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Organization: Idaho Recreation Council

Title: Executive Director

Comments: Please accept this letter as the official comments for the Idaho Recreation Council (herein "IRC") on the proposed action for the Stibnite Gold Project. IRC is very supportive of the Proposed Action except for our concern about the impact the project will have on Yellow Pine.

The IRC is an Idaho nonprofit association representing Idaho mechanized and non-mechanized recreation interests, which acts through committee(s) comprised of representatives from numerous Idaho recreation organizations including ATVs, UTVs, Dirt Motorcycles, Snowmobiles, Jet Boats, Rafts, RVs, Backcountry Pilots, Small Suction Dredge Miners, and Rock Hounds. IRC members use motorized and non-motorized means to visit the Payette National Forest. IRC members have used and enjoyed, and hope for themselves and future generations to use and enjoy, a variety of recreational, aesthetic, and commercial activities within the Forest, which require continued use of the roads, trails and play areas of the Forest. These activities (including sightseeing, hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife and plant viewing, photography and travel) require motorized access. IRC and its members regularly attend public meetings, submit input, and otherwise participate in planning activities within the Forest. We have participated in the Yellow Pine Big Creek Collaborative since its beginning and have been impressed by the staff of Midas Gold and their willingness to work with the users and the communities.

Midas Gold has done a most admirable job of proposing a project that will benefit the resources. We find no fault in anything resource related that they have proposed. We applaud them and support them in these efforts. We also believe that the project will benefit the economy of the area except for one small community: Yellow Pine. As we understand the proposal, the community will not benefit directly from the mining operation because of the closure of the Stibnite road. Without the connection, employment opportunities for the residents of Yellow Pine are lost and recreational access will be moved away from the community. Small rural communities like Yellow Pine are barely surviving as is. This proposal may well do long term damage to this historic community.

We believe that an economic impact study needs to be done before a decision is made on this project. In a recent Pacific Northwest Research Station, Science Update, entitled, Understanding the Social and Economic Transitions of Forest Communities, it stated under Key Findings that:

The Social, political, cultural, geographic, and economic conditions that are unique to individual communities must be understood in-order to:

Assess how land management decisions might affect forest communities

Determine how land management agencies may assist communities through social economic transitions

Effectively engage communities in collaborative forest stewardship

Again, we are impressed and supportive of Midas Gold and their proposal, however, it is ironic that a community built by miners for mining may be irreparably harmed by a mining operation. We urge you to address our one and only concern and to find a resolution that will do no harm to Yellow Pine.