

September 10, 2026

To the Bitterroot National Forest Service:

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed Sheep Creek Mine.

Frankly, I do not care how many safeguards, engineering controls, monitoring programs, or assurances are promised. History has already demonstrated what can happen when mining and important river systems intersect. In 2015, approximately three million gallons of mine impacted water were released from the Gold King Mine into a tributary of Colorado's Animas River. Closer to home, decades of mining contamination along Montana's Clark Fork ultimately contributed to a massive Superfund cleanup involving contaminated river sediments and groundwater.

I recognize that mining practices, technology, and environmental protections have improved and that lessons have been learned from these events. But that is precisely the point: we should learn from history rather than create another opportunity for it to repeat itself.

The West Fork and Bitterroot River are simply too important to gamble with. They support wildlife, recreation, tourism, property owners, businesses, and communities throughout the Valley. No promised economic benefit is worth accepting the possibility of permanent damage to those resources.

There may be appropriate places to develop critical mineral resources. In my opinion, a pristine watershed such as the Bitterroot is not one of them.

I respectfully urge the Forest Service to reject the Sheep Creek Mine proposal. Some risks are simply not worth taking.

Sincerely,

Robert Plumb

*Robert Plumb*