

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/9/2023 8:55:46 PM

First name: Thomas

Last name: von Alten

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Supervisor Jackson:

I am writing to comment on the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the Stibnite Gold Project (SGP). The mine would have significant impact to the environment at the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River watershed, and to other rivers protected by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. the Salmon River in general. It would have negative impacts on Chinook salmon and bull trout, all forms of recreation within the area, and would harm the treaty rights and interests of Indigenous peoples of the area. A massive industrial operation in remote Idaho will lead to higher stream temperatures, loss of wetlands, and degradation of water quality for decades.

I moved to Idaho almost 50 years ago in large measure because of the character of the land. Many others have come after I did for the same kinds of reasons, and yes, for economic opportunity that has grown up in the populated areas of our great state. Large open pit mines with permanent storage of million tons of toxic tailings parked above streams are not as attractive. While the area of this proposed mine has had mining in the past, over half of the 3,200 acres would be on previously undisturbed land, most of which are public, in the Payette NF.

The changing climate would multiply the negative effects of this project, and it doesn't appear that the SDEIS took this into consideration when predicting stream temperature. The risk analysis for local communities affected by transport of hazardous materials is not fully developed in the SDEIS, nor are the impacts downstream of the site boundary. Johnson Creek and Burntlog Creek (both eligible under the WSRA) would be exposed to potential catastrophe from a toxic spill. The analysis of impacts to recreation are limited to a 5-mile radius from major mine features, without discussion of traffic displaced to the South Salmon Road and Lick Creek Road.

The SGP would negatively impact the Nez Perce and other indigenous peoples of Idaho, as the SDEIS states: "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."

I urge the Forest Service to protect the Salmon River watershed and reject the proposed Stibnite mine plan.