Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/19/2017 6:00:00 AM
First name: Erin
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service officials:

I'm an outdoor enthusiast who cares deeply about the South Fork of the Salmon River basin, which is threatened by a new mine proposal. I used to work for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game before leaving for graduate school. I am currently a Ph.D. candidate in Ecology at Cornell University. I return to Idaho every year to recreate in its public lands, and have biked and rafted right by where this proposed mining would take place multiple times.

As you know, Canada-based Midas Gold has proposed to reopen pit mines near the remote community of Yellow Pine at the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River, a river basin prized for fishing, hunting, natural beauty and paddling.

Midas is proposing a strip mine with three pits and a total project area of 29,827 acres, including 2,000 acres of pits, facilities, stockpiles, roads and other associated infrastructure. This is a direct threat to the river and its recreational value.

What's more, the Stibnite area, which has been under exploration off and on from about 1900 through the 1990s, is already listed as a Superfund site. The Environmental Protection Agency spent $13 billion to reclaim the site and stem the release of arsenic and mercury. The East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River today is a river on the mend.

The company is also proposing to process all gold and silver on site, creating an opportunity for further environmental contamination. The project is proposed to last anywhere from 15 to 20 years or more and create long-term impacts to one of Idaho's most important recreational river basins.

I oppose any action that threatens this amazing recreational resource including water quality, fisheries habitat and recreational access to popular boating segments on the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon and South Fork of the Salmon rivers. Further, taxpayers cannot afford to fund another toxic cleanup for a private company.

Sincerely,

Erin Larson