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Comments: After reviewing the proposal from Midas Gold to redevelop the Stibnite Mining District, I think it is time for the U.S. Forest Service to approve Alternative 2 and let this much needed project move forward in the permitting process.

This region of Central Idaho has been in serious need of environmental restoration for decades. Midas Gold has already spent the past decade studying the area and all its problems, and I believe the plan they have put together in Alternative 2 will help fix some of the biggest issues local fish and wildlife face as a result of previous mining activity.

For example, the local fish living in this part of the Salmon River have not been able to migrate to their native spawning grounds for more than 80 years, ever since the river was rerouted to excavate the Yellow Pine pit. Despite allowing the river to flow back to its original route, the pit was left open, making passage all but impossible for fish. Now, the only way for fish like the chinook salmon to spawn is by manually restocking them in part of Meadow Creek, which is a painstaking process that is not practical for the long term.

Fortunately, Midas Gold has a plan for temporarily reconnecting these and other fish to more suitable spawning grounds in the short term before permanently reconnecting them to their native habitat once mining is complete. They will do this by backfilling the pit and removing some of the barriers to migration. According to the U.S.

Forest

Service's own draft Environmental Impact Statement, these efforts to increase access to feeding and refuge areas in critical habitat can improve overall productivity.

Alternative 2 includes important updates to Midas Gold's original plan to reflect the concerns of the surrounding communities, including taking extra steps to protect more salmon habitat. In my eyes, this is the best solution we have available, which is why I urge you to approve it without any further delays.