

U.S. Forest Service, Payette National Forest  
Attn: Linda Jackson, Payette Forest Supervisor  
500 North Mission Street  
McCall, ID 83638

Dear Ms. Jackson,

For years, I have been deeply concerned about the environmental issues surrounding the Stibnite Mining District, particularly in regard to the impact on local fish and wildlife. Finally, it seems as if there is a workable solution that will not only bring economic opportunities to Valley County, but will also help address these concerns and help protect fish populations. Please help make this vision a reality by accepting Midas Gold's proposal for the Stibnite Gold Project as described in Alternative 2.

Decades ago, part of the Salmon River was diverted to allow for excavation of the Yellow Pine pit, which continued for well over a decade. Once those operations were complete, the river was rerouted back to its original route, but now flowed through an abandoned mine pit, making it impossible for local salmon, bull trout, and steelhead to reach their native spawning grounds.

To this day, these fish remain cut off from miles of the high-mountain spawning and rearing habitat that they once populated. The only way for spawning to continue is by stocking salmon in Meadow Creek—a tributary of the Salmon River—after which young fish must then pass downstream over the rocky terrain of the exposed Yellow Pine Pit before reaching the ocean. Those that come back to spawn years later must then be manually collected and stocked just for this cycle to continue. It's clearly not a solution.


Midas Gold has committed to fully restoring this section of the Salmon River once they have completed their project. Going one step further, the company has also designed an innovative fish-friendly tunnel to provide a temporary passageway. Utilizing best practices in design taken from similar systems around the world, this tunnel will allow fish populations to jumpstart their recovery concurrently with the mining operations rather than waiting until after the fact.

Moreover, backfilling the Yellow Pine pit and permanently removing barriers to fish migration will help local fish populations recover and thrive. This is something that was determined by the draft environmental impact statement released by the U.S. Forest Service, which found that increased access to feeding and refuge areas in critical habitat can improve overall productivity.

Only Alternative 2 offers the right mix of environmental protections, safety precautions, and habitat restoration, which is why this should be the option that advances. It includes important updates to rock storage facilities in order to reduce impact on salmon habitat and sets aside more wetland areas for restoration. Unlike Alternatives 3 and 4, which would both cause a delay of two years, Alternative 2 will allow restoration and operations to begin immediately.

I truly believe the Stibnite Gold Project proposed in Alternative 2 provides the most effective solution to remedy the historical problems in the Stibnite Mining District and ask that you approve this proposal without delay.

Sincerely,

  
Robert Obermeyer