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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello Forest Supervisor Jackson,

The U.S. Forest Service Motto is "caring for the land and serving its people." If you truly adhere to that motto, you must reject the Stibnite Gold Project (SGP) proposed at the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River watershed. This project (though it may enrich a select few individuals) will cause irrevocable harm to the other plants, animals, and people of Idaho. Approving the project as is will go directly against the purported purpose of your organization. I have studied the impacts of mines in Mongolia and have seen the ravages left on communities and the environment once the extraction process is completed, but one does not have to look that far afield.

Although Perpetua prefers to present the SGP as a 'restoration' project, that title is grossly (perhaps even deliberately) misleading; it is a massive industrial mine that will leave the landscape unrecognizable and degraded for lifetimes to come through the creation of three open pits, the permanent storage of over 120 million tons of toxic mine tailings and an expanded footprint that more than doubles the previous disturbance of the Stibnite mining district.

There are billions of dollars spent on Snake River salmon recovery and this project represents a severe risk and endangers this investment. Stream temperatures are predicted to be elevated for up to 100 years within the mine site boundary and the habitat for these sensitive species will be for the worse. The flora and fauna of Idaho rely on the nutrients transported from the Pacific Ocean by the Chinook salmon.

This project will also result in the loss of over 120 acres of high-functioning wetlands, impacting the water quality of streams with additional sedimentation and the potential release of additional contaminants mobilized by mining and construction. Once released, these contaminants are nearly impossible to contain.

Climate change will further exacerbate the impacts the SGP will have on the environment and mitigation plans for the changes in weather and water patterns were inadequately incorporated into the SDEIS. While briefly acknowledged, the compounding impacts of a warming climate were not considered when predicting stream temperatures or other environmental impacts that are intrinsically linked to the climate.

As proposed, the SGP raises numerous concerns for rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). The project itself is located at the headwaters of the suitable South Salmon River, which feeds directly into the designated Main Salmon River. However, the scope of analysis does not include any potential impacts that extend downstream of the site boundary to review these sections of river. Additionally, Johnson Creek and Burntlog Creek, both eligible under the WSRA, will both face degradation and risk of a catastrophic toxic spill if this project moves forward.

As a longtime guide on the Salmon River, I have witnessed firsthand the positive emotional and economic bounty that the river provides; it is almost incalculable. The temporary economic "gains" proposed by the mine will be quickly negated by all of the things this proposed mining project imperils.

SGP will also negatively impact the treaty-reserved rights of the Nez Perce and other indigenous peoples of Idaho. The SDEIS clearly states that "Adverse impacts to tribal rights and interests under either alternative, including preventing access to traditional lands, harming traditional fishing and hunting rights, impacting endangered salmon and concerns that it would harm the tribe's salmon restoration efforts".

Protect the Salmon River watershed and reject the proposed Stibnite mine plan.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this project,
Emma