

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

U.S. Forest Service Supervisor:

Please accept my comments regarding the Stibnite Gold Project as proposed by Midas Gold. I have been hoping for a solution to address the issues in this area that have been around for as long as I can remember, and I believe the company's plan in Alternative 2 will go a long way in cleaning up this environmental mess, especially when it comes to the very poor water quality there.

You may have heard by now that there are dangerously high levels of arsenic and antimony in certain parts of the Salmon River. After extensive studying, Midas Gold found that is likely due to ten-plus million tons of old tailings and spent ore from previous mining projects that have been left out in the open in Meadow Creek Valley. As water interacts with these waste materials, metals leach into the surrounding water, basically making it uninhabitable and undrinkable.

In Alternative 2 of the Midas Gold proposal for the Stibnite Gold Project, the company outlines specific measures to fix this problem. For starters, it has committed to picking up the old tailings and waste rock, reusing and reprocessing the tailings, and storing them in a new, high-tech tailings storage facility to keep them separated from the water supply permanently. Similarly, the waste rock would be relocated beneath the facility's liner system, keeping it from interacting with surface and ground water as well.

As you must know, the U.S. Forest Service found that these plans will be of great benefit to the quality of water in the area. In Chapter 4 of your agency's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), it was concluded that removing legacy tailings and managing water provides long-term reduction in metal loading in ground and surface water (4.9).

In my opinion, Alternative 2 is the only way to go. This solution offers the safest placement for the tailings rock facility, whereas Alternative 3 would place that facility in a currently pristine reach of the Salmon River. There is no need to expand the size of this project and disturb untouched land if it isn't absolutely necessary.

Ask anyone who lives in Valley County and they will tell you it's time to clean up the mess left at Stibnite-Yellow Pine. Alternative 2 for the Stibnite Gold Project will do just that, so I encourage the U.S. Forest Service to accept this alternative and let the cleanup of Stibnite-Yellow Pine begin.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Peterson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.