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Title:

Comments: I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed Stibnite Gold Project by Perpetua Resources (formerly Midas Gold). The Stibnite Gold Project is proposed for the Payette National Forest which abuts the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. The project would also be within the eastern portion of the South Fork watershed of the Salmon River in Idaho.

The Stibnite Gold Project, as proposed, would re-open and expand former mine pits owned by Perpetua Resources. It would double the old mine's existing footprint and use up to a fifth of the water in the eastern portion of the South Fork of the Salmon River. It would include approximately 1,800 acres of mine pits and create 15 miles of new roads (and use dozens of miles of currently remote USFS roads). It would create a 400 foot-high tailings dam for 100 million tons of materials, which would include more than 3,000 annual hazardous vehicle trips during the mine's 25-year time period, as well as other infrastructure within the nearly 30,000-acre project area.

The 2.4 million-acre River of No Return Wilderness is one of the few quiet and lightly-visited wild places within the lower 48, and the eastern portion of the South Fork of the Salmon River is a popular destination for recreation and fishing. The Nez Perce Tribe and federal government have spent millions of dollars and many years cleaning past mining impacts and working to restore the fragile ecosystems in this area.

Under the proposed "preferred" alternative, road construction and mining operations would cause serious impacts to the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, including noise that would be audible from a nearly 2-mile radius, disturbing and displacing wildlife. And the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) seriously downplays wide-spread impacts from the proposed re-opening and expansion of the former mine pits for a cyanide vat leach gold mine.

One such example is the proposed road that the SDEIS states will be 100 feet from the wilderness boundary. Instead of creating a new road, the most logical location for the road would be utilizing an existing pack trail. The only problem with this is the pack trail doesn't stay outside the wilderness but that dips into it.

I strongly urge the US Forest Service to deny Perpetua Resources the mine permit and require them to finish cleaning up the original mine site. The mine not only puts the adjacent Wilderness at risk, but also this portion of the Salmon River that is so critical to endangered species such as salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my comments and concerns regarding this poorly considered and potentially destructive project.