

From: Fred Earnest
To: [FS-comments-intermtn-payette](#)
Subject: Stibnite Gold Project Plan of Reclamation and Operations
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2017 7:31:25 AM
Attachments: [L00117 - Payette National Forest - Stibnite Gold Project.pdf](#)

Attn: Keith Lannom:

Attached please find a letter with my comments regarding the Plan of Reclamation and Operations for the Stibnite Gold Project presented by Midas Gold Idaho.

Kindly

Frederick H. Earnest

July 19, 2017

Payette National Forest
ATTN: Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom - Stibnite Gold EIS
500 N. Mission St., McCall, ID 83638

e-mail: comments-intermtn-payette@fs.fed.us

Mr. Lannom:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Midas Gold Idaho's Plan of Restoration and Operations. Over the last eight years, I've had the opportunity to visit the site of the Stibnite Gold Project, sit down with project staff and ask detailed questions about their plans for the project and observe how the company has lived out its mission as it has grown. It is with this knowledge that I encourage you to adopt the proposed activities outlined by Midas Gold in its Plan of Restoration and Operations as the preferred alternative during EIS scoping.

As it was when I first visited the area in 2006, the Stibnite Gold Project site is a brownfield site. The U.S. government tried to restore the area years ago but the work that was done didn't go far enough. The old tailings piles left by previous mining companies are still unconstrained and therefore present a risk of leaching minerals into nearby streams and the groundwater. The lack of properly designed and constructed sediment traps allow tons of sediment to wash into the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River and other waterways from Blowout Creek, impacting water quality and aquatic habitat. And fish still are not able to swim past the Yellow Pine pit to their natural spawning grounds. This area needs to be remediated.

Restoring the Stibnite Gold Project site will be an incredible investment. Work clearly needs to be done in the area. Fortunately, Midas Gold Idaho wants to make that investment. The company is not just proposing a mining project, they are proposing a full-scale restoration project. They have plans to reconnect fish with their natural spawning grounds, properly reprocess and safely store old tailings and solve sedimentation issues.

I believe there are many checks and balances in place to ensure Midas Gold Idaho follows through on its promises to restore the site. As I am sure that you are aware, the company is required by law to set aside all of the money it needs for restoration before mining can begin. There are several things that give me confidence that Midas will do the right thing and honor their commitments. The company has already started restoration work at the site. They have planted close to 40 thousand trees to help reduce the amount of sediment going into the river, produced more than 20,000 kwhr of energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improved miles of road along the river to protect fish habitat. It is important to me that they did these things because they felt it was the right thing to do, not because they were required to do them.

In addition to the ongoing and proposed efforts to ultimately reclaim the site of the project, if the Stibnite Gold Project goes into production, the company would directly provide hundreds of jobs. These would be good paying jobs that would provide significant economic benefit for local communities and business. Midas Gold is already providing well-paying jobs to close to 30 Idahoans. Moving forward, the company remains committed to hiring locally and training Idahoans to help grow our state's skilled workforce. Economists estimate that for

every 500 jobs Midas Gold Idaho creates another 400 will be created in the community. The Stibnite Gold Project presents a huge opportunity for the state of Idaho and has the potential to change many people's lives in a positive way.

Throughout the project, Midas Gold Idaho plans to invest \$1 billion in Idaho, pay \$86 million in state and local taxes and invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to upgrade community infrastructure like roads and power lines. These targeted investments in rural Idaho will have a positive benefit. Like me, you know that investments by a private company like this are incredibly rare – this opportunity should not be missed.

Midas Gold has carefully researched the Stibnite Gold Project since 2009. I am pleased that as part of this research, Midas Gold Idaho has prioritized public access to Idaho's backcountry. In order to ensure safety of the community during construction and operations, Midas Gold Idaho plans to close Stibnite Road from Yellow Pine. The company feels the road is too dangerous to safely transport employees and equipment, however, they've come up with an alternative and it ensures all Idahoans have access to our public lands. The company is proposing using Burntlog Road. This route minimizes travel by waterways and takes advantage of existing infrastructure. Having driven the Stibnite Road above Yellow Pine in at different times of the year, I support their plans for a different route and continued public access.

I have talked with the engineers at Midas Gold Idaho and I am convinced that they have developed a plan for the construction and management of the tailings storage area that will protect the waterways long into the future. The proposed downstream construction of the tailings facility embankment using clean rock from the mine provides stability and appropriate water management not just for today, but for hundreds of years.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for this opportunity to comment on just a couple of aspects of a comprehensive plan to develop the Stibnite Gold Project. I believe the team at Midas Gold Idaho have taken a methodical and careful approach to their planning for and design of this project. I have been present in meetings with members of the public and am convinced they are genuinely interested in building a project that is good for everyone. I strongly encourage you to adopt the proposed activities outlined by Midas Gold in its Plan of Restoration and Operations as the preferred alternative during EIS scoping.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share a few thoughts.



Frederick H. Earnest

