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Comments: I oppose the Stibnite gold project EIS #50516 because of its detrimental impacts on the River of No Return Wilderness. The proposal is a massive mine on the Payette National Forest at the edge of the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and in the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho. The River of No Return Wilderness is one of the wildest areas in the lower 48, and the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River is popular for recreation and provides critical habitat for endangered native wildlife. Maintaining the pristine quality of waters in the wilderness is necessary to maintaining its Wilderness character. Cyanide leach mining for gold damages ground and surface waters and causes irreparable loss of water quality.

No such mines should be permitted since none have been operated without causing severe and irreversible impacts on water quality. In fact the impacts of earlier mining in this area are still being felt today. Negative impacts to the Wilderness include noise, wildlife disturbance and displacement, increased activity in currently remote Wilderness and pollution in Wilderness streams. The wilderness evaluation does not accurately describe impacts to Wilderness and wildlife.

The mine puts not only the Wilderness at risk, but also this important river and endangered species including salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

Millions of dollars have already been spent by the Nez Perce Tribe and the federal government in trying to clean up the effects of past mining impacts. Now Perpetua Resources wants to re-open and expand former mine pits here for cyanide vat leach gold mining.

The Stibnite Gold Project doubles the old mine's existing footprint, would use up to a fifth of the water in part of the East Fork of the South Fork, and 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, year-round traffic for the mine's 25-year time period, and other infrastructure within the nearly 30,000-acre project area.

I urge you to deny the mine permit and require Perpetua to finish cleaning up the mine site. Do not degrade the largest Wilderness area in the Lower 48 with this destructive mining project. This wild and beautiful area deserves better than more toxic mining pollution and other harmful impacts.