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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The main Salmon River has been a part of my life since my new husband took his 19-year-old wife fishing in Stanley, Idaho. Many more excursions took me up into valleys where the waters bubbled up, flooded the valley floor, and formed a fork, each one a wonder.

The creeks and tributaries that build this mighty river are each vital to the health of the people, fauna, and flora of the region.

My first concern on the Midas Gold proposal is for the spawning habitat. The fish that are dependent on these waters for life itself do not adjust easily to changes in their paths, and they are helpless in the face of tailing pollution and habitat destruction. The proposal to put mine waste and tailings on top of vital habitat is not acceptable, and should be denied with the stipulation that another solution is proposed that protects spawning habitat.

My second concern is for the plan to create pit lakes while distributing tailings and waste in nearby valleys. The Forest Service should require that the Midas Gold plan have as small a footprint as possible, and that the pits be backfilled for future restoration.

It is not clear that Midas Gold believes it can conduct this operation without contributing some level of contamination to river headwaters. The Forest Service should be absolutely sure of what Midas will do to the environment, and what the company will do to restore it, regardless of profitability of the project. And the Forest Service should have plans in place to protect and restore the public's land and water.