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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear U.S. Forest Service officials:

As someone who's livelihood depended for 15 years on the quality of central Idaho's rivers, fisheries and wilderness values, I am deeply concerned about the new mine proposed by Midas Gold in the South Fork Salmon basin.

As you know, Canada-based Midas Gold has proposed to reopen pit mines near the remote community of Yellow Pine at the headwaters of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River, a river basin prized for fishing, hunting, natural beauty and paddling.

Midas is proposing a strip mine with three pits and a total project area of 29,827 acres, including 2,000 acres of pits, facilities, stockpiles, roads and other associated infrastructure. This is a direct threat to the river and its recreational value.

What's more, the Stibnite area, which has been under exploration off and on from about 1900 through the 1990s, is already listed as a Superfund site. The Environmental Protection Agency spent \$13 million to reclaim the site and stem the release of arsenic and mercury. The East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River today is a river on the mend.

The company is also proposing to process all gold and silver on site, creating an opportunity for further environmental contamination. The project is proposed to last anywhere from 15 to 20 years or more and create long-term impacts to one of Idaho's most important recreational river basins. Further, taxpayers cannot afford to fund another toxic cleanup for a private company.

The sustainable long-term economy offered by Idaho's healthy rivers and fisheries should in no way be jeopardized for the sake of a few medium-term jobs and a project that will mostly benefit a foreign company. I hope the Forest Service will adopt a stance with absolutely minimal tolerance of environmental risk in regard to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Frishman