

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

As we continue to brainstorm what more we can do as a country to reduce climate change and limit the footprint of humans on our natural environment, there are few concrete ways a small community in Idaho can help. However, thanks to the plan put forward by Midas Gold, there are funds and a plan to ensure that nearly a century of environmental degradation is reversed. I fully support the plan that Midas has put forth.

For decades, the Stibnite mine was a place where miners would come in, extract whatever they could from the ground, and then leave without cleaning up their mess. This occurred time after time, leaving an environment more devastated than before. Finally, Midas has come forward not with a plan to mine the land in central Idaho and leave, but with a plan that will restore the Stibnite mine and the surrounding area to a point no one has seen for generations. Over the past ten years, water samples and research have shown Midas a way forward in which they will be able to restore waterways and allow for fish populations to thrive once more in their natural spawning grounds.

While these environmental restoration projects would take place alongside mining, it would take years before some of these fish passageways in the East and South Forks of the Salmon River are full restored – which is why Midas has invested millions of dollars into a system that will provide for relief in the interim. While the Salmon River is being restored to its original stream location and the water quality improves, Midas will build a fish passageway it has engineered to safely allow fish populations like salmon to travel up the river and return to their former spawning grounds. This fish passageway meets all requirements and will accommodate multiple different types of fish species as well. Once the East and South Forks of the Salmon River are fully restored, there will no longer be a need for the passageway, but it will begin to allow fish a chance to return to their former habitat.

Midas Gold has taken the impossible and provided a well thought out plan on how to transform the Stibnite mine and help our local environment. Today, I am asking you today to approve Alternative 2 proposed by Midas Gold Idaho in their modified Plan of Restoration and Operations.

Best,

Cay Nielsen
10/26/2020