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Atlanta Gold Has Money For Exploration But Not For Water Protection - Forest Service Decision Pending

Atlanta Gold Company appears to have financial resources to do new underground exploring at the site of their planned gold mine near Atlanta, Idaho, but not to adequately protect the Boise River. Boise National Forest officials will decide soon under what conditions to allow the exploration.

Atlanta Gold is eager for approval from the U.S. Forest Service for an operations plan that includes using an existing tunnel (adit) to access underground drilling sites. Water contaminated with high levels of arsenic currently flows out of the tunnel into temporary unbonded treatment ponds. Atlanta Gold and the Forest Service have yet to agree on bond terms for the treatment ponds. Atlanta Gold's limited financial resources is a factor in the discussions.

Liz Paul of Idaho Rivers United said, "Atlanta Gold appears ready to commit resources to new exploration, but not to taking care of the dangerous situation that already exists. New exploration could very well aggravate the situation and contaminate the Boise River."

The operations plan calls for work inside the adit and rerouting the flow of contaminated water as well as drilling. No environmental analysis has been done to determine the effect these activities will have and whether the existing treatment ponds will continue to prevent highly contaminated water from entering nearby creeks and the Middle Fork Boise River.