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Comments: Dear Payette Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom and staff,

As someone who hikes/backpacks, kayaks/rafts and cycles in or around the Salmon River areas affected by the proposed Midas Gold mine I want to take a moment to comment on several aspects of this project. There are numerous issues related to the current proposal.

First the plan to fill surrounding valleys with mine waste rock and tailings is less than ideal. The amount of disturbance and environmental risks can be greatly reduced if the mining company scales back its mining effort and commits to backfilling its pits instead of turning them into pit lakes.

Protecting spawning habitat for threatened and endangered fish is critically important. The current proposal to bury over a mile of spawning habitat under hundreds of feet of mining waste and tailings is unacceptable. The Forest Service needs to examine alternative ways of storing tailings and waste rock so that spawning habitat is protected.

The record of mining companies and projects in regards to contaminating waterways is horrendous and the Forest Service should take extreme care to prevent contamination from heavy metals and acid mine drainage. Previous mining projects in this area devastated fisheries with polluted water. The project should be designed in such a way that mining will not create permanent sources of pollution needing treatment in perpetuity. If there is a risk of contaminating the South Fork headwaters, the project should not proceed.

Restoration of the affected sites is critical and again mining companies have an unfortunate history of backing out of commitments, suspending operations or abandoning sites. The Forest Service should look at ways to restore the site independent of mining activities if Midas Gold is unable to restore the site in a timely manner. An adequate bond should be required by the mining company to assure the stated restoration occurs at their expense and not ultimately born by the taxpayer for their negligence.

I am frankly skeptical that mining in this sensitive area can be done safely and responsibly and ALL possible safeguards must be strong and clearly defined before allowing any project such as this to begin and go forward.

Thank you for considering my input.