



Endangered Sacred Waters

The South Fork of the Salmon River
and the Stibnite Mining Project

Save the South Fork Salmon
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The South Fork of the Salmon River

The South Fork of the Salmon River winds through the heart of Idaho, fostering some of the state's most delicate ecosystems. For centuries, it has been a thriving home for Chinook Salmon, Steelhead Trout, and Bull Trout. These fish, listed under the Endangered Species Act, are an integral part of the South Fork ecosystem and an immeasurable part of the people, both native and non-native, who for generations have inhabited and depended upon the area for physical, spiritual, and economic sustenance. Proposed gold mining in the South Fork watershed threatens these vital resource values. It will permanently degrade fish habitat and water quality, and substantially harm the Nez Perce Tribe's ability to preserve their treaty-reserved resources. In addition, the mine will risk the health and safety of surrounding communities due to increased heavy truck traffic transporting hazardous materials, new sources of hazardous air pollution, and the mine's contribution to climate change.

"As a citizen of the Nez Perce, or Nimiipuu, which means the people, I look at gold mining as a symbol of broken promises....In 1860 gold was discovered, and thousands of prospectors flooded across our borders in violation of the treaty, damaging our sacred places and natural resources and causing unspeakable injury to our people..."



Not here, not now!

Idaho headwaters are simply too valuable and vulnerable to risk.

A century and a half later, the promise of gold once again threatens our homeland and way of life. For us, the Nimiipuu, the value of the land, fish and wildlife will always be worth more than gold."

- Marcie Carter, Nez Perce Tribal member



We're Save the South Fork Salmon

Save the South Fork Salmon (SSFS) is a community-based, all-volunteer organization headquartered in West Central Idaho. Our members cherish the mountains, the clean air and water, the fish, wildlife, plants and culture that make up our ecosystem.

Save the South Fork Salmon works to expose the dangers to the South Fork of the Salmon River ecosystem posed by reopening the Stibnite gold mine as proposed by Perpetua Resources (formerly called Midas Gold, Inc.) We provide factual information about the South Fork of the Salmon River ecosystem and the environmental and socio-economic threats posed by new mining in the watershed. We mobilize public participation in several ongoing permitting processes for the mine. Currently, we focus on public participation in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. SSFS works diligently to ensure that all environmental laws and regulations that are applicable to the proposed mine are strictly enforced.

Based on information disclosed in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the proposed mine, analyses of likely

impacts by experts engaged by SSFS, and the 100+ year history of gold mining across the American west, it is clear that the long-term environmental and socio-economic costs of the proposed mine far exceed any possible short-term benefit.

We stand with the Nez Perce Tribe in opposition to all currently proposed mining in the South Fork of the Salmon River watershed. We support and encourage active protection of the river, its tributaries, fish, wildlife, and plants, and all the communities dependent on its precious waters.

What we've done!

Public Outreach

Organized local events, rallies, pamphlets, LTEs ads, and interviews

Coalitions

Organized a coalition of technical experts to analyze DEIS and other NEPA documents and permits. Developing a business coalition with Idaho Rivers United in opposition to the SGP

Oversight

Derailed Stibnite's Community Agreements with Valley County and the City of McCall that would have basically endorsed the mine

DEIS Comment

Submitted extensive comments on the DEIS compelling the Forest Service to prepare a new supplement DEIS

Permits

Helped convince the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to reject Perpetua's air quality permit application due to insufficient impact analysis



Voices from our community...

"When I think of my future self and attempt to plan for a secure existence into old age, access to the South Fork is a major part of my vision. This place brings me more security than my health insurance nearly every day." – Zak Sears

"We are accountable to this Land and we are the voice for this Land. It's our responsibility to continue to advocate for those that no longer have a voice. That's the responsibility that we carry as Nimiipuu." – Nakia Williamson

"The South Fork of the Salmon River deserves our best stewardship, it continues to amaze me with its resilience...one of the rare rivers supporting a remaining assemblage of wild Chinook salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and westslope cutthroat trout." – Kevin Lewis

What is special about the...



South Fork of the Salmon River?

The South Fork of the Salmon River is a popular destination for flyfishing, hunting, camping, hiking, and is renowned for its whitewater and hot springs. The South Fork watershed is part of the aboriginal territory of the Nez Perce, Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. The Nez Perce Tribe's rights to hunt, fish and gather in the South Fork are reserved in the 1855 Treaty with the United States. This watershed is one of the linchpins in the ongoing work to restore threatened salmon and steelhead to Idaho. The river has been found eligible and suitable by the U.S. Forest Service for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. It feeds the Wild and Scenic Salmon River and supports a thriving recreation economy, attracting tens of thousands of people annually.



South Fork of the Salmon River



What is the Stibnite Gold Project?

The proposed **Stibnite Gold Project (SGP)** is an open-pit gold, silver, and antimony mine and ore processing facility. The site is approximately 75 road miles NE of Cascade, Idaho. Most of the project is on Payette National Forest lands, adjacent to the western boundary of the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. The East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River flows directly through the site and is already contaminated from previous abandoned mining operations.

As proposed, the SGP will include the following: three open mine pits, ore processing facilities, waste rock dumps, a tailings storage impoundment, a water treatment facility, access and haul roads, electrical transmission lines, and on-site housing and support services. The project will directly impact approximately 7 square miles of mostly public land.

Water from this headwaters location supports critical habitat for Endangered Species Act listed salmon and steelhead fisheries in the Salmon River basin.

According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Duration The projected duration of the SGP is 20+ years (construction, mining, and reclamation phases).

Area The total area of direct impact will be 880 acres of privately owned land and 3600 acres of publicly owned land.

Roads The SGP will require 35 miles of new and reconstructed access roads - some of it in inventoried roadless areas on the boundary of the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.



Transporting

The SGP would result in 12,775-17,885 heavy vehicle trips every year, many loaded with hazardous chemicals (diesel, explosives, sulfuric acid, and sodium cyanide). This could potentially be 255,500+ trips on Idaho's 2nd highest year-round road over the course of the mine's operation. Even a spill risk of .01%, would result in at least 25 spills on roads crossing 69 named and unnamed waterways.

Fuel

The SGP will require burning 18,000 gallons of fuel on the site every day. This would emit 118 tons of CO2 into the atmosphere each day.

Pits

The SGP will have 3 open pits, each 140-200 acres in surface area and each 460-660 feet deep. The largest pit alone could potentially fit 457 Seattle Space Needles within it.



Power

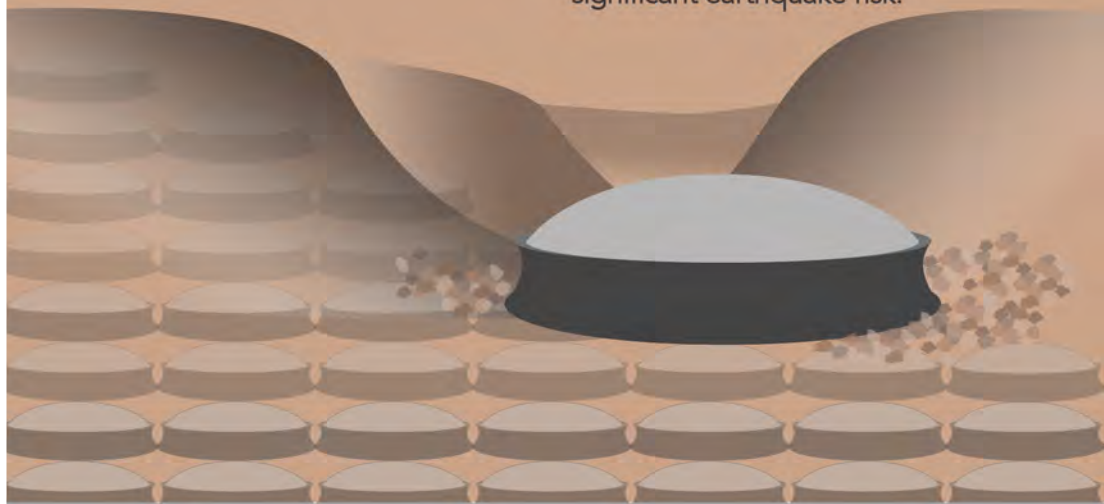
For the SGP, Idaho Power will install approximately 75 miles of 138,000 volt transmission line and the proposed mine will consume roughly 394,000 megawatts of electricity annually, roughly that of 20,000 homes.

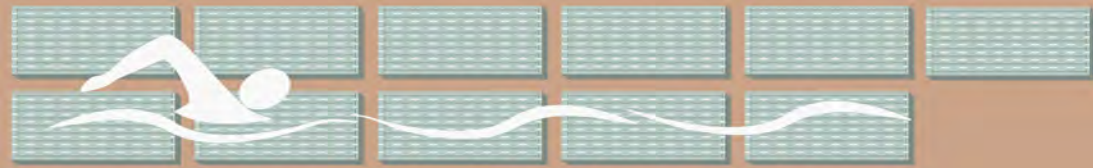
Waste Rock

The SGP will require waste rock dumps, plugging 75-200 acres of natural stream drainages. These dumps have the potential to leach toxic metals into the surface or groundwater.

Tailings

The SGP will store 100-million tons of toxic mine tailings in a 400-acre impoundment behind a 440-foot high earth and rock dam. This volume of storage is roughly equivalent 66 New Orleans Super Domes worth of material. The dam is in a seismically active area with significant earthquake risk.





Water Demand

The water demand of the SGP equals roughly 5,000 gallons per minute, continuously, for the duration of the mining operation. This is roughly 11 olympic size swimming pools (82 ft. x 164ft.) a day of use. There is currently not enough water onsite to meet this demand.

River Diversion

The SGP plans to divert the East Fork of the South Fork river through a mile long untested tunnel in order to mine the river bed. Impacts on fish are acknowledged to be adverse and would result in killing fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Claims of restoring the site

Perpetua Resources claims that remediating the impacts of historic mining at Stibnite cannot happen without more mining, and that the SGP is the only way to address degraded water quality and threats to Endangered Species Act listed fish. This is wrong. Restoration can, has been, and will be done without mining. The Forest Service, Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Dept of Environmental Quality, and others have already spent millions of dollars on restoration, fisheries research, and supplementation in the Stibnite area and the South Fork. These efforts are all without destructive, long-lasting impacts to water and fish.

Heavy Equipment
Pollution
Spill Risks
Toxic Waste
Tailings
Pits
Rock Piles
River Diversions
Blasting



What'll be the impacts of the SGP?

Threatened Ecosystems
Scarred Landscape





More facts from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Threatened Species

The SGP will permanently destroy or block up to 7 miles of salmon, steelhead, cutthroat, and bull trout habitat. The SGP is also predicted to increase stream temperatures to lethal levels for fish. The project will adversely affect bull trout, chinook salmon and steelhead populations. All are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Water Pollution

The SGP may require perpetual treatment of polluted water running off the mine site. Even after treatment, toxic arsenic, mercury, and antimony levels will exceed water quality standards.

The SGP will discharge polluted water into public waterways and treated sewage effluent onto thousands of acres of public land.

Housing

Valley County suffers from limited housing. With a projected population increase of 438 people, the SGP will increase pressure on rents and home prices, while further limiting housing availability.

Jobs

The majority of SGP workers would commute, mostly from the Boise area and out-of-state. These commuters would spend their wages in their home towns - not locally. Valley County Public agencies and service sectors could experience adverse impacts of wage inflation, and/or understaffing, resulting in loss of local businesses and reduced public services.

Royalties and Taxes

Perpetua Resources will pay zero royalties to federal, state or local governments for minerals worth 5.7 billion dollars mined on public land.

The SGP's tax payments will almost entirely go to the federal or state government. Therefore, Valley County property taxpayers will have to pay for most of the impacts to the county.



Gold vs. Carbon

Statistics show that gold mines have emitted on average 0.8 tons of CO₂ for every ounce of gold that was produced in 2019. According to Perpetua Resources, there are 6 million ounces of measured and indicated gold. With these figures, the SGP could potentially produce 4.8 million tons of carbon emissions just from its on site activities.

Recreation

Surrounding communities rely heavily on recreation and tourism to support their economies. The SGP will have impacts on recreational access, facilities and special-use permits, along with increased road congestion and safety risk.

What about Antimony?

Perpetua's new "green image" marketing strategy revolves around the fact that antimony, which they would produce, may be used in a type of battery that another company hopes to develop for renewable energy storage. This seemingly environmentally progressive application comes with its own environmental costs and speculative economics. Although antimony production doesn't contribute much to the SGP revenue stream, it does serve the public relations purpose of providing "green" window dressing for what remains an enormously destructive gold mine.

What should you expect next?

Look for the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS)? What is this exactly?

Thanks to the vigilant efforts of SSFS, other non-profits, the EPA, and the public, the Forest Service determined that an SDEIS was necessary before the Stibnite Gold Project could move forward. An SDIES is necessary because of significant deficiencies in the scientific analysis conducted for the first DEIS released in August 2020. Perpetua, following a pattern of providing inadequate and incomplete data, has again modified the project plan with proposed actions that have not yet been analyzed. This new plan must be evaluated in the SDEIS and will require a significant effort for the Forest Service to address numerous concerns already identified.

The **Supplemental DEIS may be out in Spring 2022**. Save the South Fork Salmon will again be directly involved in the NEPA process, hiring scientists to provide technical analysis to support our thorough review and comments. We will also alert the public to any deficiencies in the document they need to be aware of in order to draft their own comments.

Additionally, SSFS is dedicated to tracking and commenting on the many other permits required for the Stibnite Gold Project. We will also be tracking any new mine proposals in the area such as the Stallion Gold exploration project.

Additionally, SSFS and partners are working to initially organize and mobilize a **Business Coalition** campaign. The campaign would provide resources and tools to local businesses to raise awareness and take action regarding risks and burdens posed by the mine that will impact the business community and the local economy.

Write
Letters
Converse
Share
Join SSFS
Donate
Organize
Learn
More
Stay
Informed



Here's how you can get involved!

Your voice matters! Take action and help protect the South Fork of the Salmon River. Here are some steps you can take to get involved.

- 1.** Speak out for the protection of the Salmon River drainage.
- 2.** Support Save the South Fork Salmon. Consider donating. Most of our donations go to hiring technical help.
- 3.** Support the Nez Perce Tribe's efforts to protect their ancestral lands and treaty-reserved rights.
- 4.** Demand that government entities in Valley County prevent any costs of this mine from being shifted onto the backs of the taxpayers
- 5.** Follow SSFS on social media and share content
- 6.** Stay informed by visiting our website. It is regularly updated with new developments and alerts about how you can help.

Want to help the South Fork Salmon River?

Get
Involved



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