

[Type here]



August 13, 2023

Mike Welker, District Ranger, Winona District  
Dan Olsen, Forest Supervisor  
Paula Homan, NEPA Planner

Dear Mike Welker and USFS Staff Members:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Arkansas Audubon Society, a statewide organization committed to fostering a greater knowledge of the natural history of Arkansas and promoting conservation of natural resources in Arkansas.

This letter is in relation to OQC-304P, the Quartz Mine Proposal. We agree with the points made by the Ozark Society in its letter to you dated July 12, 2023, and echo their requests and recommendations. We are concerned that as the proposed permit currently stands, detail is lacking that in the worst case could allow significant harm to the environment by the permittee. We are concerned that the permit is not time-limited. We are concerned that oversight may be so scanty that stream sides receive insufficient protection.

We are also in agreement with Central Arkansas Water's objections. We agree with them that the wiser course of action would be to deny the permit to mine near one of Central Arkansas's water sources, and to create a protected perimeter around the lake where no future permits or use will be allowed. A similar perimeter already exists around Lake Maumelle. It is critical for the future of water supply in central Arkansas that Lake Winona be similarly protected.

Arkansas is blessed with abundant public lands, but they are not endless. We appreciate the US Forest Service, and hope that the permit can be tailored more tightly to better protect our forest ecosystems and water sources.

Sincerely,

Lynn Foster  
Vice President, Arkansas Audubon Society