

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/17/2026 8:10:52 PM

First name: David

Last name: Cook

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Stillwater Mine neighbors 2 of our great nation's most beautiful, wild, and historic areas: it is just 24 miles from Yellowstone National Park and 1 mile from the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness. The natural beauty and wildlife in the vicinity of the mine is simply breath-taking. Downstream of the mine, along the Stillwater River, sit countless productive ranches that families have made a living on for generations. The river is also a popular recreation area for locals and visitors. The mine sits directly between the wild lands of the Bearhooths and Yellowstone above, and the productive agricultural lands below. The actions our government and Sibanye-Stillwater take on this proposal will impact this area for generations.

As ranchers in this area have shown, it is possible to generate economic output while operating in harmony with nature. To do this, you need to steward the land with an eye toward the long-term. And you need to pay close attention to how your actions impact the larger ecosystem.

This proposal would win my support if it:

1. Includes sufficient monitoring to ensure any breaks or surprises get caught quickly. The Stillwater River is essential to ranchers, outfitters, recreationists, and wildlife. We cannot let this majestic river be degraded. A key aspect of this is water quality monitoring wells. We should actively monitor surface water in the river as well. Linings can and will tear. The only way we can detect and fix issues like that is with extensive monitoring.
2. Utilizes natural designs in both the creation of the new facilities as well as the reclamation of them once they're no longer needed. Except for the mine, this region is essentially unspoiled. The tentacles of development have not reached here as they have in Big Sky or the Front Range of Colorado. The mine is already a blight on the landscape, but at least it is a productive one. No one wants to recreate next to a mine, so minimizing the visible disturbance due to this amendment will support the recreation industry in the area while preserving viewsheds for people who call it home. And once the mine is no longer productive, we must re-wild the site to return the area to its natural state: flourishing birds, beautiful wild flowers, elk and deer grazing in the meadows and bedding down in the timber.

I believe it is possible to mine without forever harming an ecosystem, but it takes a strong will and concerted effort. In closing, I encourage you all to sit with this quote:

"Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance."

? Theodore Roosevelt