

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/8/2023 4:46:03 PM

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Comments: I urge the Forest Service to deny the Stibnite Gold Project mine permit and require Perpetua Resources to finish the clean up of the existing site to restore ecological function.

As a ecological restoration practitioner I am aware that mining produces highly toxic by products that destroy the land and waters nearby. The destruction is extreme and reversing it is so difficult that mining companies never agree to restore the area to anything remotely resembling original ecological function. It is left to us, the taxpayers, to fund the toxic pollution clean up.

Perpetua Resources claims that remediating the impacts of historic mining at Stibnite cannot happen without more mining, and that the SGP is the only way to address degraded water quality and threats to Endangered Species Act listed fish. This is wrong. Restoration can, has been, and will be done without mining. The Forest Service, Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Dept of Environmental Quality, and others have already spent millions of dollars on restoration, fisheries research, and supplementation in the Stibnite area and the South Fork.

The Stibnite Gold Project puts not only the famed Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness at risk, but also the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River and endangered species such as salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

Under the preferred alternative, road construction and mining operations would cause serious 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. Sediment pollution is highly disruptive, killing insects fish rely on.

The wilderness evaluation downplays the listed impacts above to a ludicrous degree.

The new proposed road is entirely too close to the wilderness boundary as it would sit 100 feet from the boundary or could enter the Wilderness, because the most logical location for the road is an existing pack trail that dips into the Wilderness. If this project is permitted, I fully expect the design to be altered to make it even more destructive as Perpetua focuses on lowering costs.

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.