

Stibnite letter

Payette National Forest

McCall, Idaho

Re: Perpetua Stibnite Mining
Proposal
DEIS

Gentlemen:

As a long-time resident and business owner in the Johnson Creek/Yellow Pine/Stibnite area, I have many concerns regarding the Perpetua Stibnite Mining proposal, but most immediately, two:

1. The vastly bigger footprint of the proposed project from that which has been mined and reclaimed before will be a horrendous impact on a historic recreational and wilderness area important to all of Valley County and increasingly so to many in the Boise Valley. The impacts to the wilderness surrounding the Stibnite valley, the many species of wildlife that inhabit those forests, and the streams and watersheds that produce and protect several species of threatened fish cannot help but be a concern. I will not go into detail regarding these dangers to the area from the expanded mining activity because there are experts who have shared their concerns with you in learned ways I cannot match. But this is an emotional issue for me and my husband who have literally made our living from the forests and waters in this, our 'back yard', for over 35 years. We have fought to protect the ecosystem, both by nurturing it along with our business, and I worked for many years to achieve a Conservation Easement on my 160 acre, historic homestead, and have worked for many years with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Nez Perce Tribe to provide refuge for the elk in our area and enhance the salmon populations in Johnson Creek, which flows through the property.
2. Road conditions providing access to backcountry residents and the ever-growing visitor recreationists will be severely impacted by the proposed mining traffic. In the long-term, the Warm Lake Road will take the brunt of the proposed heavy traffic for the life-time of the mine. The added impact on Route 55 will affect Cascade, Donnelly and McCall, all heavily populated and vacation destinations for the burgeoning populations in the Boise Valley. Adding this traffic to an already crowded roadway will increase the possibility of tragic accidents and impact the road surface which will increase the costs to the State and County for repairs.

Even more important to me is the proposed use of the Johnson Creek Road and the East Fork Road from Yellow Pine to Stibnite for the first three years of this project while they construct the Burnt Log Road and extension into the mining area. I would hope that the permits to operate the mine would be held until the Burnt Log Road extension was complete. Anyone who has traveled those roads know the dangers to the heavy mining truck traffic and to residents and visitors trying to compete with that traffic safely. In past mining operations they have used convoys for all the mining traffic, setting a time to gather at Landmark in the early a.m. with a guide car which led them all the way to the mine. Then there was a set time they returned in

convoy in the late afternoon. While it took some planning for residents and recreationists to depart and enter the area to avoid the convoys, it reduced the risk of accident with two way traffic and the guide car could control the speed of the mining traffic (which has already become a problem, even now).

I would strongly advise that this be a requirement of the mine traffic using the Johnson Creek and South Fork Roads. Also, the mine should be held responsible for dust abatement at least beginning at milepost 16 through and into Yellow Pine to mitigate the bad air quality created by the mining traffic for local residents and travelers.

While I cannot condone the cutting of a haul highway from the current end of the Burnt Log Road to the mine, it is certainly a better route for the long term than the Johnson Creek Road. It does not impact that fine salmon spawning stream as much and creates fewer hazards for other travelers on the narrow dirt roads. Stopping all but mining traffic on the Burnt Log Road would seem to be the only safe thing to do. Allowing the continuing recreational use of that road and the new extension would be hazardous in the extreme, especially during the hunting seasons.

I hope the Forest Service will conduct a Supplemental analysis to address these issues, as well as others highlighted by comments to the latest analysis.

I will end my comments with saying that the expanded megalithic mining proposal and the access to it, both during construction and during the life of the mine will destroy my business, one now of hosting backcountry visitors seeking solitude and wilderness atmosphere, and will severely impact my lifestyle, property and tranquility. My hope is that the project can be scaled down, the mine will operate only when the Burnt Log Road access is complete, and the mine operators will be held strictly responsible for the road maintenance and repair and any damage to the ecology of the area. Recent news of DOD funding makes that a forlorn hope, I fear.

Most Sincerely,

Diana Swift Bryant

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