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Comments:

The West Mountain Snowmobile Club would like the following comments to be considered for the environmental review of the Midas Gold Stibnite Project. Our comments are restricted to the impacts on winter recreation, specifically snowmobile riding and the associated grooming program.

We appreciate the offer and suggestion by Midas to include overnight parking of the grooming vehicle in the Midas road maintenance facility proposed at Landmark. During the 3-5 year period of mine construction, overnight stays will give added flexibility to complete grooming activities without extended hours of operation for operators. Inside, heated storage is a significant benefit to insure equipment operation. We feel it is important to make certain this is a clearly identified as a temporary mitigation measure that is tied to mine construction so as to avoid the interpretation it is an expansion of grooming operations and any associated analysis that comes with that interpretation.

Secondly, we do not think the benefits of constructing a parallel snowmobile trail adjacent to the Johnson Creek road for the 3-5 year period of mine construction is warranted. Riders bent on using the Landmark area will venture to Landmark on the well maintained Warm Lake summit road. Remember, the Big Creek summit is the first screen to weed out the drivers that are not confident to travel mountain summits. The Cabin-Trout trail cannot be groomed in its current condition. Live water crosses and intersects the trail in a number of locations. Live water and a groomed snowmobile trail are incompatible as the water below the snowpack melts the overhead snowpack. Also, the current alignment/location of the Cabin-Trout trail was not designed to accommodate grooming. Steepness, side slopes and power line structures pose significant obstacles. Construction of the upgraded power line and associated access road(s) need to be designed to accommodate grooming. The amount and cost of constructing the trail adjacent to the Johnson Creek road would be sizeable given there are 5-6 perennial streams and significant areas of dozer work to clear vegetation, boulders and debris so there would be a 20' clear zone for the groomer to operate.

Midas could partially mitigate the loss of snowmobiling opportunity and groomer access by accepting the financial cost associated with transporting the County groomer to Landmark approximately 5 to 6 times each season or provide funding for a contract groomer to do the trails south/east of Landmark. The point is: there are cheaper and less land disturbing alternatives to off-set the loss of grooming and snowmobile riding as a result of the mine proposal during build out. The action to plow snow and provide a good running surface on the Warm Lake summit will allow many snowmobile users to travel to Landmark and off load. Parking facilities need to be designed and maintained as mitigation by the mining company. Once the mine is operational, the Cabin-Trout and Johnson Creek/Landmark route becomes functional. Again, infrequent, overnight or emergency warehousing for the groomer during the mine operation would be of tremendous value.

Thank you for your time.

Steven Hull - President

West Mountain Snowmobile Club