

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/13/2020 6:00:00 AM

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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Midas Gold Idaho's Plan of Restoration and Operations. Over the last several years, I've had the opportunity to hear a handful of presentations on the Stibnite Gold Project, sit down with project staff and observe how the company has lived out its mission as it has grown. It is with this knowledge that I encourage you to permit the Stibnite Gold Project.

The old Stibnite mine site will likely never be cleaned up unless industry takes responsibility for those who came before them. Midas Gold plans to do just that. By mining the site, Midas Gold plans to restore the natural flow and gradient of the East Fork of the South Fork to reconnect historical spawning grounds. The DEIS analysis showed removing existing barriers to fish migration will help Chinook salmon, bull trout and steelhead. In fact, DEIS 4.12-39 says long-term access to blocked habitat would result in increased productivity and genetic diversity of isolated populations. The company will repair blowout creek, permanently solving a source of massive sedimentation and habitat degradation. Plus, in reprocessing and repurposing millions of tons of spent ore and unconstrained tailings, Midas will safeguard water quality indefinitely. To protect the environment, the Forest Service is requiring Midas Gold to implement 156 mitigation measures (appendix D of the DEIS). Part of these measures include a one to one replacement of wetland areas (DEIS 4.11-26), which would lead to a net gain of 346.5 wetland functional units [acirc][euro]" a 40% increase (DEIS appendix D, table 8-2).

The Stibnite Gold Project is the type of project our state needs. I highly encourage the U.S. Forest Service to permit this project, using the preferred alternative presented by Midas Gold, as expeditiously as possible.