

## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Forest Service Authorizes Idaho Gold Mine Despite Violations to Nez Perce Treaty Rights**

Lapwai, Idaho – On Friday, the Forest Service signed a final Record of Decision approving Perpetua Resources Corp.’s (“Perpetua”) Stibnite Gold Project (“Mine”), a massive open pit gold mine in the headwaters of Idaho’s South Fork Salmon River in Idaho. The Mine sits within the Nez Perce Tribe’s homeland, where the Tribe reserved, in its 1855 and 1863 treaties with the United States, its sovereign rights to fish, hunt, gather, pasture, and travel.

The Forest Service’s decision authorizes Perpetua to mine three open pits, establish ore processing facilities, build roads and transmission lines, and create a 475 foot high “tailings storage facility”—an impoundment of 120 million tons of mine tailings that will fill over 400 acres of the Meadow Creek valley and inundate spawning and rearing habitat for native fish. According to the Forest Service’s own final environmental analysis, the Mine will destroy fish and wildlife habitat and impair surface water and groundwater regimes well past the life of the mine.

“Following an exhaustive review of Perpetua’s mine plans over the last eight years, we believe the Forest Service’s approval of the mine violates an agreement the United States made by treaty with the Nez Perce people 170 years ago,” said Shannon F. Wheeler, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee. “Our treaty-reserved rights are fundamental to the culture, identity, economy, and sovereignty of the Nez Perce people. The Tribe is extremely disappointed with the Forest Service’s decision to approve this mine and is evaluating next steps.”

Despite the Forest Service’s decision, Perpetua cannot begin mining until it has secured all necessary state and federal authorizations. Importantly, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“Army Corps”) has not completed its independent review of Perpetua’s Clean Water Act section 404 permit application for the Mine. A critical component of the Army Corps’ analysis is its obligation to ensure that issuance of a 404 Permit will not violate the Tribe’s treaty rights. “The Tribe’s treaties with the United States are the supreme law of the land and remain binding. We expect the Army Corps will honor and uphold them,” said Chairman Wheeler.

Although Perpetua has touted its Mine as a source of antimony, the company will almost exclusively target, and profit from, the gold it extracts from the site. The Forest Service’s decision does not require Perpetua to mine and process antimony; if the company does, the Mine would supply the United States with less than five years of the mineral based on current rates of consumption.

“Since it first arrived in the Tribe’s homeland, gold mining has only served to dispossess the Nez Perce people,” said Chairman Wheeler. “By every indication, this Mine will be no different.” The Tribe’s history with gold mining dates back to 1860, when gold was discovered within the reservation boundaries established by its Treaty of 1855 with the United States. Thousands of miners trespassed onto the Tribe’s reservation, instigating conflicts and degrading natural resources. Rather than expel the illegal miners, the United States forced the Tribe to enter into a new treaty in 1863, known to the Tribe as the “Steal Treaty,” that reduced the reservation 90 percent and made millions of acres available for non-Indian mining and other activities. The Tribe, however, never relinquished its sovereign rights to fish, hunt, gather, pasture, and travel across its homeland secured in the 1855 Treaty.

Before Perpetua and its predecessor, the Midas Gold Corporation, acquired interests in the Mine in 2008, the Tribe had secured funding to restore legacy mining impacts on fish passage at the site. The Tribe’s Department of Fisheries Resources Management currently spends approximately \$2.8 million annually to restore Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout populations and habitat in the South Fork Salmon River watershed.

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