April 3, 2021

TO: Rick Goshen, Sierra Vista District Ranger, Coronado National Forest

COMMENTS ON SUNNYSIDE EXPLORATION DRILLING PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, PROJECT #55719

I have lived in the Patagonia Mountains for almost 26 years; my very essence is interwoven with the energies of this ecosystem. Six different biological provinces overlap in this region: Rocky Mountains, Sierra Madre, Sonoran Desert, Chihuahuan Desert, Great Plains, and Neo Tropics. There are more than 300 species of birds. Patagonia is the pollinator capital of the United States with over 600 species of native bees, 300 types of butterflies and moths, 14 hummingbird species, and two nectar feeding bat species. There are currently 112 Federally threatened, endangered, and sensitive species in the Patagonia Mountain area.

E.O. Wilson (American biologist, researcher, theorist, naturalist, and author) writing in his latest book "Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life" makes the point that even though extinction rates are soaring, a great deal of Earth's biodiversity can still be saved. Wilson contacted 18 of the world's senior naturalists (each with international expertise in biodiversity and ecology) and asked them to "name one to five places in the world you consider best on the basis of richness, uniqueness, and most in need of research and protection . . . " Among the top choices are the Madrean mountain chains of Mexico and the Sky Island heights of the southwestern United States == which includes the Patagonia Mountains.

We are living in, and as humans contributing to, the decline of the ecosystem due to a climate crisis. We can, and must be, part of the solution. The Patagonia Mountains must be protected from 21st century industrialized mining activity.

I hereby reference and incorporate all comments submitted by Patagonia Area Resource Alliance and other organizations. Those comments address the many reasons why there needs to be an Environmental Impact Statement for the Sunnyside Exploratory Drilling proposal filed by Arizona Standard, a company wholly owned by Barksdale Resources, a Canadian company. I am very concerned about the endangered, threatened, and sensitive species that live in the area of this proposed activity. At a minimum, there should be NO 24/7 operation that is authorized. And the Forest Service must take into consideration as part of this evaluation the

cumulative impacts if all proposed projects in the Patagonia Mountains were to proceed. The proposed roadwork alone will cause massive degradation of public lands.

CONCLUSION

The Forest Service must require an Environmental Impact Statement rather than an Environmental Statement to ensure that the Sunnyside project area and its biological residents and visitors are protected from rather than impacted by exploratory drilling.

Carolyn Shafer, working to protect the water and the wildlife