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Comments: I know some conservation groups oppose the Midas Gold plan for the Stibnite Mining district, saying they don't want any mining to take place there ever again. But I strongly believe they are missing the point. U.S. Forest Service approval of the Midas plan will fix the problems confronting Stibnite-Yellow Pine and the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River, not make them worse.

There are 10.5 million tons of old, toxic tailings and mining wastes in the area. Will they just magically disappear if we leave them alone? Of course not, they will continue to leach dangerous chemicals and metals into the water and soil, just as they have been doing since before World War II.

Midas Gold has a clear plan to safely reprocess and contain that old mining waste, getting it out of the river, the wetlands, and the soil. With documented arsenic levels in the East Fork of the South Fork well above human health benchmarks, I think it would be completely irresponsible to do nothing and let that harmful chemical, and others, continue to pollute Idaho waters.

I know I don't need to read your own draft EIS back to you, but I feel it is important to highlight the finding in Ch 4. p. 4.9-70 that says removing the old legacy tailing piles and other wastes would lower concentrations of arsenic and antimony in the East Fork of the South Fork. Again in Ch. 4, this time 4.12 103-104, it says it would improve the water quality in Meadow Creek Valley as well, which is water that eventually makes its way into the Salmon.

American Rivers has cited the South Fork as one of the most endangered rivers in America. Doesn't that mean we should take action to save it instead of just walking away? I believe it does and I think the Midas Gold Stibnite project is the fastest, most effective way to accomplish our clean water goals in the area. Please approve this plan.