

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/6/2023 3:49:31 AM

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Comments: My understanding is that Perpetua Resources (formerly Midas Gold) is proposing a massive strip mine, the Stibnite Gold Project, in the Payette National Forest at the doorstep of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, in the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho. The East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River is popular for recreation and critical for endangered native wildlife.

I understand that the Stibnite Gold Project proposal, a cyanide vat leach gold mine, involves an almost 30,000 acre area, doubling the old mine's existing footprint, and would use up to a fifth of the water in part of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. The proposal includes about 1,800 acres of mine pits, 15 miles of new roads (plus dozens of miles of currently remote USFS roads), a 400 foot-high tailings dam for 100 million tons of materials, more than 3,000 annual hazardous vehicle trips, and year-round traffic for the mine's projected 25-year time period.

I also understand that millions of dollars have been spent by the Nez Perce Tribe and the federal government working to clean up past mining impacts in this area. I am confused as to why Perpetua Resources has not been required to clean up the existing mine site. I am also concerned that allowing Perpetua Resources to further develop this area without being required to clean up their previous mine site will only leave a larger mess for the Nez Perce Tribe and the federal government to clean up (using taxpayer dollars).

The proposed project will seriously impact the very popular Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. The proposed mining road would be 100 feet from the wilderness boundary and would likely enter the Wilderness, as the most logical location would be the existing pack trail that briefly enters the Wilderness. The road and mining operations would make noise audible in a nearly 2-mile radius, causing wildlife disturbance and displacement, and increased access to and activity in the Wilderness. The wilderness evaluation erroneously downplays these impacts.

The East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River and endangered species such as salmon, steelhead, and bull trout would also be seriously impacted by water withdrawals and sediment pollution in streams within the Wilderness. We need to understand the irreplaceable value of clean, fresh water, in the drought prone American west, and the importance of these key fish species to the ecosystem and sportsmen and women.

The last thing this area needs is more toxic mining and associated impacts. Please deny the permit for Perpetua Resource's Stibnite Gold Project and require Perpetua Resources to finish cleaning up the mine site.