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First name: Ryan

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Ryan Blackadar and I oppose the proposed project in the South Fork Salmon River basin. I have experience with this watershed from my recreational activities (whitewater kayaking and rafting, fishing, snorkeling, camping, hot spring soaking), conducting stream ecology research in graduate school in the East Fork South Fork Salmon (fish snorkel surveys, aquatic invertebrate sampling, spider surveys), working as a Fish Biologist for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (Chinook salmon management), and while working as a Fish and Wildlife Biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The substantial and long-lasting effects from the proposed project will be detrimental to the aquatic communities that live in this watershed and to the people of Idaho that rely on this place for recreational experiences. In my opinion, this watershed is still recovering from the previous disturbances (logging and mining activities) and the protected species that live in the project area are still exposed to significant extinction risks from these past actions coupled with effects from a changing climate. I can remember sticking my hand into the water near the 'glory hole' in the upper south fork salmon river and feeling the burn from the toxic substances in the waters...imagine what that feels like for the species that live in these waters for their entire life? Now is not the time for additional disturbances that will jeopardize these species in perpetuity.

Affects to aquatic organisms:

All aquatic species that reside in the South Fork Salmon River basin do not have equivalent conservation protection measures. For instance, it is well known that the proposed project will have adverse, long-lasting effects to the protected species and their habitats (Chinook salmon, steelhead, bull trout). The major destruction of habitat and the introduction of toxic chemicals used in the mining process will reduce productivity of the protected species for many decades, with possible effects that may lead to extirpation of the populations. In addition, consider the affect to the many aquatic species that have no conservation measures including, mountain whitefish, species of suckers, species of sculpin, species of minnows, freshwater mussels, aquatic plants, Idaho Giant Salamander, species of frogs, and many others. Moreover, the effects of the proposed project will directly affect the aquatic species that live in these water, but will also indirectly affect the species that consume these aquatic species as food resources including eagles, osprey, otter, gray wolf, black bear, and others. The adverse effects of the proposed mining project will be measured in decades rather than years, and these effects should be considered for all species, regardless of the federal protection status.

Risk of hazardous mining materials reaching river system:

I am concerned with the transport of hazardous materials used in the mining process within the South Fork Salmon River drainage. Accidents happen to all people, therefore, my concern is focused on the effects of hazardous materials being transported and likely to spill into the waterways en route to the project area. Please provide analysis for the risk of hazardous mining materials and the threat of spills into the South Fork Salmon River drainage. The delivery of hazardous mining materials via accidents along the route to the project area has significant impacts to the organisms that reside in these waters for long-term periods (i.e. decades) and to recreationists that love the area (i.e. subsistence fishing, sportsmen fishing, whitewater kayakers and rafters, hunters, etc.). I also have concerns for the risk of avalanches and debris flows that occur in this system and have effects to the delivery of hazardous materials to the waterways. Please provide analyses for the risk of avalanches and debris flows as a source for delivery of contaminants into the water.

It is vitally important to me, my family, and future generations that the U.S. Forest Service protects the unique water quality and characteristics of this river system. I am concerned that the aquatic organisms will perish and the outdoor recreation will be negatively affected by contaminants from mining activities. My personal opinion is

that the proposed Alternatives 1-4 will adversely affect my enjoyment of the public resource (whitewater kayaking, fishing, camping, snorkeling) and will create additional negative stressors to the aquatic communities that are present in the action area. Extinction is a real threat to both protected species and non-protected species in the south fork watershed; therefore, I oppose the proposed mining project.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.