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Comments: The Stibnite Gold Project puts the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River and endangered species such as salmon, steelhead, and bull trout at risk. The wilderness evaluation erroneously downplays negative impacts. Road construction and mining operations would cause serious negative impacts to the River of No Return Wilderness, including noise audible from a nearly 2-mile radius, wildlife disturbance and displacement, increased access to and activity in what are now quiet and lightly-visited places in the Wilderness, and sediment pollution in streams within the Wilderness. The new proposed road would sit 100 feet from the wilderness boundary and could enter the Wilderness, as the most logical location for the road seems to be an existing pack trail that dips into the Wilderness. The more than 3,000 annual hazardous vehicle trips, the year-round traffic for the mine's 25-year operating period, and other infrastructure within the nearly 30,000-acre project area would disastrously degrade the Wilderness values and experience.

The proposed cyanide vat leach gold mine puts not only the Wilderness at risk, but also this important river system and endangered species such as salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Cyanide leach pits have proven to be prone to leakage in the past and a leak would devastate not only the surrounding area, but any waterways a leak may enter. Cyanide is highly toxic, and can result in substantial environmental impacts and public health risks if released into the environment. Cyanide spills have already resulted in major fish kills, contaminated drinking water supplies and harmed agricultural lands.

The proposed tailings dam for 100 million tons of materials, is also highly problematic (see above) .

The wilderness evaluation erroneously downplays all these impacts. The Forest Service needs to deny the permit for Perpetua Resource's Stibnite Gold Project and require Perpetua to finish cleaning up the mine site, rather than increasing the damage already done. The Forest Service needs to increase the number of Wilderness Areas - not harm those that are already designated.

There is no more Wilderness than we have now. It cannot be manufactured. We, and you, should be treasuring our public lands rather than plundering them for their treasure. The value of the River of No Return Wilderness, one of the wildest areas remaining in the lower 48 states, is in the intrinsic untrammelled qualities it provides as a Wilderness Area.