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Title:

Comments: Stibnite Gold Project EIS #50516

Comment by Elizabeth Bridges

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The SDEIS released details three Action Alternatives for the project:

1. The Proposed Action (Also known as ModPro2 or MMP)
2. The Johnson Creek Route Alternative
3. The No Action Alternative

I urge you to support the No Action Alternative for the proposed Stibnite Gold Project for the following reasons:

- 1.Honor Wild and Scenic Rivers status of the Salmon River
- 2.Value of Recreation to the State of Idaho and the Nation
- 3.Destruction of National Treasure for Weapons of War Sold to Foreign Lands

Reason 1 for Pursuing No Action Alternative

The Salmon River was designated a Scenic River and Recreational River under the Wild and Scenic River System in 1981. Its tributary, the South Fork of the Salmon, was designated a Scenic and Recreational River at the same time. Should the Stibnite gold project take place, water flowing down Johnson Creek and the South Fork of the Salmon River would be adversely affected by diversion, warming waters, increased sediment flow and by heavy metal pollution, if not from the mining tailings, then from the spilling of fuels during traffic accidents, more likely than not, frequently observed in gold mining operations in other areas.

Reason 2 for Pursuing No Action Alternative

The Salmon River and its tributaries are national treasures, drawing recreationists from across the state, nation and world to Idaho to enjoy the natural beauty and tranquility the river system offers. The revenue from recreation in the State of Idaho far exceeds the revenue from agriculture and is a sustainable and renewable resource. No Super Fund site clean up is required from recreating on Scenic and Recreational Rivers, while we, as a nation, would carry the burden of clean-up for generations should the Stibnite gold project begin.

For almost 3 decades my family and I have boated, hiked and fished on the Salmon Rivers and on Johnson Creek. I first took my son kayaking on Johnson Creek in 1995 and was awed by the quietude, cleanliness and beauty of the river valley. I soak in hot springs that burst out from geologic faults along the South Fork of the Salmon River. I hunt morels and wild mushrooms along the flanks of the Johnson Creek and South Fork of the Salmon watersheds. I fish and hike along the South Fork of the Salmon River, and have led volunteers on trail building week long trips along Salmon River tributaries. I have rafted the Salmon River over 20 times, in spring, summer and fall, and have welcomed friends and family on those trips.

Following summer rainstorms, when I have had to take to my tent, I have found dust and pollen on my tent's ripstop fabric. The wind blows in the high country of Idaho, and any mining tailings exposed to the sky would be wind tossed and distributed widely across the landscape. Any dust from tailings would distribute heavy metals on the watershed of the Salmon River and would adversely affect recreation, recreationists and the quality of the watersheds. Any heavy metals, like arsenic, escaping the mining site would have a direct and negative effect on me, my family and friends, as we rely on the river water for drinking and cooking while in the backcountry of the

Salmon River. I value my life, the lives of others, and the health of our forests and do not understand how a mining company can potentially poison the water and land that I love and depend on. 14,000 acres of land I love and treasure would be blocked from recreation for 20 years, should you approve the Stibnite mining project.

Reason 3 for Pursuing No Action Alternative

The metals highly sought by the would-be Stibnite mining operations, gold, silver and antimony, are not critical minerals in the United States. We are no better than the poorest of countries, when we let Canadian, or any other nation's companies come onto our land, extract our resources, poison our forests, watersheds and people, all in the name of providing profit for shareholders.

One metal desired from mining the Stibnite area is antimony. Antimony is a critical component of a variety of military applications, including night vision goggles, explosive formulations, flares, nuclear weapons production, and infrared sensors.

(https://usitc.gov/publications/332/executive_briefings/ebot_a_critical_material_probably_never_heard_of.pdf)

Antimony is needed by Ukrainians to repel Russian forces. While I support the war for democracy in the Ukraine, I do not support destroying our resources to protect theirs. Ukrainians love their land. I love mine. I do not support mining for minerals that will spread death and destruction not only in the mined area, but in lands I might never see, among people I care about but might never meet. The daughter of a diplomat, a life long teacher, words and some covert activity will go farther to bring a resolution to wars in other people's countries. To be clear, the United States and the USDA Forest Service are willing to take public land, create a toxic landscape, despoil the land for recreation and wildlife, bar its citizens from access to public lands and poison some of the most beautiful watersheds in the world, to send weapons of war to foreign countries, all in the name of peace and supporting democracy, but really so that foreign entities can earn a profit from the ravages of war. I am mortified that our national treasures, our public lands and scenic watersheds, are economic pawns.

Summation

I am a citizen of the United States and a public land user. I love our public lands, our clean waters and our freedom to recreate on those lands and over those waters. I oppose any mining in the Stibnite mining project and urge you not to allow any mining in the Stibnite project.