



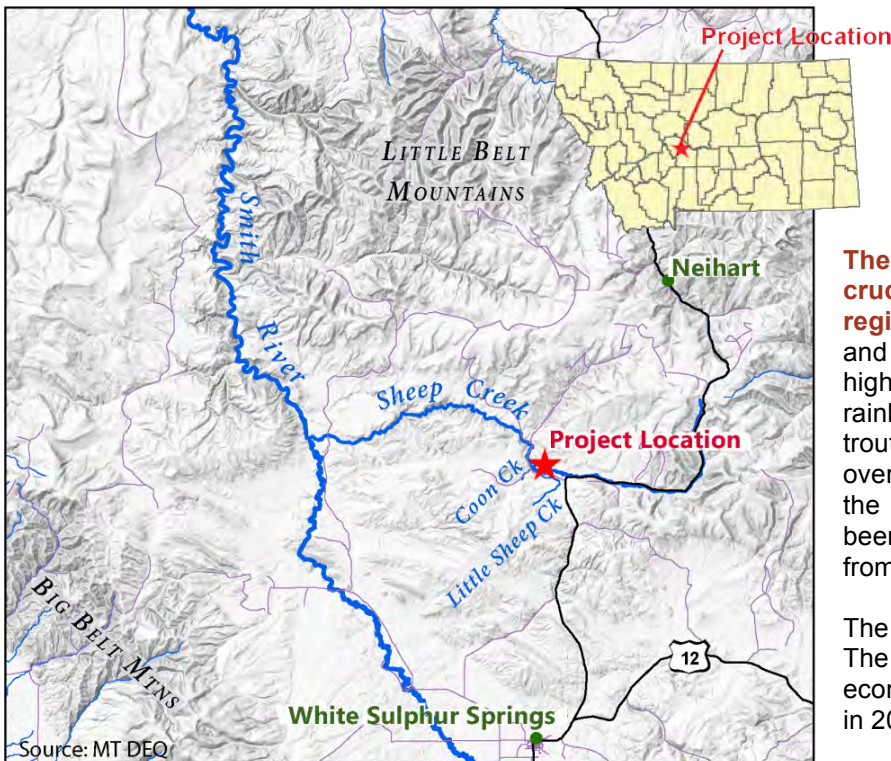
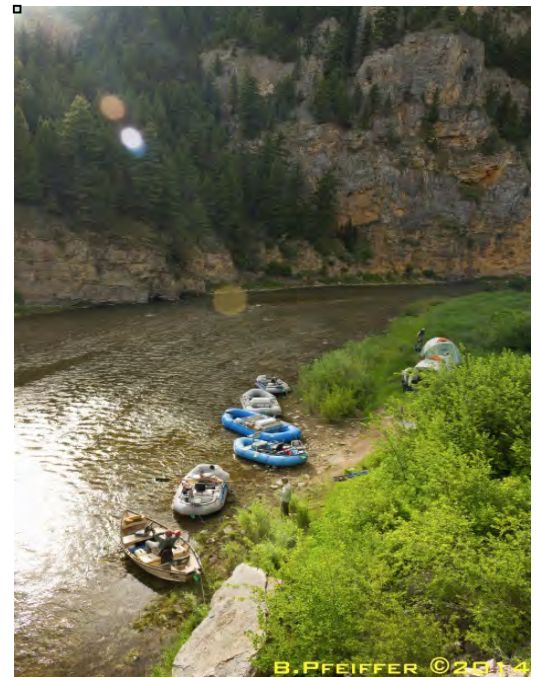
PROTECT MONTANA'S SMITH RIVER

From Mine Pollution and Dewatering

Montana's Smith River is renowned for its spectacular scenery, towering limestone canyons, and blue-ribbon trout fishery. It is Montana's only permitted recreational river due to the exceptional public demand for its fishing and recreational opportunities.

It depends on clean cold water from its tributaries to sustain its abundant trout and the agricultural operations downstream. Demands on the river's waters already exceed available flows in many years, creating challenges for downstream water users.

This beloved Montana river is now at risk from a small Canadian start up company – Tintina – that seeks to develop a major copper mine at the headwaters of the Smith River, along Sheep Creek, 20 miles north of White Sulphur Springs in central Montana. The mine hasn't submitted formal plans, but its mineral leases and claims cover about 12,000 acres, and the company projects an 11-year mine life.



The Smith River and its tributaries provide crucial habitat and spawning grounds for regional trout fisheries. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks classifies the Smith River's fishery as high-value, owing to its bountiful population of rainbow, brown, westslope cutthroat, and brook trout. The Sheep Creek drainage accounts for over half of tributary spawning of rainbow trout in the Smith River drainage, and rainbow trout have been known to travel nearly 200 miles round-trip from the Missouri River to spawn!

The river is also an important economic engine. The annual revenue generated for the state economy from fishing and recreation on the Smith in 2011 was \$1.7 million.



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Mining Threats to the Smith River

The proposed copper mine, known as the Black Butte Project, would pose a significant and persistent risk to water quality and water quantity:

- Tintina's proposed copper mine is particularly concerning because it will mine through sulfide minerals, which when exposed to air and water can react to form sulfuric acid in a process known as **acid mine drainage**. Acid mine drainage is highly toxic to fish and other aquatic life.
- The mine tunnels would descend below the water table, and Tintina would have to pump huge quantities of groundwater out of the mine to keep it from flooding. Groundwater pumping from mining activities could **lower the water table, leading to reduced stream flows**. The Smith River and Sheep Creek already suffer from low flows during most years, putting pressure on downstream water users and preventing the fishery from reaching its potential.

During the permitting process, mining corporations often claim that water pollution won't occur. A recent study of modern hardrock mines by a Butte mining engineer demonstrates how often those predictions are wrong. It found that 100% of the mines predicted no water quality impacts, yet 93% of those mines located near surface and groundwater with the potential for acid mine drainage resulted in water pollution.¹

What You Can Do To Help Protect Montana's Smith River



Montana's Smith River is an extraordinary resource, and deserves our most rigorous effort to protect it from mine pollution and dewatering.

➤ **Please contact Governor Bullock and Director Stone-Manning by signing the petition at SaveOurSmith.org.** Montana Governor Steve Bullock and Department of Environmental Quality Director Tracy Stone-Manning will make critical decisions that will determine the future of the Smith River and the Sheep Creek Mine. Let them know that the Smith River is an incredibly important place for the people of Montana and should not be sacrificed for temporary and risky mining activities. *Voice your support for protecting the Smith River from degradation by signing the online petition.*



- **'Like' the Save Our Smith Facebook page** to get regular updates on the issue.
- **Pick up a "Save Our Smith" bumper sticker** at your local fly shop, sporting goods store, or other local businesses and proudly display it on your car, boat, or boat trailer.

¹ Kuipers, J.R., Maest, A.S., MacHardy, K.A., and Lawson, G. 2006. Comparison of Predicted and Actual Water Quality at Hardrock Mines: The reliability of predictions in Environmental Impact Statements.

