Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/19/2017 6:00:00 AM
First name: Allison
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Payette Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom and staff,

I am an Idaho native and have been kayaking the East Fork of the South Fork Salmon and the South Fork Salmon since 2013. These two rivers are some of my favorite in my world. The peace and solitude found on this river drainage are unparalleled. The idea of doing anything to put these rivers in jeopardy seems untenable to me.

I was deeply concerned when I learned that Midas Gold was planning to reopen the Stibnite mine. How is it possible given the disastrous results of the last attempt at mining and the discovery that the levels of mercury and arsenic are much higher in the area than initially thought? If the last company to mine Stibnite skipped out on its clean-up bill, who is to say Midas Gold will not do the same?

While our rivers and fish are still trying to recover from previous mining, we need to be vigilantly protecting them, not letting foreign companies come in with promises for which they can make no guarantees. Although Midas claims it will restore fish habitat, it will cover up over a mile of spawning area in the meantime. How can a company be trusted to follow through on clean-up when it is not even up front about the amount of damage it plans to do?

The Animas River, with its crystal-clear water, was one of my other favorite multi-day river trips. Unfortunately, in 2015, three million gallons of mine waste were dumped into the river after a string of negligent and careless actions, turning it a mutant orange color and tainting it for years to come. Please do not allow the South Fork Salmon drainage to become the next tragedy of reckless mining.

Midas's plans begin with undoing $13 million worth of restoration for which we the taxpayers have paid. What do we get in return for this? At this point, all we are being offered are promises and the strong possibility of a future clean-up bill when Midas opts out of its clean up duties and files for bankruptcy as is an unfortunate trend in the mining industry.

President Roosevelt created the Forest Service to protect and advocate for the nation's public lands. The South Fork Salmon drainage needs the Forest Service to stand up on its behalf. Midas has put together a nice website with a superficially attractive plan; however, when you get down to the details and check the facts, this plan makes no sense and is outright irresponsible. Please reevaluate this proposal and help us keep Idaho's rivers clean and accessible to both people and fish alike.

Sincerely,

Allison Dwyer