Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/14/2017 6:00:00 AM
First name: Merrill
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment during the scoping period for the Stibnite Gold Project.

I am a rancher and I also consider myself a conservationist. Our ranch has been recognized by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission for our work on salmon recovery, by the US Bureau of Land Management as National Range Steward of the Year, and by the state of Idaho for excellence in agriculture for environmental stewardship. Ranchers, like miners, can be misunderstood.

I am writing in support of the Midas Gold project at the old Stibnite site located in Valley County. I have toured the area and met with Midas Gold. I have reviewed the Plan of Restoration and Operations submitted by Midas Gold Idaho and it is an example of how companies should incorporate public feedback and balance the needs of business, the environment and the community. We have the opportunity with this project to correct mistakes of the past, to restore connectivity for fish migration currently blocked by the "Glory Hole," and to address the blowout at the mouth of Meadow Creek. This project will create a functioning watershed that is vital to the intrinsic and extrinsic value of the area. Midas Gold should be applauded.

The plan as put forward by Midas Gold Idaho is a rare opportunity to have a private company invest in rural communities and repair an area damaged by so many years of unregulated mining activity. Today's mining standards, monitoring and requirements for financial assurances will protect this land and make it better than it is today. Just like ranching has had to adapt, so has mining.

Fish migration is one of the great natural wonders. I've partnered with many groups such as Trout Unlimited to help build and protect essential migration and spawning habitat. I am excited by the possibility of restoring fish habitat in the upper reaches of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River.

What concerns me is when I read comments submitted by individuals who are clearly misinformed and unwilling to come to the table. The potential for good is too great to allow misinformation to derail this opportunity.

In my business as a rancher I rely on the use of public lands. Through this experience I've learned firsthand how conservation and environmental protection requires that all parties come to the table to work together. This demands transparency, openness and a belief that the best solutions are crafted through collaboration and a willingness to listen. I have seen this vision of sustainability and an earnest dedication to collaboration in every interaction I've had with Midas Gold Idaho.