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Comments: I vehemently oppose the Stibnite Mine in any proposed form because it increases the risk of heavy metal contamination, stream temperature increases, and general loss of critical ecosystem function and habitat in a pristine and protected landscape.

The planned open-pit cyanide vat leach gold mine in Idaho's Salmon River Mountains would jeopardize public health and clean water, harm threatened species, violate Indigenous treaty rights, and permanently scar thousands of acres of public land in the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River.

The plan still involves excavating three massive open pits, punching in a road through three roadless areas and along the boundary of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, and filling Meadow Creek with toxic mine waste. The proposed Yellow Pine pit would extend more than 700 feet beneath the riverbed of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, requiring the river to be rerouted through a concrete tunnel during mining activities until the pit is eventually backfilled with mine waste.

This is unacceptable. The Forest Service ought to be protecting our wild places, not bulldozing the way for its destruction. Clean water and maintaining the watershed's impeccable Salmon habitat (which is a cornerstone of efforts to restore threatened Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout) are of the highest priority.

The Forest Service says the South Fork Salmon River contains the "most important remaining habitat for summer chinook salmon in the Columbia River basin."

So act like it. Stop the Stibnite mine!

Immediately downstream of the mine site, the South Fork Salmon River also provides world-class recreational opportunities for whitewater paddlers and anglers alike whose access and experience will undoubtedly be diminished by the proposed project.

By the State of Idaho's calculations, operations at the proposed mine will also emit millions of pounds of arsenic-laden dust per year posing additional environmental and human health risks for anyone recreating near, or traveling through the mine site.

That the mine plan has not meaningfully changed to address the substantive concerns raised the public in the last comment period is a tragedy.

Against the backdrop of ongoing salmon recovery efforts, recreational values and access, the broad negative impact to the environment, and Indigenous treaty rights, this project represents an unacceptable risk to our public lands.

Passionately,  
Bethany Blitz