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Comments: Comments and Concerns Relative to the Stibnite Gold Project

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Submitted by Dayle and Lane Bennett

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As part-time (six to seven months per year) residents of Yellow Pine, we will be impacted both directly and indirectly by approval of the proposed Stibnite Gold Project and for a variety of reasons we would prefer the project not be approved. However, we recognize that the selection of Alternative 5, the No Action Alternative, is not likely to occur. Therefore, after careful review of this comprehensive and voluminous DEIS, we begrudgingly support Alternative 2. Conversely, we are adamantly opposed to a selection of Alternative 4 (Yellow Pine Haul Road), as we believe that alternative would adversely impact the safety of those who travel the Johnson Creek and Stibnite roads.

Using the Johnson Creek and Stibnite roads as the project haul roads will result in an unacceptable increase in traffic accidents, property (vehicle damage), personal injury and possibly fatalities. Both roads already carry an ever-increasing number of ATVs, UTVs and motorcycles, as well as passenger cars, pickup trucks and occasional semi tractors and trailers, especially during June through October (personal observations) and will no doubt continue to increase as more and more people move into the Treasure Valley and seek recreational opportunities in the Yellow Pine area. Adding an additional 65 - 68 SGP vehicles per day (45 of which are HV vehicles) to these two roads (Johnson Creek and Stibnite) will surely increase the risk to all who use them.

This increased risk should be evaluated in terms of number of potential accidents between alternatives. However, the number of accidents displayed in this DEIS is only addressed in the "Baseline Conditions." The action alternatives, 1-4, don't show any such estimates of traffic accidents. Instead, they discuss plans to mediate any increased risk rather than attempt to quantify and compare that risk between alternatives. This analysis and comparison of risk relative to the number of potential traffic accidents by alternative is inadequate. We suggest that an appropriate comparison should be made between alternatives by at least estimating the number of vehicle accidents that may occur as the volume of traffic is expected to double on the Johnson Creek road and increase by 2.5 times on the Stibnite road (as per the DEIS discussion on page 4.19-53). No such baseline traffic accident information is likely available for the Burnt Log haul road. However, we suspect that the volume of traffic, hence the risk of vehicle accidents, will be less on that road than on the Yellow Pine haul roads.

Also missing from this DEIS, relative to changes in traffic which might affect public safety, is a recognition that the selection of Alternative 4, may likely cause an increase in the volume of traffic...thus, increasing the risk of accidents... on the South Fork of the Salmon River road as travelers to and from the Yellow Pine and Big Creek areas seek to avoid the increased traffic caused by SGP vehicles on the Johnson Creek road. Although the South Fork road is paved, it is still a single lane road with several "blind curves," steep elevational changes and limited "pull-outs." Any additional traffic on this road will, no doubt, increase the risk of vehicle accidents, injuries, possible fatalities and fuel/other chemical spills.

Another concern we have regarding the the proposed use of the Yellow Pine haul road is that the increased risk of vehicle accidents could result in fuel and/or other chemical spills into Johnson Creek and/or the East Fork of

the South Fork of the Salmon River, both critical fisheries for Chinook salmon, bull trout and cutthroat trout.

Finally, it should be noted in this DEIS that any persons injured from a serious traffic accident could be one and one-half to two and one-half hours away from medical assistance. Our point being that the action alternative selection process for this project should given additional consideration to reducing the volume of traffic and the potential for accidents on these proposed haul roads.

Respectively yours,

/s/ Dayle D. Bennett
Lane R. Bennett