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First name: Spencer

Last name: Graves

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I write to you today in the hope that my comments regarding the proposed Stibnite Gold Project will help steer the U.S. Forest Service's approval of Alternative 2 as presented by Midas Gold Idaho. I truly do believe that their plan for restoration and operations will go a long way in revitalizing the wetlands and entire ecosystem in the Stibnite Mining District. Thank you for taking the time to consider my views on this matter.

Among the long list of environmental concerns that have been a part of Stibnite for decades now is the fact that areas that were once home to fertile wetlands have long since been dried out and are continuing to erode day by day. Midas Gold has included in their plans efforts that would stop the excessive level of sedimentation in the waters and restore the surrounding wetlands.

Hundreds of tons of sediment continue to flow into the river system every year, clogging fish gills, making it more difficult for them to find food, and weakening their immune systems. This sediment also cuts off the oxygen supply to the gravel bed in the river and other waterways, making the local salmon spawning habitat less productive than it would otherwise be.

Midas Gold has said they will address this issue by installing a drainage system below the failed dam causing these problems and rebuilding the stream channel to limit ongoing sedimentation. They will also raise the water level to help restore the wetlands to their former state.

I believe these efforts will help immensely. As a matter of fact, your own agency seems to agree. In Appendix D of the U.S. Forest Service's draft environmental impact study, it was concluded that Midas Gold's proposed mitigation plan offers a net gain of 346.5 functional wetland units, representing a 40-percent increase to current levels (Appendix D, CMB Table 8-2).

The problems at Stibnite have been going on for far too long, so it is important that restoration begin as soon as possible. That is why I think Alternative 2 in the proposal by Midas Gold is the best option we currently have available. For these reasons, I urge you in no uncertain terms to approve Alternative 2 for the Stibnite Gold Project.