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First name: SCOTT

Last name: GERBER

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to comment on the Stibnite Gold Project EIS 50516.

To say that I am both terrified and appalled by the idea of open pit mining in this area of Idaho is an understatement.

I first visited this area in the early 80's to explore the rivers and the surrounding wilderness. The South Fork Salmon stands out not only as a Mecca for river runners, but as a gateway to the kind of wilderness experience that is becoming increasingly more important even as it becomes that much harder to come by. As a whitewater paddler for 45 years, I love the SF for many of the same reasons I love all wild rivers; for the beauty, the challenge, and the privilege of being able to experience that which is untrammelled by the hand of man. The unique experience that has been given to those of us who have had the opportunity to visit this magnificent place needs to be protected and preserved so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy it as well.

I find it hard to believe that open pit gold mining is even happening in this day and age, and that it would be considered in as area as pristine and majestic as this area is. How is it possible that a private, for profit operation is allowed to pillage that which belongs to all of us? This is not equitable forest management.

Midas makes the claim that "the Stibnite Gold Project, as proposed, represents a rare opportunity to use private investment for natural resource restoration. The Project will restore salmon migration into the headwaters of a branch of the Salmon River, clean up a large abandoned mine site that has compromised water quality, and help the local economy and local communities." This is so obvious in its deception as to be laughable. They are actually trying to convince the managers that their profiting from the destruction of this area will be beneficial for the general public. Yes, this place has been abused and plundered in the past. Let's not pretend that a new assault on it will fix that which the same industry damaged once before. The mere thought of putting the East Fork of the South Fork in a tunnel literally brings a tear to my eye. It is an outrage and an unacceptable abuse of our public lands!

Additionally, there is the matter of this land being part of the Nez Perce tribe's territory and the U.S. government has a responsibility under the existing treaty to protect this land. An open pit gold mine in no way fits into this formula!

I urge you to deny this project and furthermore to add conditions of protection to prevent this type of travesty from coming to the table in the future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Scott Gerber

Portland, Oregon