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Comments: The environment surrounding the Stibnite Mining District has been allowed to languish and degrade for decades. While I was hesitant about a new mining project being the answer to problems at Stibnite at first, I feel as though Midas Gold Idaho is best equipped to help address the impacts of previous mining operations and improve the quality of life of the local ecosystem.

As you know, previous mining operations that lacked proper oversight left landscape and natural habitat surrounding the Stibnite Mining District in desperate need for restoration. There are 10.5 million tons of used, discarded material from previous mining efforts-known as tailings-leaching metals into the river and groundwater. A dam failure more than 50 years ago has resulted in ongoing erosion that has led to a massive buildup of sediment in the water .

All of this has had a severe, negative impact on aquatic life, water quality, and the overall ecosystem surrounding the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. To address these environmental concerns, Midas Gold has made mitigation and restoration a key part of its plan for the Stibnite Gold Project. In fact, many of these efforts have already begun. Already, Midas has planted more than 55,000 trees to help prevent further erosion and reclaimed 33 acres of land. It has also recycled 4,000 pounds of waste and invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to improve road conditions and reduce sediment runoff.

In addition to contributing to unsustainably high sediment levels in the water, the blown-out dam has also drained a large area of what were once thriving, functional wetlands. Midas Gold plans to stabilize this area to reduce erosion, thereby improving water quality and watershed conditions while enabling wetland restoration to begin as soon as construction of the mine is complete and continue while the operations are ongoing and after they are complete. As the Draft Environmental Impact Statement indicated in Chapter 4, the mitigation plan would increase the functional wetland in the area by 40 percent (Appendix D, CMP Table 8-2).

The Stibnite Gold Project is an opportunity to restore the local ecosystem and mitigate the decades-long problems that threaten local wildlife and the surrounding environment. The U.S. Forest Service should adopt Alternative Two in the draft EIS without any further delay.