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Organization:

Title:

Comments: USFS,

I have worked for Perpetua Resources for five years. In that time, I have observed and been a part of a team dedicated to bringing the Stibnite Gold Project forward with the best possible environmental outcomes. I am also optimistic that this project plays a banner role in showing how the western United States' brownfield sites can be addressed with redevelopment and modern mining practices. I have played a part in the environmental characterization of the site's existing conditions and modeled conditions under the proposed action. The company lives its ethos of being a good neighbor and a benefit to the community and Idaho. I am pleased that the Forest Service has aligned with Perpetua in choosing the Burntlog Route (MMP) as the preferred alternative. This will allow the project to operate with less environmental and safety risk while reducing the construction time required.

Where I am most proud of the Stibnite Gold Project is in the environmental goals built into it. Salmon and steelhead must again have volitional upstream migration into the upper East Fork SFSR and Meadow Creek and with that, critical spawning and rearing habitat. With the impending impacts of climate change on the Pacific Northwest, the high-elevation habitat offered at the site above the existing Yellow Pine pit fish barrier offers premium cold-water habitat. On top of this, the project will create a significant amount of new wetlands and overall have a more ecologically functional environment.

Addressing the designation of the "impaired waters" at Stibnite is another great benefit to the project. By reprocessing and resituating the legacy mining wastes and storing them with our mined materials in engineered facilities with liners and covers, we will reduce the concentration of arsenic and antimony, leaving the site to the tune of 40% of the arsenic. This is not even accounting for the work that would be done under the ASAOC in phases 2 and 3 that would happen alongside construction and operations.

I would be ignoring the most obvious personal benefit if I did not acknowledge the economic impact the project has had on me and my family. Perpetua Resources, along with the mining industry as a whole, produce good-paying jobs for many Idahoans. The approval of this project will result in the company spending \$1.3 billion dollars to construct with 500+ direct jobs. For many Idahoans, the mine could constitute most of their career.

I see the Stibnite Gold Project developed by Perpetua as a fantastic opportunity to proceed with a project with excellent environmental outcomes and broad economic benefits. At the same time, we should not forget that the project will be producing the critical "mineral" antimony which has no other domestically controlled source.

Sincerely,

Koda Merkley