

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2020 1:19:59 AM

First name: Claudia

Last name: Camerino

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Linda Jackson and Victoria Christiansen,

My name is Claudia Camerino, writing to you from White Salmon, WA.

I am a whitewater kayaker, in a place where rivers are literally the life blood of our community. The free-flowing, glacial waters of the White Salmon support some of the last major salmon runs in the country, and tourists from across the nation delight in the Wild and Scenic sections of the river. In turn, these aspects of the river have fostered a thriving local economy, including rafting and fly fishing outfitters, local restaurants, inns and shops. Less quantifiable but just as valuable, is the natural beauty, habitat, and clean water source that rivers like the White Salmon provide to our community. We're proud of this special place, and the river is an essential part of that.

I am writing to ask the Forest Service to create a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the relative agencies and public to review and comment on. I am concerned about the extent of missing and incomplete information of the current DEIS highlighted as highlighted below, and as a responsible agency who is involved with managing invaluable public resources, like water quality, I ask that you please provide the aforementioned information.

A primary concern with the current DEIS is the shortcomings around the Reclamation, Mitigation and Remediation sections. Midas is proposing an open pit mine, which would divert the East Fork from its channel, excavate 3 massive pits, and impact over 3 square miles of land with industrial development. The modeling within the DEIS clearly indicates that unhealthy levels of arsenic, antimony, mercury, and other metals will contaminate water for decades to come.

When the mining is over, millions of tons of toxic sludge behind a 400 foot-high rock tailings dam will remain. The mine will damage a fragile high elevation environment. It threatens a web of economies that depend on clean water. It could result in near-perpetual water treatment and environmental clean-up. The probability of adverse impacts far outweighs the promised benefits.

As of now, there is no definitive plan in place from Midas regarding a commitment to reclamation, and this is something that I hope a supplemental DEIS will take seriously and address. A plan to treat water in perpetuity to meet water quality standards relies on an assumption that Midas will put money into a trust fund to support the operational costs to treat the water-- forever. The infrastructure to do so (powerline, roads, treatment facilities) will remain forever. However, the contamination is modeled to still require treatment 100 years in the future. The DEIS assumes, without support, that chemical reactions causing contamination will slowly decrease to a point where contaminants will be 3 below state standards.

While I am also writing to support Alternative 5, the No Action Alternative outlined in the existing Stibnite Gold Project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the requested Supplemental Draft EIS is crucial for review and consideration.

I hope you will carefully consider the extent to which these decisions impact fragile environments and communities, and therefore see the value in producing a supplemental DEIS.

Thank you for your consideration, please confirm receipt of this message.

Warm regards,  
Claudia Camerino