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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to comment on the proposal to enlarge the Stibnite Mine to almost double its current size and to allow an additional 30 year period of mining operations. I am strongly opposed to this proposal. My reasons are:

Having lived in Stanley, Idaho, year round for over 40 years, I have seen firsthand the impacts of many mining projects as well as the long term adverse effects they can have on the area and on its fish and wildlife. My highest, but not my only, concerns about this project relate to impacts on our endangered salmon and wolverine populations.

This project creates significant potential for environmental damage due to water quality issues impacting each of Idaho's salmon species. Where the mine is situated, the fact that it is sited in a seismically active area, the high potential for accidental releases into the river, the human, mechanical, and chemical presence inherent in the proposed 30 year mine life all sound like a recipe for a true disaster scenario in the East Fork of the South Fork Salmon River habitat. Furthermore, since the waters from this mine flow all the way to the Pacific, an accidental spill could potentially impact salmon and other wildlife even farther downstream and be a significant factor in our salmon's ultimate extinction. Realistically, our salmon don't have 30+ years to wait for the safer habitat they need to survive in the Salmon River ecosystem.

Another of my concerns is the potential for detrimental impacts on wolverine. A small population of this endangered species exists in Idaho, which is one of only a few states in our country where they are still found. One of those places is the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork. My husband worked as a technician on a Central Idaho wolverine research project in the 1990s. I was fortunate enough to be able to tag along occasionally. As a result, I learned how human activity in the wolverines' high mountain territory severely impacts this reclusive, secretive animal. The Stibnite Mine sits right in the middle of active wolverine territory. An expansion of this mine could easily spell doom for the area's endangered wolverine population, further impacting this iconic and federally protected animal.

Potentially severe impacts to the East Fork of the South Fork Basin are a strong reason to deny this request for expansion and further operation. Because this mine's location is in sensitive habitat, it is almost guaranteed to impact sensitive wildlife like wolverine and salmon. There is no way around it with today's available technology. This danger should make the proposal to expand this mine an absolute no-go.

Thank you for considering my concerns,

Maryellen Easom

Stanley, ID