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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the United States Forest Service,

I am writing to express my concern over the Stibnite Gold Project proposal near Yellow Pine, Idaho. I have toured the mine site with Midas Gold staff, read details of their proposal, and listened to the perspectives of Nez Perce tribal members. After doing this research, I have concluded that the impacts of the proposed project are large, and many are irreversible or require management in perpetuity. Furthermore, the plan does not contain all of the information needed to make an informed decision. For these reasons, I encourage you to deny the Stibnite Gold Project proposal.

While the Stibnite Gold project is selling itself as a restoration project because it will restore some areas damaged by a mine that was shuttered decades ago, the net impact will be far greater, as the mine will expand beyond the previously impacted area into pristine habitat. It is predicted that the mine's operations will elevate water temperatures for 100 years. It will use many tons of arsenic that will need to be recaptured and treated. The operation of a water treatment plant designed to manage this waste will need to operate in perpetuity. I do not believe any project that needs monitoring and management of toxic waste in a pristine environment in perpetuity is a good idea. Something will fail eventually, and there will be irreparable damage to our water and fisheries.

Public lands belong to all of us, including the tribes whose territories are impacted by mining. I am concerned about the impacts of this mine on the Nez Perce tribe. Salmon are central to their culture, and this project will impact salmon by raising water temperatures and through the inevitable spills or leaks of toxic mining waste. Furthermore, the breadth of this project, including expansion of the mine and the creation of new roads, will impact village sites, archaeological resources, gathering places, and trails used by the tribes. I stand with the Nez Perce, who oppose this proposal.

The creation of roads is of particular concern to me. I have driven the roads to Yellow Pine. They are windy, steep, narrow, border mountain streams, and approach the Frank Church Wilderness. Snow, ice, and avalanches are common along these roads. Trucks containing toxic materials will be traveling treacherous sections of these roads; eventually there will be an accident and a truck will slip off the road into the river, causing irreparable damage. The site location, and the roads needed to access it, are too precarious to support a project of this magnitude.

Finally, I am concerned that the environmental impact statement does not have all of the information we need to make an informed decision. We need to know what type of liner will be used, we need to know more about the transportation risks, we need to know what infrastructure is needed to support this project beyond those at the site itself, and we need to know how fish will be affected by the increase in water temperature.

The US Forest Service's mission is "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations". I do not believe the Stibnite Gold project serves that mission. It is the forest service's duty to sustain the resources of clean water and salmon habitat for present and future generations, and this project threatens to destroy both.

Sincerely,

Tanya Anderson

