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First name: Ron
Last name: Platt
Organization: Valley County Parks and Recreation
Title:
Comments: The Valley County Snowmobile Advisory Group to offer its support for the permitting of the Stibnite Gold Project proposed by Midas Gold Idaho. From the beginning of this project, they have made a concerted effort to reach out to the communities in this area, including recreation groups such as ours, in order to alleviate any concerns about the project's impact on access to the area. The result is a plan that is a balance of safety-for their employees and the public-and environmental protection all while assuring residents will be able to continue to enjoy their many recreational activities.
In order to accomplish those objectives, Midas Gold minimized the number of trips to the site for its employees, transporting the majority by bus to work in two-week cycles. This allows for less traffic on the surrounding roads and in turn less dust generation and greenhouse gas emissions. Supply trips will also be consolidated so that fewer trips will be needed to the site with delivery only occurring Mondays through Fridays during businesses hours. This allows less traffic interference with recreational travel time.

The company is very aware how important continued access is for Idahoans and adjusted their plan accordingly when concerns were raised. For example, they initially planned for no public access through the site due to concerns over safety. Yet once they heard from the public that retaining access through the Stibnite site to Thunder Mountain Road was important for the area's recreationalists, they worked side - by-side with the community to find a potential solution.
Overall, after reviewing the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) put out by the U.S. Forest Service, we believe Alternative 2 is the safest option for our members and the environment that we love.

First, Alternative 2 poses the best plan for roads and access to the site. Alternative 4 uses Johnson Creek and Stibnite Road for mine traffic rather than Burntlog Road which would put OSV travel next to mine traffic for life of project, this is not a good alternative for OSV or any recreational travel. Alternative 2 would use Burntlog Road for site operations so recreationalists and others can safely use Johnson Creek without interference. Moreover, Midas Gold plans to construct a snowmobile parking lot at the intersection of South Fork Road and FS 467 and they will also plow Warm Lake Road between Landmark and the Bumtlog Route into Stibnite throughout the winter to maintain access to the mine.
Along with their clear commitment to maintaining safe recreational access for the community, Midas Gold is also committed to leaving the Stibnite site in a better condition than they found it through responsible mining. In their modified plan of restoration and operations (Mod-PRO), Midas Gold would reprocess and properly store millions of tons of legacy tailings in a 21st-century, cutting-edge tailings storage facility to prevent any further leaching into the ground water. As the draft EIS found, this efforts would lead to significant improvements for the area. As mentioned in Chapter 4, removing legacy tailings and waste will improve water quality (4.12 103-104). Plus, they have already demonstrated this commitment to the environment by beginning the restoration process before mining has even started.
Safety, environmental protection, recreational access and restoration all add up to a winning plan for the Valley County community. The U.S. Forest Service should move quickly to adopt Alternative 2 laid out by Midas Gold Idaho as their preferred alternative.