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Organization:
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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to respond and submit questions regarding the Stibnite Mine proposal.

The proposed Burnt Log corridor is suggested as a route that does not follow waterways. It does, in fact, follow waterways that are headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River in the Landmark and Warm Lake areas. Then, the route follows waterways much of the route from Big Creek Summit to Cascade. Then, the route to the hub of the project, Boise, follows the Payette River. In addition, the Highway 55 route from Boise to Cascade along the North Fork Payette River is already the most dangerous highway in Idaho. The impacts of increased traffic, transport of fuels and chemicals, and industrial traffic create an unsafe route in all respects, to people and natural resources. Another route which would not include Highway 55 along the North Fork Payette River and the Warm Lake basin must be seriously considered.

The Warm Lake area is described as a moderate use area in the proposal. This area has seen increased use for the last 10 years, summer and winter, as the surrounding towns and Boise grow, and recreation use increases everywhere. The weekend including the July 4 holiday, 2017, had campgrounds full and dispersed camping overcrowded. This trend will continue, and the solitude, quiet, and peacefulness, which is sought, will be degraded by heavy truck and transport traffic climbing and descending the summits bordering the basin. The noise from the roads echoes throughout the basin and the effects will be all encompassing. The safety of travel in the area will become more dangerous. Estimates of fuel-haul trips have not been provided, but will be astronomical based on the scope of the proposal. Construction, service, and commuting will increase the traffic. Current roads were not designed for this type of heavy use.

The proposed mine site and the associated activities will be in the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River and near the Frank Church Wilderness Area. This area is home to many endangered and protected species, including salmonids, bull trout, wolverines, goshawks, and others that may not have been found yet. Toxic chemicals, fuels, carbon emissions, and human activity threaten these species. It is not in the national mandates for their protection to allow these invasive measures to occur, and then try to mitigate the effects.

Communities surrounding the proposed mine area have established vital economies based on recreation and tourism. Protection of clean water, air, and viable wildlife are the foundation of this success. The proposed mine threatens all aspects of these inherent resources. These economies have proven to be sustainable. Mining is a short term financial boost, but the fallout is that history has shown them to be detrimental to these values in the long term. Lack of accountability and follow through are the legacy of mining, and this does not promote these communities in the long term.

It is more important than ever that the Forest Service promote the best use of public lands for the most number of people, for the longest period, and for the best health of the land itself. This will become ever more vital in the years to come. Please safeguard the irreplaceable qualities of these special lands for the generations to follow.

Thank You,

Richard Barker