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Payette National Forest

ATTN: Forest Supervisor Keith Lannon

Subject Matter: Stibnite Gold EIS Scoping

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We are responding to the Scoping Notices and public meetings on the Midas Gold Proposal for new mining in the Stibnite Mining District.

My Thoughts:

I became aware of the Midas Gold project in 2014 when I retired from my job in Singapore. My family has worked and lived in Yellow Pine since 1965. My Uncle and Aunt both taught school here. Since my retirement in July of 2014 I have spent 6 months each summer at my Cabin in Yellow Pine. I own 5 lots in the downtown core of Yellow Pine.

I have watched and observed, the past 3 years full time in the summer, the Midas Gold Operation from an Organizational Perspective. I am a retired Multi-National Oil and Gas CEO and Master Chief from the US Navy. I taught College (Organizational Leadership, Organizational Ethics, First Time Leader in Asia) for 9 years and hold 5, active, International Executive Coaching Certifications. Organizationally, Midas Gold seems to be very solid.

Community relations:

The community relations division of Midas Gold has done a wonderful job working with the Village of Yellow Pine. They have helped with Fire department Projects and many other civic gatherings and should be commended for their efforts, to this point, and thanked. All Community Relations work will be for naught if this plan goes through as written.

Local Leadership:

Two main points of focus I look for when observing exhibited behavior of Leaders is their "Trustworthiness" and "Attention to Detail." I have watched with a critical eye, for 3 years, the behavior of the local leadership and am impressed with their integrity and what seems to be a genuine concern and total commitment to their people, safety, and the project.

Attention to detail:

I am impressed by the attention to detail that is pervasive in the operation. Going forward with the project, I believe this will be a reassuring attribute to be taken into consideration in regard to the reclamation concerns.

Environmental Concerns:

"Restore the Site" I honestly believe, if executed properly, Midas Gold will, at the end of the Project Lifetime, have a positive impact on the Stibnite Mining District. The aquatic habitat of East Fork of the Salmon River will benefit the most. We are all looking forward to seeing unrestricted flow for the migration of Salmon and Bull Trout.

Road Closure FSR 412 at Sugar Creek Confluence for 17 - 25 YEARS:

While, from a business perspective, convincing the county to relinquish the right of way through the property to conduct planned mining makes sense, the issue is the social and economic effect on Yellow Pine.

For over 100 years Yellow Pine has been the support town for the Mine. We are part of the "Mining District." I totally understand the environmental concerns that eventually led to the choosing of the Burnt Log / Meadow Creek route for mining. Thank you to Midas and the Forest Service for considering those concerns in this plan.

However, Make no mistake, Midas Gold has made it look like "Yellow Pine" (as if it was a collective decision to be isolated for 25 years) has suggested bypassing the town, this is not the case. Like I said above, great idea to use Burnt Log for all the right reasons, but the news to the community that Forest Service Road 412 would be closed for the duration of mining and restoration just happened last summer (2016). The closure of FSR 412 will have serious economic impact on our community.

Here is where the contradictions, and or dilemmas come into play for the community of Yellow Pine, the County, and Midas Gold.

The economic health of our community relies on access for "Full Sized" (like Vans with Disabled folks, the Elderly, etc) vehicles to the "Mining District" i.e., Yellow Pine, Big Creek, East Fork (FSR 412), Stibnite, to Monumental via Forest service Road 375, and the entire Thunder Mountain District." Yellow Pines economy has grown over the past 25 years due to Tourism. Most weekends in the summer, Hunters, Fishermen, ATV/UTV/Motorcycle/Jeep clubs, Kayakers, hikers and Equestrians come in droves to Yellow Pine. Idaho is a Recreation Mecca, each area has something unique that is the main draw for the recreating public. For us, our main draw has been the Stibnite / Cinnabar / Monumental / Thunder Mt. The Mining District has made us a destination place. If our Village loses our main draw, it will be just a matter of time that we will be another statistic, in the long list, of small towns that died in the West because of a Mining Company decision or the Rail Road moved just 5 miles away West. We do not want to become a statistic. Simple Comparison, look at Warren Compared to Yellow Pine. We are a vibrant community compared to Warren. It is not just our community. We support Edwardsburg in the Big Creek area as well.

Many of the Vehicle Recreation folks have no other means of accessing our National Forest lands other than their ATV, etc. While the offer to push a road through from Horse Heaven to Meadow Creek lookout to intersect the New section of the Thunder Mt Road seem like a nice alternative, but it falls way short of providing access to full sized vehicles. From Johnson Creek junction of the Thunder Mt road, it is over 10 miles and a 3+ Thousand foot climb. To accommodate disabled and the elderly in UTV's it would be cost prohibitive to make is smooth enough for them to even handle the journey.

The Yellow Pine - Thunder Mountain Corridor (as it currently stands) offers the best opportunities for multiple recreation opportunities. Many of us made decision, and significant investments, for retirement based on Yellow Pine being the center of all of these recreation opportunities and having access to the Thunder Mountain Region.

Our Community has had many discussions and meetings on this topic. Yes, there is a very small minority that wished no one ever came up the hill into town. The majority of us feel differently. We have a vibrant community and much younger intellectual retiree's that are civic minded and want to see our Village thrive.

Another Main Concern for allowing the closure of FSR 412:

On two occasions Ranger Anthony Botelo stated, (I paraphrase but it is almost verbatim) "It is our policy that if a road ends at private property, we will put a gate at the entrance of the road as it leaves the main road." We were standing at the "New" gate at the Red Medal Mine Rd. The second time was at the Gate on Sugar Creek. So, with him being the Ranger, and the policy is as stated, it will be, I'm speculating, a short period of time before a permanent gate will be placed at the intersection of the Profile Road and FSR 412 (at the location of the "New" spring time temp gate). The closure would be another stake in the heart of the community. Prime fishing with no motorized access for the elderly or disabled, no visitors to our lodge, restaurants, bars, campers buying supplies[hellip]Etc, Etc[hellip]

Proposal:

Build a short loop road to the north of the Yellow Pine Pit coming off of FSR 412 between Pepper and Fiddle Creek Creek. Put the loop road on the very outside perimeter of the project so that people can see a modern mining operation from the safety of a dedicated public access road, just on the edge of the property.

1. When I brought up this proposal last year, all I got were reasons why we can't do it. Anthony Botelo told us that wouldn't work because the land is designated "Roadless Area." So with that answer, you cannot proceed with the Burnt Log route because a majority of that route is in a designated "Roadless Area." Exceptions are being made for access for the Mining Company but not for the Tax Paying public in Yellow Pine. Yes, the tax revenue from Midas Gold is a windfall for Valley County, we understand that. Don't allow our village to be used as a bargaining chip to access those funds.

2. The cost of a perimeter road to the north of the proposed mining operation, crossing the main road near the junction of FSR 412 and Meadow Creek near the Stibnite Airport. This option would be much cheaper than trying to improve 10 miles of road and build 3 - 4 miles of new road between Horse Heaven and Meadow Creek Lookout.

3. The Horse Heaven - Meadow Creek option would require unnecessary construction through Fragile Alpine Flora. This proposal, even with proposed reclamation, will permanently scare this high alpine environment.

4. Leave the Horse Heaven - Meadow Creek alone and build a short (les than 3 miles) road skirting the perimeter of the Midas Gold Property

I'm a pretty Patriotic Guy. I spent 26 years in the U.S. Navy. I am an 80% disabled Veteran. I fought in 2 wars for this country. I have, for over 40 years, dreamed of my retirement in Yellow Pine and have worked hard toward obtaining that goal. 3 years into retirement, and significant investment, I find out that I will have to transit over 100

miles round trip to go to Thunder Mt. So[hellip], a Canadian Mining Company buys Stibnite, spends enormous human capital on public relations and offering a helping hand to a small American Village and then cuts off our legs for the sole purpose of making more money. If our Village dies, who will compensate us for the loss of our life savings on our investments. I will be close to 90 years old before the project is complete. How will I enjoy the fruits of 40 plus years of saving and decisions in life for the prospect of living in our little slice of Heaven in the Mountains of Idaho? Who? You, the Forest Service, Midas Gold? We, the villagers of Yellow Pine will lose.

Yellow Pine has been under assault for the past 10 years, by the Forest Service and Environmental Groups. Red Medal Mine, Sugar Creek, now Stibnite, what next. Your founding Father Gifford Pinchot stated at the inception of your organization, "There will be conflict between Conservation and People." Yes there is.

Your Mission Statement:

The mission of the USDA Forest service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of PRESENT (Highlighted by me) and Future Generations.

"[hellip]to meet the needs of Present" The Village of Yellow Pine's Need today is maintaining our vibrant community. Our tax base, if left alone, will provide funding to Valley County and provide support to the Forest Service for many years to come, long after Midas Gold (a Foreign Company) takes what they can of our Natural Resources and then leave.

Thank you for listening. Please save our Village!