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Organization:

Title:

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Dear Forest Service,

I wish to take this opportunity to comment on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Stibnite Gold Project, proposed at the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River watershed. I am concerned that this project will risk native wildlife, pose lasting ecological damage, and negatively impact recreation within the area.

My family operates a whitewater rafting business in the Boise National Forest, and while the Stibnite Gold Project is unlikely to have a direct impact on our operating area, I understand the impact it could have on local outfitters. I offer my concerns and comments as a fellow outfitter and a citizen concerned about protecting and preserving the environment that allows us the lifestyle we enjoy. As proposed, the Stibnite Gold Project raises numerous concerns for rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). The project itself is located at the headwaters of the suitable South Salmon River, which feeds directly into the designated Main Salmon River. However, the scope of analysis does not include any potential impacts that extend downstream of the site boundary to review these sections of river. Additionally, Johnson Creek and Burntlog Creek, both eligible under the WSRA, will both face degradation and risk of a catastrophic toxic spill if this project moves forward.

In addition, recreation within the general area of the mine will be negatively impacted. The analysis of impacts on recreation is arbitrarily limited to a 5-mile radius from major mine features and does not include any discussion of traffic displaced to the South Salmon Road and Lick Creek Road that will logically result from this project.

The Stibnite Gold Project will have adverse effects on Chinook salmon and bull trout. Given the billions of dollars spent on Snake River salmon recovery, this project represents a severe risk and undermines efforts to restore these species to a sustainable population. Stream temperatures are predicted to be elevated for up to 100 years within the mine site boundary and the habitat for these sensitive species will be for the worse, not better, as a result of this project.

As proposed, this project will result in the loss of over 120 acres of high-functioning wetlands. It will negatively impact the general water quality of streams found within the site from additional sedimentation and the potential release of additional contaminants mobilized by mining and construction. Throughout the life of the mine, hazardous materials will be transported to the site through the communities of Valley County, but there are no risk analyses on local communities if a hazardous spill were to occur and the potential exposure of a hazardous spill is much larger than the SDEIS portrays and must be addressed by the Forest Service.

Although Perpetua prefers to present the SGP as a 'restoration' project, it is a massive industrial mine that will leave the landscape unrecognizable and degraded for lifetimes to come through the creation of three open pits, the permanent storage of over 120 million tons of toxic mine tailings above previously undisturbed wetland habitat, and an expanded footprint that more than doubles the previous disturbance of the Stibnite mining district. For these reasons, I urge the Forest Service to protect the Salmon River watershed and reject the proposed Stibnite mine plan.

Sincerely,

Anne Long

Cascade Raft & Kayak