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Comments: The fallout from decades of mining activity has plagued the Stibnite-Yellow Pine region for long enough. As an advocate for the environment and local wildlife, I am writing today to ask that you please approve Alternative 2 for Midas Gold's proposal for a new, 21st century mining project that incorporates restoration and reclamation as a core part of its design.

Among the problems that have afflicted the Stibnite region, failure of an earthen dam in the 1960s has led to extensive and ongoing erosion over the years. This has resulted in over-sedimentation of the river downstream—with hundreds of tons of sediment entering the river each year—clogging the gills of local fish and making it harder for them to see and find food. At the same time, this dam blowout has also drained the creeks and river in the valley above, destroying the wetlands and hurting local wildlife.

In their proposal, Midas Gold has included plans to repair the damage from the failed dam in order to permanently keep sediment out of the river. At the same time, their plan for restoration and operations includes the restoration of the wetlands that were drained so many years ago. In fact, your own agency's Draft Environmental Impact Study found that the company's mitigation plan offers a net gain of 346.5 wetland function units, representing a 40 percent increase from current levels.

I firmly believe Midas Gold's restoration efforts and commitment to cleaning up old mining activity will help restore these once fertile wetlands, making the entire region more ecologically functional. As a matter of fact, the company has already started restoration work before this project has even begun. They've planted more than 55,000 trees, reclaimed 33 acres of land, and recycled 4,000 pounds of waste material.

Alternative 2 is the right answer to properly restore the Stibnite-Yellow Pine region. Other options would not provide as much environmental protection moving forward. Essentially, Alternative 2 is just an improvement on Alternative 1, with additional safeguards that will protect salmon habitat, reduce the distance mined materials are transported to reduce environmental impacts, and restore more wetland areas. Meanwhile, Alternative 3 would place the storage facility for used materials and tailings in a less safe area and Alternative 4 proposes road options that would increase the likelihood of spills and sediment delivery. Last and in this case least, Alternative 5 would mean maintaining the status quo and taking no action whatsoever, which is unacceptable.

We have a viable option to address the longstanding environmental issues in the Stibnite-Yellow Pine region, and we need to pursue it. Please approve Midas Gold's plan as specified in Alternative 2.