Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/14/2017 6:00:00 AM
First name: Owen
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service officials:

I'm an outdoor enthusiast, ecologist, and former proud resident of Idaho who cares deeply about the South Fork of the Salmon River basin, which is threatened by this new mine proposal.

I have lived throughout the west, and I know that Idaho's unique brand of untrammeled outdoors is one of a kind. I have hiked passed the Stibnite area superfund site, following wolf tracks through the snow, and have seen first hand the high quality of the wilderness and wildlands that surround the area on all sides. I strongly oppose re-opening activities at this mine at the proposed levels.

I find it hard to believe that the Environmental Protection Agency, which spent $13 billion to reclaim the superfund site and stem the release of arsenic and mercury in this same area, will find it appropriate to open more mining activity. The presence of an existing suprfund site should be considered in this proposal, and strict cleanup guidelines should be enforced in such a way that the current company, Midas Gold, will not leave another burden on taxpayers, as did previous operations.

The company is also proposing to process all gold and silver on site, creating an opportunity for further environmental contamination. I strongly believe that the company should be forced to provide details for the EIS and NEPA process in order to create and present an alternative that involves off-site processing, so that the potential environmental effects of on-site processing can be made clear for the agencies and the public.

The project is proposed in one of Idaho's most important recreational river basins, and this basin is an ecological jewel. Unfortunately, the remoteness and wildness of this area means that only a very small portion of the US public has heard of or knows about it, meaning that very few will speak out with their opinions about proposed actions like the current one.

I hope that the outstanding quality and irreplaceable value of the publicly owned land involved in this proposal is recognized to the highest degree possible during any and all coming approval/evaluation/permitting processes.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment (my mother used to do what you do for the BLM and FS, and I know it's challenging work!), and I appreciate your service to our Nation and our Nation's forests, wilderness, and wildlands.

Best,

-Owen Baughman, M.S.