

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/28/2020 6:00:00 AM

First name: Sam

Last name: Bourque

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Attention Payette National Forest Supervisor,

I write this letter in support of approval of the preferred alternative 2 for Midas Gold's Stibnite Gold Project

As a local resident of Garden Valley, a member of the whitewater boating community, and a professional geologist in the minerals exploration and mining industry, I especially ask that you base your final decision on the wealth of scientific and economic facts available covering the multitude of factors going into this decision, and don't provide undue weight to the purely emotional arguments against the project.

The damage from historic mining operations will not be remediated without a new mine operator, is is well beyond the scope of Federal funding and resource allotment to get fixed within the next few generations. The South Fork of the Salmon River will continue to flow though an oxidizing portion of a sulfide ore body in perpetuity how things stand now. I am well aware of the requirements and monitoring for a zero-discharge mining permit, and fully believe that the mining plans Midas Gold has for the Stibnite Project will not result in discharge of toxic pollutants, and will result in immediate benefits to the pH and sediment load of the River.

The economic benefits of the Midas Project are immense, and would be game-changing to the economies of Cascade, Donnelly, McCall, and all of Long Valley. The jobs would be much higher paying and more secure than the capricious recreation and hospitality industry, and would provide a new sense of place and purpose for an area that has watched it's former mainstay industry of logging nearly vanish in the last two generations.

As a long-time whitewater kayaker, I need to comment on the opposition from the Whitewater Community. The South Fork Salmon and Secesh Rivers are Class 4-5 whitewater, experts only, and these are NOT boated by 95% of boaters who are regularly on the Payette and other stretches of the Salmon. The South Fork Salmon is an overnight wilderness trip, these groups almost always come into the area packed up and loaded with groceries and supplies from Boise or elsewhere. Other than gas and a burger on the way in and out of town, these boaters contribute very little to the local economy, and live in areas with much greater economic opportunity. Please do not place undue weight on the hyperbolic rhetoric of the very vocal members of this community. And I will note, they do not have any problem using the river with the current environmental damage that is on-going from historic mining.

I ask that you please use facts and reason to approve Preferred Alternative 2 for Midas Gold's Stibnite Project