

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/23/2020 6:00:00 AM

First name: Melvin L

Last name: Jorgensen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Stibnite Gold Project as part of the public permitting process.

I know this project will have a positive impact for the environment, the communities surrounding the site, the citizens of Idaho and the United States of America as a whole.

From 1941 to 1945, this site produced 40 percent of the tungsten, and 90% of the antimony for the United States. This mine, and the minerals produced, had a significant impact for the U.S. and it's Allies in winning WWII; however, it left a legacy affecting the Salmon River watershed.

Although designated an EPA Superfund site, the Federal Government and Environmental Groups including the Nez Pierce Nation who are opposed to the Stibnite project, have never stepped forward to fully fund or find solutions to mitigate the legacy issues. The U.S. government tried to restore the area years ago but their work didn't go far enough to mitigate the problems which exist yet today.

Midas Gold Idaho has been studying the Stibnite area for nearly a decade and they have invested millions of dollars in this process.

The mining plan they have developed has a solution for cleaning up the prior waste, lowering heavy metal pollution while eliminating sediment pollution in conjunction with restoring stream beds, salmon runs and native fish habitat.

Midas Gold has prioritized restoration work so that much of the effort occurs early in the project, and in fact, reclamation efforts have already started at the site.

Midas Gold is planting thousands of trees and has begun work to reduce sediment entering waterways near the site. This shows a pro-active approach and commitment to utilize modern mining techniques and restoration practices, not only during the mining process, but even before mining begins.

To me, these actions prove the company is truly committed to restoring the site while providing critical minerals, jobs and industry to the state of Idaho and our country.

The tailing piles left by previous mining companies were never properly constrained and pose a risk of continually leaching metals into nearby streams and the groundwater.

Midas Gold will reprocess and re-purpose this material and make sure it is stored in a secure tailings facility to fix these water quality concerns.

Each year, hundreds of tons of this tailing sediment continues to be dumped into the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River and other waterways from Blowout Creek, impacting water quality and aquatic habitat.

Midas Gold has a plan to fix these problems during construction. Unfortunately, if Midas Gold isn't allowed to move forward with its plan, it is highly unlikely these critical improvements will ever happen.

Fish haven't been able to swim past the Yellow Pine pit, the area that was severely impacted yet especially important to winning WWII, to their natural spawning grounds for 80 years.

Midas Gold will reconnect fish to these waterways during construction by building a specially designed passage and by the time the project is completed, the natural flow of the river will be restored so fish are permanently reconnected to the upper waterways. This comprehensive plan includes restoring critical waterways and habitat for fish in this entire region.

According to the draft EIS, an additional 26.5 km of habitat for anadromous salmonoids becomes available before mining even begins with the construction of the fish passageway around the Yellow Pine pit (DEIS 4.12).

Alternative 2 would also provide a net gain of 11.1 km of intrinsic potential habitat for steelhead trout and 12.4 km for bull trout. These benefits should be fully recognized and supported by the U.S. Forest Service.

During the time Midas has been evaluating opportunities and all of the prior mining waste issues, the company has also found support for the Federal Governments findings that arsenic and antimony levels in the groundwater far exceed human health standards at multiple points across the site.

Being progressive in their approach, the Stibnite Gold Project is designed to address this issue as well.

In the company's Water Quality Management Plan, Midas will lower levels of arsenic and antimony in the river and cause concentrations to be lower than what we see at the site today (DEIS 4.9-70).

Midas Gold Idaho has proactively engaged community members and consistently sought local feedback.

Some suggestions from locals are reflected in the mining plan [acirc][euro]" including the proposed road to site to keep traffic and potential pollutants away from waterways.

In my mind, actions speak louder than words and Midas Gold has proven they will be a good partner for Idaho, recreationalists, the environment, salmon and the Salmon River watershed moving forward.

Midas Gold Idaho has worked hard to integrate itself into the fabric of the community. The company gives its time, talent and resources to support local charities and environmental causes.

Midas Gold believes in collaboration and transparency. Over the years, the company has taken more than 700 people to the site so they can see it for themselves, learn about the project and ask questions.

While some of the Stibnite Gold Project will take place on public lands, Midas Gold has made a commitment to the community to ensure access is preserved to people[rsquo}s favorite places. The company has promised to provide parking for winter recreationalists at their maintenance facility and submitted an additional plan to the U.S. Forest Service to allow Idahoans to continue to use Stibnite Road throughout the life of the project when it is safe.

As the U.S. Forest Service and other state and federal agencies review the proposed plan and determine the course of action, I encourage you to consider and appropriately weigh the positive benefits Midas Gold will have on Idaho. We need to move this project ahead after the 60-day comment period.

I sincerely believe that Alternative Two is truly a win-win opportunity for Idahoans, the environment and the U.S. as a Nation.

As a Viet Nam era veteran who was stationed at Mtn. Home AFB in 1970-72, I have continued to visiting Idaho for work and my friends who have lived there since our duty at Mtn. Home.

I have witnessed many changes in the growth over the 50 years since being stationed at Mtn Home 50 years ago. These changes have not been limited to the growth of population, the growth and varieties in businesses, nor the expansion of highways and housing. All have benefited, developed and improved through innovation and technology.

As a former logger and still a miner, I have witnessed the evolution and innovation not being limited to tech, construction, Agribusiness, or manufacturing companies, but is utilized across our entire population and business world.

These advancements have also been integrated and implemented into the timber and mining industries. The way we logged and mined in 1970 has drastically changed for the better, just as TV's, making phone calls, building houses and roadways and so many more things have been improved.

Ever evolving techniques and "Best Practices" are being shared and my experience as a miner, including working in Zambia, Guyana and Mongolia, is that U.S. Mining is leading the world our approach and commitment to the environment.

Midas Gold Stibnite Gold Project will be among these world leaders with their approach to restoration/reclamation and mining "Best Practices" at Stibnite.

I would also like to add that the events surrounding Covid 19 have brought to light many facts about how dependent our country is, including "the citizen's of the U.S." to foreign countries for everything from pharmaceuticals to minerals to jobs and thus our security and way of life as a nation. The Midas Gold Stibnite project is just one piece of a puzzle that we as a country, as a nation, as Americans, should look to approve and support in order to minimize our dependence on foreign sources for our daily living standards.

Although I am not currently a resident of Idaho, I look forward to an opportunity to assist Idaho and all Americans, but more importantly to me to ensure my grandchildren have a future, where responsible use of natural resources, including mining, allows everyone to have a quality of life equal to or better than what I, Idahoans and other Americans have had.