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Comments: The Cougar Mountain Snowmobile Club would like to take this opportunity to convey our support for the permitting of the Stibnite Gold Project proposed by Midas Gold Idaho.

We reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) released in August and feel this is a comprehensive and thorough review by the U.S. Forest Service. Also, the virtual resources provided by the agency was very helpful and informative. Given these tools, 60 days is plenty of time for the public to review the agency's analysis.

It is our sense that Alternative 2 proposed by Midas Gold Idaho - and their preferred alternative - is the best path forward for Idaho. The area surrounding the historical Stibnite mining district is a major draw for snowmobilers from across Idaho. As such, one of our top priorities[mdash]along with restoration of the site-is to ensure that access for all recreational groups and individuals continues throughout this project. Thanks to Midas Gold's commitment to transparency and willingness to work with the community, we are confident that those priorities will be met.

It was by listening to members of the community that Midas Gold learned just how important access is for Idahoans who enjoy hiking, hunting, fishing and snowmobiling in the area around the Stibnite mining district. The company kept that in mind when submitting their plan, ensuring that recreationalists will be able to continue enjoying the area and their activities just as they do today. They not only encouraged feedback, but altered plans accordingly in their Modified Plan of Restoration and Operations (Mod PRO) submitted to the Forest Service. In addition, Midas Gold has been more than willing to partner with recreational groups to mitigate potential impacts on our activities as the project gears up. Knowing their project and construction plans would affect snowmobilers given the area's popularity, Midas Gold worked with local snowmobiling groups to guarantee the necessary upgrades--a parking lot and maintained groomed trail-are in place. For example, in Alternative 2 they plan to plow Warm Lake Road up to Landmark, continuing onto the Burntlog route. Additionally, Alternative 2 will also keep site traffic and access off Johnson Creek and Stibnite Road, major roadways for the public, and ensure a higher level of safety for all. Alternative 4 will create an issue for snowmobile travel from Trout Creek to Wapiti if you expect us to travel for 20 years next to truck traffic. Besides, the section of road next to the falls area is not wide enough to travel next to truck traffic and even if you remove some of the rock, my guess is the cut and slope of that rock will not make travel safe. We do not mind a two year shift in travel, but we do not want permanent mine traffic on that route.

Restoration of the Stibnite mining district is another priority for us as it is tied to the recreational enjoyment of the surrounding area. Fisheries, water quality and the natural habitat have all suffered damage from past mining activities and each has unique challenges to be met. Luckily, Midas Gold has designed this project with restoration a key component and has presented plans to reconnect fish passageways, improve water quality and clean up abandoned waste. As the DEIS notes in Chapter 4, there

are several findings that show positive improvements to the environment as a result of Midas Gold's plans, like access to historically blocked critical habitat would result in increased fish productivity (4.12) and removing legacy tailings and managing water provides long-term reduction in metal loading in ground and surface water (4.9).

We value the opinion of those who are skeptical of a project like this, especially given the area was damaged by mining practices of the past. But now is the time to support a new era of mining in the Gem State and Midas Gold is the right group to take on the challenge of changing perceptions.

For the above reasons, we would urge the U.S. Forest Service to adopt Alternative 2 presented by Midas Gold Idaho.