

February 20, 2013

Subject: Comments on SB 347

Dear Sir or Madam:

My wife and I own 182 acres along the East Fork of the Bull River (EFBR) in the Cabinet Mountains. Since 1997 I have worked in cooperation with Avista Corporation, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance fisheries habitat for bull trout and pure strain westslope cutthroat trout on our property. I have invested tens of thousands of dollars on stream restoration and habitat enhancement, as well as many hundreds of hours of manual labor working on stream bank stabilization and revegetation. In 2012, we placed a conservation servitude on the property to protect the native fisheries and wildlife values of the property in perpetuity. The EFBR and the habitat it provides for native fish and wildlife are more important to me than anything else except my family.

Although the above ground facilities for the proposed Montanore mine will be located on the eastern side of the Cabinet Mountains, the mine is projected to severely impact the baseflows of several streams on the western side, including the EFBR (please see the attached table and graph). This will occur because keeping the underground mine dry will require lowering the groundwater table throughout the area of the Cabinet Mountains which provides the headwaters for these streams. Even with mitigation actions, the projected dewatering of the EFBR is severe (97% in the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness) and is projected to last for hundreds of years. Reduction of baseflow of the EFBR will increase water temperatures and negatively affect fish passage for spawning as well as spawning habitat, in addition to negatively impacting the aesthetics of the stream.

SB 347 is an attack on the principles of individual property rights and environmental protection which are fundamental to the essence of Montana. Please oppose this bill.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Stein

Robert A. Stein

efbullriver@frontier.com

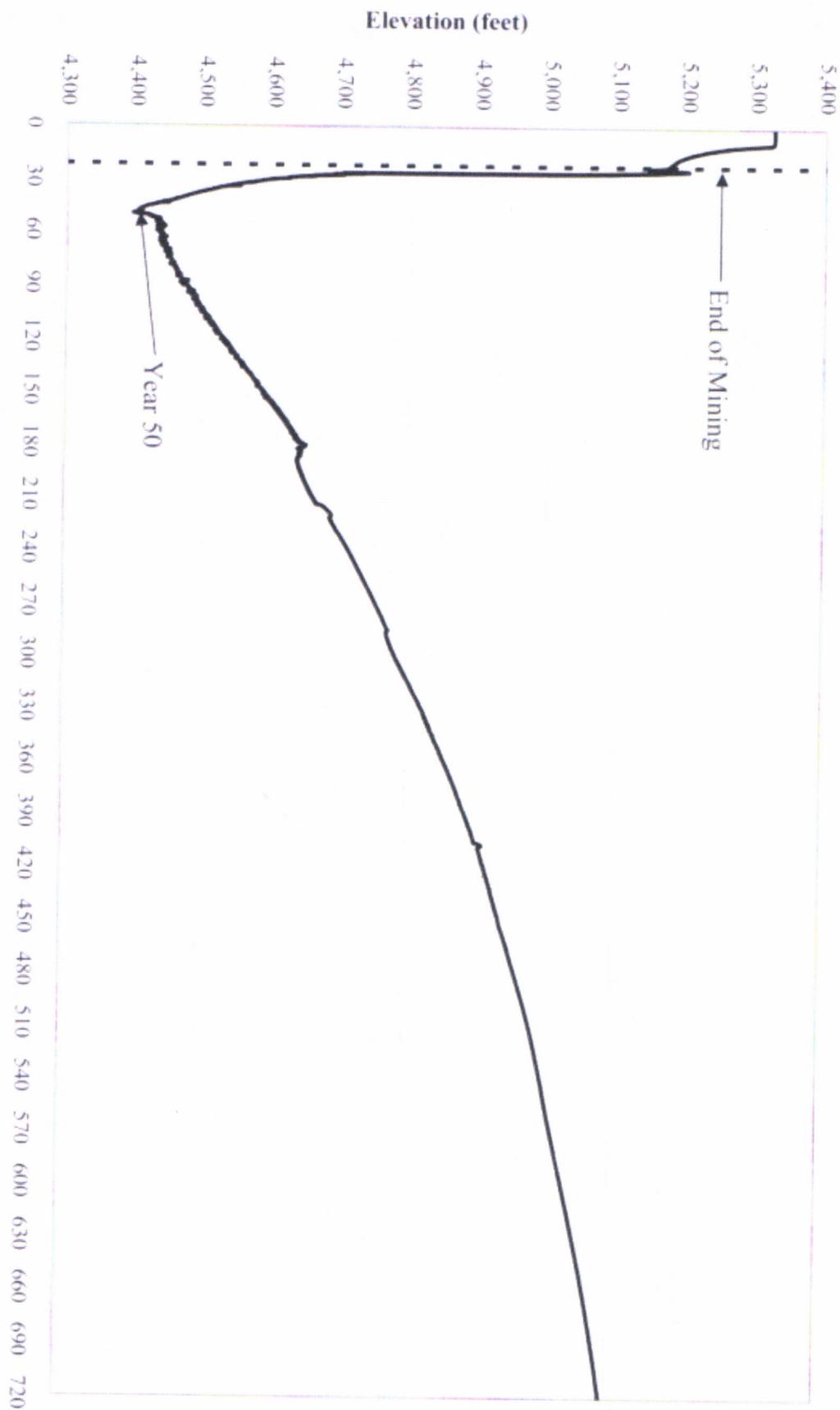


Figure 73. Predicted Water Level Above Mine Void Near Rock Lake, Evaluation through Post-Closure Phases

Time Since Mining Activities Begin (years)