

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/15/2023 7:00:00 AM

First name: Rob

Last name: McWhorter

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you the opportunity to comment on this important project.

I have read the project description and other related materials. I am a resident of Wittrock Road, a neighborhood likely to experience some impacts from the work to be done. My Bureau of Land Management experience exposed me to issues involving coal and oil and gas exploration, development and transportation in Montana and Alaska, but I am certainly no expert, especially not in hard rock mining.

I would like to see a full Environmental Assessment done on this drilling project. The large number of drill holes and associated activities in proximity to so many residences, I think warrants an EA vs. the Categorical Exclusion process being put forward. I reference the recently completed EA/DN for the Jenny Gulch work.

It may not be 100% relevant here, but I can recall USFS requiring a full EIS on lesser oil and gas exploration projects in western Montana. This was required by USFS, I believe, to overcome objections that NEPA requirements were being "piece meal".

I may have other suggestions about mitigating impacts from noise, dust, cultural resources, fire watch, local employment opportunities, potential restrictions on recreational activities in the Wabash Springs area, scenarios for long term mining plans that the drilling results may ultimately lead to, and further plans for delineation drilling as may be indicated by these sampling results. I hope the comment period is long enough to allow people to absorb the information and provide meaningful, helpful commentary.

I am looking forward to the public meeting and hearing more information.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment at this early date.

Sincerely,

Rob McWhorter

redacted