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First name: Brett

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Keith Lannom and Staff,

I am writing to comment on the Stibnite Gold Plan of Operations EIS #50516. I am an Idaho native, outdoor enthusiast, geotechnical engineer and concerned citizen. The Idaho backcountry is core to my identity and that of my friends and family. I now reside in Washington state but make yearly pilgrimages to the Yellow Pine area to fish, backpack and hike with my friends.

After reviewing the plan of operations, I have several comments.

1. I applaud the focus on restoration in the proposal. However as with any open mine project, the restoration methods should face rigorous scrutiny. I understand that the EIS will provide more specifics, however at this point the lack of specifics compared to the magnitude of restoration work proposed has me concerned. I ask if alternate plans are being considered to avoid mining virgin land and focus on working the previously mined areas in order to limit the need for repairing land that is currently undisturbed or land that has already been restored

2. Extreme care must be taken by the Forest Service and Midas Gold to prevent water from being contaminated by heavy metals and tailings waste. The tailings from this project will exist for eternity and will always pose a risk to the waters and biology in this ecosystem. The current tailings dam is addressed loosely in the proposals and the safety and long-term maintenance and monitoring of the tailings facility needs to be described further. The proposal tends to focus on the restoration of currently disturbed areas and less on new disturbance that will be caused

3. In my opinion Midas should be applauded for their work so far in the area. They have been a benefit to the community and appear to be responsible stewards to the environment. However, historically Midas Gold has been an exploration company, not an extraction company. They have limited track record with full scale mining operations. Proposing to complete this scale of work without a track record is concerning and I hope the Forest Service is evaluating Midas Golds qualifications to do the work.

4. A primary concern at this point is access to the site. The proposed Burnt Log haul road will cut through untouched forest and wildlife habitat along the border of the Frank Church. Maintaining the National Forest buffer around the wilderness area is in my opinion vital to the protection of the wilderness. The proposed construction "freeway" will permanently remove the buffer. Alternatives to the access road should be considered and if a solution for relocating the road is not found, in my opinion the project should not move forward. Maintaining the untouched wild of Idaho for generations to come should come as a priority over approving a project that promises to remediate an area that has already been disturbed.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to further discussion with interested parties and the public.

Sincerely,

Brett