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Comments: I write today to encourage the U.S. Forest Service to adopt Alternative 2 for the plan to redevelop the stibnite mining district. I believe this the most effective way to help fix the environmental issues that have been an unfortunate part of the history of this area for as long back as I can recall.

The stibnite mining district has been home to various mining operations over the past 80+ years, and each has left their mark. One of the biggest impacts has been on local fish and wildlife. Today, Chinook salmon and other fish that live in the ocean but spawn in fresh water are unable to reach their historical spawning ground upstream of the Yellow Pine pit. That is because the river was diverted to allow for mining of the pit in the '30s. However, proper steps were not taken to fill in the pit once those operations ended, so when it was rerouted to its original flow, the area became unpassable for migrating fish.

In Alternative 2 of their plan, Midas Gold Idaho has laid out how they will address this issue both in the short- and long-term. In the short-term, the company will build a .9 mile-long tunnel using best practices in design to help connect fish to miles of upstream habitat. Then, once mining has ended, Midas Gold Idaho would backfill the Yellow Pine pit and fully restore this part of the Salmon River, permanently connecting fish to their historical habitat, including waters for spawning, feeding, and taking refuge.

As the draft environmental impact study released by USFS states in Chapter 4, section 12, increased access to feeding and refuge areas in critical habitat can improve overall productivity. As if that were not enough, Alternative 2 also sets aside more habitat for protection than do the other alternatives, plus it is just more economically feasible, so the chances of it moving forward without issue are greater. For all these reasons, I implore you to approve Alternative 2.