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Organization:

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Comments:

Dear USFS NEPA staff,

As a practicing civil engineer for water resources and one that frequently reviews dam safety construction methods and environmental remediation, I ask you to question the environmental cost to monetary reward of mining in the particular location. The risk reward of this project is extremely low of an open pit mine in the middle of the critical river. This project is in the wrong location with too much risk to affecting the biology of Chinook and migratory salmon downstream. The project will not stop if the heavy metals like copper and gold that affect the fish are slowly seeping in, around and through the many proposed coffer dams and infiltration of ground water. The tunnel that the river will divert through will contain high loads of contaminating metals that will further purge itself into the Salmon River.

Look at any other superfund EPA mining sight and you have all the right conditions for building one right in Yellow Pine, Idaho. How? A possible dam failure, continued slow infiltration into the river system, or extremely contaminated storm water runoff of the tailings/construction. Keep in mind this is proposed to happen over 20 years which is a long time to be adding even the slightest heavy metals into a river tributary, with fish that are extremely sensitive to the heavy metal byproducts. I do not have to read 5,000 pages of your document to understand that copper and lead pollution from car brakes and manufacturing has major negative to the Puget Sound salmon spawning in tributaries of western Washington. In even modern mining practices the concentrations of heavy and rare metals are elevated. The entire food chain starts at the lowest bug that is eaten, with these toxins ending up in the birds and largest aquatic creatures. I suppose if Midas were to build a fish hatchery that would be about the only way to increase returns after this project affects the steelhead, chinook, and other endangered species.

While the clean up and state of the art methods are posed, it doesn't make the project any cleaner as the majority of the clean up will not be happening till 15-20 years at the end of life. That is a long time to save your environmental steps all for the end. Under the US Clean Water Act, the pollutions from this project would not be allowed in your backyard. Why should it be allowed in a main undisturbed tributary of the Salmon and Snake?

I ask you through your EIS and NEPA process to oppose the construction of the mine in its current methods by Midas. I suppose that the political leanings of this current US administration will rapidly expedite the EIS and NEPA steps so please, take your time reading my comments and if you have time please respond to my concerns.