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Comments: Thank you in advance for your consideration of the comments that follow regarding the Midas Gold Stibnite Gold Project (SGP), which has been thoroughly evaluated by your draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

I will confine my comments to what I view as the positive impacts (supported by the EIS) on water quality, wetlands, and rivers.

As you know and the EIS makes clear, past mining activities have not been kind to the area's water quality, rivers and streams, and wetlands.

High levels of antimony and arsenic can be found in groundwater and surface water. The (East Fork) South Fork of the Salmon River (EFSFSR) no longer follows its historic path and instead spills into a mining pit (Yellow Pine). The East Fork of Meadow Creek (Blowout Creek) is damaged and filled with sediment as a result of a dam failure more than a half-century ago.

Groundwater levels have fallen.

Midas Gold Alternative 2 entails extensive restoration to the area and will address these issues in ways that improve the status quo. Highlights include:

- * Removal of barriers to fish migration. Actions under Alternative 2 will reestablish passage for bull trout, salmon, and steelhead into Meadow Creek and the headwaters of the EFSFSR. A temporary tunnel under the Yellow Pine pit will be followed by reconstruction of the streambed as it existed before 1938. This would be a tremendous improvement that would support fish spawning and biodiversity.
- * Clean-up of mining waste impacting water quality. As part of Alternative 2, Midas Gold pledges to clean up tailings and other mining waste leaching into the Meadow Creek drainage area. Hazardous materials will be reprocessed and removed to a modern, safe storage facility.
- * Repair of the East Fork of Meadow Creek (Blowout Creek). To support stream and wetland improvements, Midas Gold will construct a new channel and drainage system to reduce harmful sediment flows.

As I understand, Midas Gold will also undertake actions to mitigate the impacts of new mining activity. The company plans to construct/reconstruct and improve stream channels, riparian areas, and wetlands in the valleys of the EFSFSR and Meadow Creek. This will improve water quality and fish habitat. In addition, the company will work with the U.S. Forest Service to reforest the Stibnite area. This will support populations of fish, birds, and other wildlife.

Midas Gold seems to be approaching its venture with a clear understanding of its responsibilities for environmental protection. The detailed plans for environmental mitigation and reparations, as well as financial assurances, bear out this point. With this in mind, I urge the U.S. Forest Service to approve Alternative 2 for the project.