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Comments: I am writing today to submit this official comment to the U.S. Forest Service concerning the Stibnite Gold Project's draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Specifically, I support Alternative2 proposed by Midas Gold Idaho because of its commitment to environmental restoration. I urge the USFS to approve this project as soon as possible.

As you know, historic mining operations have left environmental scars in several regions throughout the western United States, including Idaho. While many projects have been undertaken to restore mining sites, this work is often incomplete. What were once pristine rivers are left awash in sediment. Worse, heavy metals can leach into surface water and groundwater. In addition, connectivity is often lost between rivers, disrupting the movements of many species of fish.

All of these environmental issues can be found in the Stibnite mining region of Valley County, Idaho. They have been left largely unaddressed for decades.

Midas Gold Idaho's Alternative 2 plan would go a long way to addressing these issues and restoring the area. The most promising part of the plan is the restoration of the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. Currently fish cannot follow this tributary on its historic path because it flows into the Yellow Pine mining pit.

If the U.S. Forest Service approves Alternative 2, Midas Gold plans to repair and improve approximately 12 miles of river and enable trout and salmon to reach the headwaters of the Salmon River for the first time in more than 80 years. Notably, a temporary tunnel will enable salmon to reach newly accessible spawning grounds at the outset of the project, before mining begins.

Completion of this tunnel represents an important milestone in the early stages of the plan. Subsequently, Midas Gold will rebuild the East Fork of the South Fork in the vicinity of the Yellow Pine pit, restoring the river close to a state last seen in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This will represent a permanent change-allowing fish to reach headwaters and spawning beds in perpetuity. Chapter 4:12-39 of the draft EIS outlines these benefits in detail.

Alternative 2 includes other comprehensive plans for restoration in the region, including at Blowout Creek, the West End pit, and Hangar Flats. It will be heartening to see all of this area restored.

I encourage you to move forward on the planned timeline without an extension of the comment period.