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First name: LES
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: October 26, 2020

TO: LINDA JACKSON, PAYETTE FOREST SUPERVISOR

RE: STIBNITE GOLD PROJECT EIS350516

FROM: LES BECHDEL, PO BOX 477, MCCALL, ID 83638, 208-634-4304, lesbechdel@gmail.com

TOPIC: BOATING RECREATION IN AFFECTED DRAINAGES

In the scoping section of the EIS:

Section 2.5.4.4:

"Social Resources - The EIS should describe the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the following resources as they relate to the Social Environment: * Consider economic impact versus environmental impact of the proposed action and examine influx of people to area as a result of mine development; * Recreation, etc."

"General remarks and comments regarding recreational activity use in the area that the Forest Service should evaluate in the EIS included: * The Salmon River draws thousands of rafters and kayakers from all over the country and internationally each season. Whitewater enthusiasts are concerned about the impacts to the river and river basin for paddling."

In the DEIS:

Section 3.4.3.3.17, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS: "Communities near the analysis area are rural and rely heavily on tourism to support their economies."

Section 3.19 There is no information on the impact the project will have on local recreation for boaters.

Comments:

Whitewater boating is popular on the following drainages that could be affected by the Stibnite gold mine: Big Creek, Johnson Creek, East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River, the South Fork of the Salmon River and the Main Fork of the Salmon River. Fishing is a popular activity among these boaters. If there was a catastrophic accident during construction, or during operation, then it is possible that many, if not all of these exceptional waterways could be environmentally damaged.

From the Bureau of Economic Analysis (2018) and Idaho Business for the Outdoors 20200: Idaho generates $7.8 billion in consumer spending and approximately 78,000 jobs. Furthermore, 78% of Idaho residents enjoy outdoor recreation. I have not found in the DEIS any information of what kind income is generated by the many boaters who run the rivers listed above. In fact, nowhere in the DEIS are those user numbers listed. Isn't it the responsibility of the DEIS to study the impact of an environmental disaster on the economic effects on the local communities?

On a personal note, I have been running these waters since 1985. Over the years, I have seen the increase of

use of these rivers by paddlers from all over the world. For good reason; this drainage is incredibly pristine, unique and mandates federal consideration and protection.

Thank you for your consideration of these substantive formal comments,

Les Bechdel
(Please consider this a digital signature)