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Comments: Forest Supervisor Matt Davis, Payette National Forest,

In response to my comment (19345, on pg. B-748), the FEIS responds, "No further response required. General in nature or position statement. It is acknowledged and understood that concerns regarding potential long-term environmental impacts, ecological integrity, and the well-being of potentially affected communities are valid and important to consider. During the decision-making process, the Forest Service will seek to identify the best possible balance between environmental protection, community needs, and sustainable forest management."

This is inadequate because, as stated in my comment letter, a major gold mine in the headwaters of the SF Salmon River would undermine the large networks of complex and connected rivers unimpeded by anthropogenic influence that native, wild, and ESA-listed fish communities thrive on in central Idaho. The endangered and sensitive fish species present in the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon cannot sustain the projected impacts of this project. The FEIS admits that the Stibnite Projects will raise stream temperatures up to 8 degrees C (this is more than was anticipated in the DEIS) (p. 4-289), decrease quantity and quality of habitat, will rely on a tunnel to maintain connectivity throughout the river network (p. 4-353), and will likely input hazardous chemicals from spills during transport. It also completely cuts off access to Meadow Creek, an important bull trout spawning ground. These actions are all unacceptable and will impede the recovery of threatened Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout, which works directly in opposition to the Forest Services obligation through the Endangered Species Act to work towards recovery of listed species. The FEIS has not detailed ways in which the plan will mitigate these impacts on the streams, it does not reach a balance that includes environmental protection, and does not follow its mandated obligation to work towards the recovery of the threatened species listed above. By not having an adequate recovery plan for these native fish, the FEIS also derogates the Treaty of 1855 with the Nez Perce Tribe that allows for tribal members to hunt and fish on usual and accustomed places.

Additionally, as also stated in my comment letter, a large gold mine on the edge of the Frank Church that includes the Burntlog Road along the edge of the Wilderness would damage this Wilderness character. The FEIS again does not reach a balance that includes environmental protection (large swaths of connected landscape, untrammelled by man), community needs (the nations' need for Wilderness that was protected in the Wilderness Act of 1964), and sustainable forest management (which includes Wilderness and multiple uses, rather than just the interests of the mining company).

The remedy for this (these) violation(s) is for the Forest Service to withdraw the FEIS and DROD and not issue any decision or take any action based on the inadequate FEIS. The Forest Service must not take any action until a revised FEIS and revised DROD demonstrate full compliance with each and every law, regulation, policy, Treaty, and requirement noted. The Regional Forester must withdraw the FEIS and DROD with instructions to the Payette National Forest to correct all errors noted before approving or taking any actions.

Thank you for considering this comment.