Dear Supervisor Jackson,

Thank you for accepting public comments on the Stibnite Site Project. I am writing to convey my concerns about the SDEIS and project as a whole. While I know the US Forest Service has the responsibility to balance the economic benefit with conservation of natural resources, those decisions must take into account long-term social and ecological effects of short-term economic gain on USFS managed land. The Stibnite Gold project will provide short-term economic gain through mining at the expense of the social and ecological communities in Valley County and in Idaho. Perpetua Resources claims that they only way to restore old mining harm to the area is to open mining again. Not only is this not true (the site has been restored and stewarded by the Forest Service and Nez Perce Tribe for decades), but the value of the social and economic resources in the area is too high to take mining risks that are either unproven in efficacy (e.g. the fish tunnel, liners of tailings ponds, and building new roads along a streambank) or not guaranteed to be rectified by the company if something goes wrong during or after mining. Perpetua is proposing a mining project, not a restoration project. They will double the footprint of the existing historic mining and thus double the area of destruction. They claim antimony is a necessary mineral for homeland security, when in reality, the amount of antimony that might result from the mine will be low grade and such a low amount that it will hardly impact the US need for the mineral. It is ultimately an open pit gold mine making use of toxic chemicals for leeching, that will cause too much harm for the small amount of economic benefit. The risk to social and ecologic resources is just too high. Below, I outline a couple of my specific concerns about degradation of the social and ecological systems that are only addressed by the No Mining Alternative in the SDEIS.

1. The Fishery

The headwaters of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River are essential habitat for native fish species that are already threatened or endangered, including bull trout, chinook salmon, and steelhead. The SDEIS states that re-mining the site will negatively affect these fish that that are necessary for the aquatic and terrestrial habitat and for the livelihood of people (such as fishing guides and connected businesses) downstream. My partner and friends rely on these fish to make a living. The SDEIS does not adequately address the negative effects of mining on these fish throughout the Salmon River watershed, and in fact mentions irreparable harm due to riparian degradation and the probability of toxic mining truck spills and leaks from tailings ponds.

1. Nez Perce Tribal Sovereignty

The United States and individual state governments have a dark history of marginalizing and outright genocide of Indigenous people. As a nation and state, we have an opportunity to make history right by those who came before us. Greenlighting the Stibnite Project will be in direct opposition to reconciliation and making things right with the Nez Perce Tribe, who have inherent rights to their land and legal rights according to the Nez Perce Treaty of 1855. These rights supersede the Mining Act of 1872. I am in support of the Nez Perce Tribe’s comments about the Stibnite Project and there is an opportunity to recognize and move to reconcile past wrongs to Indigenous people in opposing the Stibnite Project. Re-mining the area will be a further affront to the Nez Perce Tribe by negating millions of dollars and decades of hard work of restoration at the site. There must at least be reparations paid to the Nez Perce Tribe if the money and work they put into cleaning up a site that was not their fault in the first place is destroyed once again by the Stibnite Gold project.

1. Climate Change

The SDEIS does not appropriately mention nor provide an alternative that will mitigate the perpetuation of climate change by permitting the Stibnite Project. It is inevitable that the project will produce greenhouse gases (vehicles, heating buildings, utilities, etc.) that increase climate change effects globally. At the least, Perpetua should be required to provide mitigation strategies for adding greenhouse gases and other toxic chemicals to the ecosystem to not worsen the effects of climate change. This will impact not only those of us living in Valley County, but all global citizens. The Forest Service has an opportunity to make a decision that will benefit society and our natural resources, rather than greenlight a project that will make climate change worse for the generations that come after us.

 I am sure this decision will not be taken lightly, and I encourage you to consider making a precedent for the long-term benefit of the people and the land, and not one that may result in short-term economic benefit.

Sincerely,



Beth Kochevar

Address:

914 Strawberry Ln.

McCall, ID 83638

Phone:

303-870-0223