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Comments: The Salmon River is beloved by many who come to fish, raft, hunt, and enjoy the natural, untouched beauty of the landscape. Midas argues that a renewed mining project would bring jobs to Idaho, but these jobs are temporary. The sustained economic upside of countless years of tourism to come, which exist exclusively due to the natural environment, far outweighs the fleeting benefit of the proposed mining project. The Idaho Department of Commerce lists Tourism as a primary economic driver whose $3.7 billion tourism industry employs more than 45,800 Idahoans and generates $475 million in local, state and federal tax revenues [1]. With willful degradation of land, tourists like myself will be forced to find other places to enjoy.

Quoting the USDA, "The South Fork Salmon River is one the few areas in the entire Columbia River basin that has reasonably intact assemblages of native fishes, including bull trout, westslope cutthroat, chinook salmon, and proposed-threatened steelhead trout. There have even been historical sightings of endangered sockeye salmon. The National Marine Fisheries Service has designated critical habitat for chinook salmon. It includes all tributaries of the Salmon River presently or historically accessible to chinook salmon." [2]. The South Fork Salmon River is a habitat for already threatened species, and The Fisheries Service has even recently proposed that steelhead trout be added to the threatened and endangered species list [2].

As stated by the USDA, within critical habitat, an agency must avoid actions that destroy or adversely modify that critical habitat [2]. I am pleading that you take action to uphold this fragile ecosystem.

Sources:

[1] https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/payette/home?cid=STELPRDB5160141

[2] https://commerce.idaho.gov/tourism-resources/