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Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

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Comments:

Dear U.S. Forest Service officials:

I am writing this letter as a river lover and passionate citizen. My husband and I own a rafting company in McCall, Idaho, so the natural landscape is not only something that we care about personally and on a recreational level, but rivers are the source of our livelihood. Without the river and its tributaries, we would suffer a great loss, both in terms of our business and personal recreational enjoyment. We are outdoor enthusiasts who care deeply about all rivers, but especially the one in question: the South Fork of the Salmon River basin.

Although we do not operate our business in this particular area, all of these river veins are interconnected. Just like the human body, if one vein is compromised, the damages travel quickly and affect the body as a whole. It is disturbing to think that our children, grandchildren, and generations after will not be able to enjoy the clean and clear waters of the river basin, or hike in the publicly-accessed drainages that we enjoy today. How dare anyone take that away from us?

As you know, Canada-based Midas Gold has proposed to reopen pit mines near the remote community of Yellow Pine at the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River, a river basin prized for fishing, hunting, natural beauty and paddling.

Midas is proposing a strip mine with three pits and a total project area of 29,827 acres, including 2,000 acres of pits, facilities, stockpiles, roads and other associated infrastructure. This is a direct threat to the river and its recreational value.

What's more, the Stibnite area, which has been under exploration off and on from about 1900 through the 1990s, is already listed as a Superfund site. The Environmental Protection Agency spent \$13 million to reclaim the site and stem the release of arsenic and mercury. The East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River today is a river on the mend.

The company is also proposing to process all gold and silver on site, creating an opportunity for further environmental contamination. The project is proposed to last anywhere from 15 to 20 years or more and create long-term impacts to one of Idaho's most important recreational river basins.

We oppose any action that threatens this amazing recreational resource including water quality, fisheries habitat and recreational access to popular boating segments on the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon and South Fork of the Salmon rivers. Further, taxpayers cannot afford to fund another toxic cleanup for a private company.

Sincerely,

Lauren Curtis
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