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Comments: The Stibnite Gold Project gives Idaho a cost-effective way to address a serious environmental problem, the damage done to the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River fish runs by 100 years of careless mining. I fully support this project and urge the Forest Service to do the same.

It seems counterintuitive to think that pollution caused by mining can be undone by more mining, but that is exactly what the Stibnite Gold Project would do. Midas Gold Idaho is committed to conducting their operation in an environmentally responsible manner and using a significant share of the revenue the project will generate to clean up the waste that so significantly impacts the river and the fish that try to live in it.

Their plan would reconnect fish migration to the upper stretches of the river, something that has not been possible for roughly 80 years. It would also restore miles of river habitat for the salmon and trout that make the hazardous journey from river to ocean and back again to produce new generations of sport fish. The improvements they have committed to make will improve water quality and reduce the sediment that makes it difficult for fish to survive.

The Alternative 2 plan proposed by Midas would be the most beneficial for fish populations. As documented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, it would remove historical barriers to fish migration, resulting in increased productivity and improve genetic diversity (Ch. 4.12-33), and increase stream functionality by 23 percent (Appendix D, Table 8-1).

Those are not promises made by Midas but findings of U.S. Forest Service research, giving them serious credibility.

It would be foolish for the Forest Service to say no to this project, when it would accomplish the environmental goals we want to achieve without burdening taxpayers. Giving Midas Gold the go ahead to begin mining would protect fish and improve stream and ground water quality, while simultaneously stimulating growth in the local economy. It would be a win for everyone.

I know that there is significant local support for the Stibnite Gold Project in the Yellow Pine community. I hope the Forest Service will take that into consideration, along with the tremendous environmental benefits it will create, and approve the project ASAP.