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First name: Dan

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Linda Jackson,

My name is Dan Ostermiller MD. I've lived in McCall, Idaho for the last 34 years. I have been a family physician in McCall for 32 years, and I have worked as a river guide on the South Fork of the Salmon prior to finishing my MD degree from Univ of Utah. I have lived and practiced in McCall because of the beauty and majesty of the rivers. I have kayaked the S Fork of the Salmon and boated the East Fork.

I am concerned about the impact of the Stibnite Gold Project on our community and medical hospital and system. I am also concerned about the impact on recreation.

As a stakeholder passionate about our lands, rivers, and the species dependent upon them, I urge you to take a closer look at the proposed Stibnite Gold Project. The DEIS is lacking critical analysis and sufficient alternatives for the public to weigh in, and the Forest Service must submit a supplemental EIS to address these issues.

I also urge you to support Alternative 5: the No Action Alternative. Idaho rivers and our outdoor recreation economy are worth far more than gold! In my 30 plus years as a resident of Idaho I have experience with these resources as a river guide, for work and as a fisher person and paddler.

I have a few more detailed comments in opposition to the Stibnite Gold Project and the impact area of the project as follows:

Problems with the Process

The DEIS is a very intimidating document. I have experience with documents of this type. This DEIS is NOT in a form that is easily interpreted. How can you possibly expect anyone that doesn't have expertise with these kind of documents to even attempt a comment that will actually be accepted? Also, we have not been given enough time. You are encouraged to extend the deadline - again - to let people who do not have expertise be able to gain the knowledge and process to rightfully respond to this DEIS.

And finally, the Stibnite Gold Project, and all Action Alternatives in the DEIS, would cause undue harm to ESA listed fish, the irreplaceable recreational values of the region, and indigenous resources.

Purpose and Need

I am NOT convinced there is a need for more gold and I certainly am NOT convinced this DEIS proves there is a need to mine for gold at Stibnite given the possible consequences to the environment in perpetuity. The chances of failure are there, they last forever, making all of the reasons to mine....

What is the failure rate for the tailing storage pond? 0.0001%? A pond left in perpetuity will fail at some point leaving a toxic legacy. The price is too high to pay to have a mine here.?

Many modern mining projects have accidental spills due from tailing dam failures or operational issues, placing everything downstream at risk, including accidental spills on our roadways placing first responders and hospital personal at risk. This would quickly and possibly overwhelm our hospital
?

Midas Gold intends to nearly triple the footprint of the historic mine area, using three open-pit mines and cyanide leaching to extract gold and antimony in the headwaters of one of Idaho's most iconic waterways: The Salmon River. This is permanent and not worth the short term gain of collecting gold.?

There are varying treatments to the alternatives giving us a fragmented basis on which to make judgements for comparisons. The DEIS does not take a HARD LOOK at 3 & 4. There is the hard look doctrine that should have guided this. ?

In section 1502.14 of NEPA Regulations it requires that the agency must "rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives" and "devote substantial treatment to each alternative." In addition regulations require "appropriate mitigation measures" be included. From what I can see, alternatives 3 & 4 were not looked at with the rigor nor evaluated to the standards required and in many sections of the DEIS there are "adverse impacts" mentioned and NO mitigations at all offered. ?

The looming risks of large scale mining include acid mine drainage, tailings dams failures, and cyanide spills.

Possibilities of contamination from mining activities, which will create 446 million tons of potential acid generating

and/or metal leaching materials and 161,095 sq. meters of open pit walls is too risky. Additionally, mine access roads would cross 71 different streams, exposing each stream to the risk of hazardous material spills and increased sedimentation. ??

?Impacts on Recreation ?The South Fork Salmon River (and the East Fork South Fork) represent something special to citizens in Idaho and beyond. Whitewater paddlers and anglers travel from around the world to enjoy this irreplaceable river. Downstream from the mine site, the South Fork is suitable for Wild & Scenic designation. In addition to restricted tribal and recreational access in the 3,423 acre mine footprint and 13,446 acres of public land within the Operations Area Boundary for 20 years, unforeseen circumstances (mine or dam failures, contamination, etc.) could jeopardize even more river miles and recreational opportunities downstream.

Rivers/solutions IRU website * Visual/solutions ??My ideas in conclusion - ?

Please stop the Stibnite Mine Project. Alternative 5.

Sincerely,

Dan Ostermiller MD