

10/27/2020

Dear Forest Service Officials and Legislators,

I strongly oppose the Stibnite Gold Project. I do not support mining on public lands and I believe this operation would be extremely disruptive to local flora and fauna.

I grew up in Idaho and my fondest childhood memories are of whitewater rafting with my father on the Salmon River. I remember plunging into the river with my Dad at the oars, breaking through the rapids in explosions of illuminated water droplets. Sometimes there would be a moment of crisis where we almost lost control and flipped, but those moments only added to the intensity of our campfire stories. I remember inhaling the fresh mountain air peppered with the smell of ponderosa pine and observing animals share in mutual curiosity as they passed peacefully between our tents. I remember a sense of wonder growing in me as innumerable stars in the pollution-free sky cast down ancient light into my eyes. I remember being so small yet tracing the whole Milky Way band with my outstretched finger. I remember smiling and laughing and returning to the river the next year and the year after that. My father taught me early on the culture of rafting; he would always say, "You've got to hit the wave straight on or you won't survive." I've come to apply that strategy not only to rafting, but also to facing other obstacles in my life. My father is no longer with us, but I feel his memory most strongly when I'm out rafting. The river is a place of both solace and empowerment for me. It's a place where I can remember my past and dream about my future.

I hope one day to pass on the tradition rafting to my children so that they can enjoy the outdoors in the same way that I have. I believe that the Stibnite Gold Project, will damage the precious ecosystem of the South Fork of the Salmon River such that my children would not be able to enjoy it in the same way that I did. I believe Idaho's greatest assets are our beautiful forests and rivers and that they should be preserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Rachel Bowyer