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Title:

Comments: The McCall Area Snowmobile Club would like to voice our support for the permitting of the Stibnite Gold Project proposed by Midas Gold Idaho. While access to the area surrounding the historical Stibnite Mining District is of importance for our members, and other recreationalist groups, restoration of the site is also a priority. Fortunately, Midas Gold has presented a thoughtful plan that encompasses both in Alternative 2 outlined in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Snowmobiling is a popular recreational activity in McCall and throughout all of Valley County, snowmobilers eager to enjoy the breathtaking mountains and bowls, which is the best of backcountry snowmobiling. The McCall region also offers more than 544 miles of groomed trails and our members are proud of its consistent top ranking for the North Western United States.

When Midas Gold first proposed its plan for the Stibnite Mining District, we were concerned about continued access to the area given their need for road closures and road design changes during the project.

Those concerns were alleviated once it became clear Midas Gold was aware that maintaining access to the backcountry is important to Idahoans and designed their plan accordingly. Their travel plans to and from the site prioritizes safety for Idahoans while taking care to maintain access for all types of recreational activities from hiking to hunting to fishing and of course, snowmobiling.

Midas Gold has also shown a willingness to work collaboratively with recreational groups to address any additional concerns that have arisen during the project. In fact, many of the changes laid out in their Modified Plan of Restoration and Operations (Mod PRO) were a result of collaborative, open dialogues with groups like ours. As a result, in Alternative 2 Midas Gold proposed maintaining seasonal access through the site by routing traffic on a road through or near the upper portions of the Yellow Pine pit, similar to the levels of access today. When looking at Alternative 4, you have Johnson Creek as the main access to site, this means either no access or shared for 20+ years, this really isn't a viable solution to traffic. Besides recreationalist being run out of the area, why would you put that truck traffic along a waterway for over half of their travel? Do you want to see them fail?

Equally important to us as Idahoans is the restoration of the historical Stibnite Mining District, which is showing the lasting damage of past mining activities. But after reviewing the draft DEIS, we realize if held accountable by the community, mining can be part of the solution. As your analysis indicates, Alternative 2 will result in better water quality in the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River due to efforts from the company to lower concentrations of antimony, mercury and arsenic (DEIS 4.9-70)/

It is for these reasons that we would like to encourage the U.S. Forest Service to adopt Alternative 2 proposed by Midas Gold Idaho for the Stibnite Gold Project.