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First name: Kathy Sue

Last name: Fritscale

Organization:

Title:

Comments: More than a century of mining, most of which happened without the benefit of our current high standard of environmental protections, has left the historical Stibnite Mining District in bad shape-especially when it comes to the water quality of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. There's a long road ahead if we want to clean up the river, and I wholeheartedly believe the Stibnite Gold Project as laid out in Alternative 2 by Midas Gold gives us our best chance at restoring water quality and protecting this once pristine region from further environmental destruction.

Past mining projects-and unfortunately some regrettably irresponsible practices-have resulted in more than three million tons of tailings from the height of the antimony and tungsten mining boom around World War II being left unconfined in Meadow Creek Valley. On top of that is another seven million tons of spent ore. As water passes over these legacy tailings, these metals leach into the surface and groundwater, resulting in extremely high levels of arsenic and antimony.

Restoring this area as close to the natural habitat as possible cannot happen if these materials are not dealt with properly. That is why, as part of its restoration and operations plan, Midas Gold has said it intends to remove the spent ore, reprocess the legacy tailings from previous mining projects, and relocate tens of millions of tons of waste rock from the riverside. All of these efforts will greatly contribute to the quality of the water supply. In fact, according to your draft environmental impact statement, removing legacy tailings and waste lowers concentrations of antimony and arsenic in the East Fork South Fork of the Salmon River (4.9-70)

For those of us living in the Valley region, this part of the Salmon River has been an environmental nightmare for as far back as I can remember. If we have a company that's willing to put in millions of dollars in private investment to improve water quality and restore the environment, then we should take them up on that offer-particularly if it also means hiring local workers and stimulating local economies.

I encourage you to help advance this critical project by accepting Alternative 2 in Midas Gold's proposal.