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First name: Larry

Last name: Laxson

Organization: Idaho State Snowmobile Association

Title: President

Comments: The Idaho State Snowmobile Association (ISSA) is an organization committed to the future of snowmobiling in Idaho and protecting Idahoans right to ride. Access to, and preservation of, Idaho's natural areas is paramount to our organization.

To date Midas Gold Idaho has been a valuable partner. The company has worked to keep access to Idaho's backcountry open and kept our community and member's safety a top priority in the design and operation of the proposed Stibnite Gold Project. Therefore, we would like to submit our comment of support for the U.S. Forest Service to move forward with permitting Midas Gold Idaho's project.

Access to the historic Stibnite Region was still limited just a decade ago, with sections of backcountry in the region inaccessible as a result of environmental damages left by mining projects that took place in the century before. Before Midas Gold Idaho began exploration and study of the area, snow was piled too high on Stibnite Road to drive a car or truck all the way up to the mining site during the winter months.

The company has worked to make these roads once again passable, opening up this section of Idaho backcountry not just to company vehicles, but snowmobilers and recreationalists during more months of the year. One of the favored areas for snowmobile operators is Profile Creek Bridge. Passages like this are important to local communities, given the financial benefit that Valley County experiences from the motorized recreational community. Midas Gold Idaho has worked with the ISSA and other groups to ensure that access areas like Profile Creek Bridge remain passable by cars and snowmobiles throughout the duration of the Stibnite Gold Project. By working with organizations like ours and maintaining an open dialogue, Midas Gold Idaho created an environment of transparency and a symbiotic relationship between economic growth and environmental preservation/land access.

As a result of this dialogue, Midas Gold Idaho updated their Plan of Restoration and Operations to reflect the concerns and requests of surrounding communities and stakeholders. Access to places like Thunder Mountain Road was not always part of the design plan, with project planners citing safety concerns as their reason for not allowing public access through the site during operations. But during the public scoping process, the company heard the requests of organizations like ours and worked with us to identify a solution to this important community issue.

Midas Gold Idaho has demonstrated itself as a transparent, attentive corporate citizen through its project design and proposal for the Stibnite Gold Project, listening to and valuing community feedback while offering solutions to issues raised by local residents. They are committed to being a member of the Idaho community, not just a company operating within the state's borders.

Midas Gold Idaho is a responsible company who cares about the environment, the economy, and the community of Valley County, and ISSA is proud to support the Stibnite Gold Project. Therefore, we would like to urge the U.S. Forest Service to adopt Alternative 2 presented by Midas Gold in their modified plan of restoration and operations (Mod PRO).