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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am strongly opposed to the Stibnite Gold Project and all listed alternatives described in the Draft EIS, (other than alternative 5, the "No Action Alternative"). I have many concerns with this project ranging from the many effects of decreased and threatened water quality of the South Fork of the Salmon, harm to some of the most important remaining spawning grounds of the endangered Columbia River Chinook, the negative impacts on our communities infrastructure, work force, schools and housing, to Native American tribal rights. There are a few other concerns that I have regarding issues not commonly discussed.

Visual Impacts from the Air: Beginning with visual impacts from the mine, the study lists Key Observation Points, (KOP), and rates the visual effects from these places. It is an oversight not to include areal views as part of the KOPs, and the people that view it from the air, not listed as one of the user groups in the area. I am a commercial pilot by profession, and fly smaller single engine planes across and into Idaho's "backcountry". My job entails flying people from places like McCall, Salmon, and Boise to places mostly within or on the perimeter of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, largely for recreation purposes such as rafting, hunting, fishing, backpacking. The visual impact of the Stibnite Project and its impact area will be far reaching and have an overall negative impact on the vast majority of our passengers experiences. The flight for most people is more than just a means of transportation to their adventure; it is part of the adventure, and the rugged, remote, and undeveloped nature of the landscape it without a doubt, a big part of it.

Between the various local air charter operations, literally thousands of people are flown across this area every year. These are just passenger numbers from commercial flights, not counting recreational flyers, who also flock to Idaho's backcountry. These user groups and the effects on them are not part of the study, yet should be. An example of the scale of the impact zone, from a minimum altitude of 8,500 feet MSL, any flight originating from McCall to the Middle Fork of the Salmon River from the furthest upstream airstrip at Bruce Meadows to the furthest down stream at Bernard, and also going up Big Creek to Cabin Creek, will be within easy view of the impact zone of the SGP including the Burnt Log Route. Any Flight from McCall between Cabin Creek and Indian Creek will be within the view of the mine's open pits and tailings dams. 8,500 feet MSL, is an absolute minimum altitude across this area, and most planes fly higher than that, increasing the distance viewed.

Backcountry Skiing Not Specified as a Recreation Use:

As an avid backcountry skier, I am concerned that they were not mentioned as a recreation user group in the area impacted by the mine. They are probably not the largest recreational user group in the area, but they do undoubtedly use it. I have personally skied in the area of Murphy Peak and Monumental Summit, the peaks above Cinnibar. One of my concerns are the seismic and airwave impacts from the daily blasting during mining operations, and their possible impacts remotely triggering avalanches in adjacent areas. (Ref: A Study of Blasting- Induced Snow Instabilities and Avalanche Releases, Chernouss, Fedorenko, Barashev, Mokrov, (2006)).

If winter access on the Burnt Log Route is allowed, (which I can't find that it is not, and I think it should be), it will increase road access to high elevation skiable terrain. This alone will undoubtedly draw backcountry skiers to the area. Backcountry skiing is one of the fastest growing segments of the ski industry, and with Idaho and the Long Valley's explosive growth, this will probably draw more and more skiers to the area. Existing trail heads likely won't serve good skier access points, so additional plowed pull outs to allow this access should be considered.

Lack of Information on How Far the Blasting will be Audible for People:

The sound studies do not really give an idea of how far the sound of blasting will travel. For example, if on the

crest of the Lick Creek Range, could the blasting be heard and how loud?

Lack of Study and Information on General Effects and Seasonal Migration of Large Game Animals:

I am concerned that the Burnt Log Route will negatively effect the seasonal migration of animals such as deer and elk. I'm also wondering the various effects from the noise of daily blasting on these animals.