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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments regarding the Stibnite Gold Project EIS. Please accept my comment as an Idaho resident and a white-water kayaker passionate about the preservation of our nation's pristine waters, like the East Fork South Fork (EFSF) and South Fork of the Salmon. I strongly oppose the Stibnite gold mine project due to its impact on our land, water and wildlife. I am concerned with the Forest Service's (FS) lack of proper analysis regarding the impacts to these invaluable natural resources including Endangered Species Act (ESA) protected fish; a lack of proper action alternatives, none of which would destroy and adversely modify the critical habitat of chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout; and also the willingness to amend your Resource Management Plan to accommodate the wants and needs of a Canadian company eager to degrade these FS lands that belong to all Americans. I appreciate the incredible amount of care and effort that it takes to manage our nation's public wildlands and waters, and ask that you uphold this responsibility by doing proper analysis for this project and decline the proposal.

From my research, I know that the EFSF of the Salmon River provides critical habitat for three ESA species- chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. The FS website shares that the South Fork of the Salmon is actually designated as critical chinook salmon habitat. Is it not an agency's responsibility to avoid actions that destroy or adversely modify critical habitat? The Stibnite Gold Project would drastically alter this critical habitat for chinook (and steelhead and bull trout). Alternative 2 of the DEIS includes project proponents slated to destroy 20.8% of chinook salmon critical habitat and 27.5% of bull trout critical habitat in the analysis area. Recall that these are endangered fish species and this habitat damage is unacceptable, when it is your job to protect them.

Although the impacts to these fish are on their own reason enough to stop this project, they are far from the only glaring issue worth considering. I am appalled by how large-scale mining also includes acid mine drainage, tailings dam failures, and cyanide spills. Possibilities of contamination from mining activities, which will create 446 million tons of potential acid generating and/or metal leaching materials and 161,095 sq. meters of open pit walls blows my mind! Roadless areas are absolutely foundational to the wildness and health of our natural world, however proposed access roads would cross 71 different streams, exposing each stream to the risk of hazardous material spills and increased sedimentation. These streams are obviously the homes of fish, but they are also the life line of terrestrial species, and are part of the headwaters feeding important waters downstream.

It is my dream to one day paddle the South Fork of the Salmon river, and I know I am not alone. Whitewater paddlers and anglers from around the world visit Idaho to experience these pristine and untrammled rivers (South Fork and EFSF). Downstream from the mine site, the South Fork is suitable for Wild & Scenic designation, and I also dream of being part of the movement that achieves this protection for this pristine place. Please do not green light a project that stands to destroy this national treasure to the detriment of the American people and the intrinsic value of these invaluable waters.