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Organization:

Title:

Comments: TO: United States Forest Service

RE: Stibnite Gold Project DEIS Comments

09/08/2020

Greetings,

Please consider my support for the Stibnite Gold Mining Project, per the Draft Environmental Impact Statement comment period. Below, I lay out material facts about the project, which I believe merit consideration and inclusion in your final decision.

Economic:

During these uncertain economic times, it is imperative that the United States takes some ownership of its natural resource opportunities in a meaningful and responsible way. This year we have seen a surge in unemployment, and concurrently state budgets will be on the chopping block for things like schools, infrastructure and conservation as we head into 2021. The full effects of the COVID-19 pandemic won't be known for some time, but I can say, reasonably, that having access to good paying recession resistant jobs in rural Idaho will be a game changer for both the local economy and the whole state of Idaho. The county tax rolls will experience more reliable revenues amid these trying times, which keeps our roads, bridges and snow removal service open and operable. In turn, this will enhance the ability of our local recreation-tourism economy to stay afloat, and should disburse the tax burden in a scale-able manner. Additionally, housing affordability has been a major challenge for this region. With Midas Gold's plan to offer wages (\$70K+/-) well above the current average, that opens up extensive opportunities for local people to own their home rather than rent, save for the future and plan for retirement. There are very few parallel sectors in this region that can offer that level of opportunity and security for 500+ people.

Environmental:

We all know mining doesn't have the best track record. So why not try something new and innovative? The alternative is to not have an economy. In civil discussions with friends and family about the mining industry, I often challenge folks who draw a hard line that mining should just "go away" with the following truth: Unless you don't own a car, live in a house, work in a building, ride a bike, use a phone, wear shoes and clothes, etc., you simply cannot achieve a world without natural resource extraction. Mining, despite its legacy challenges, is imperative to human civilization. To suggest it should not exist is a fool's errand, so why not try to make the processes and impacts of mining better and more transparent. I believe Midas Gold is doing exactly this by putting forth not only a plan of operations, but also a concurrent and aggressive plan of restoration to mitigate and correct the sins of our fathers. Objectively, doing nothing is far worse for the environment than cleaning up and sealing off the existing tailing piles and heartbreaking scars of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River. As an Idaho angler, I can think of nothing better than to see the historic fish passages up river reopened above the Glory Hole, and sedimentation reduced or eliminated below Blowout Creek. What an opportunity we have to make a step toward a better world and a better industry with the Stibnite Gold Project.

Community:

During these divided times, I fully understand that there are two camps for everything. Immigration, climate change, civil rights--the list of topics on fire right now is exhaustive. There is so much noise, hurt and anger at play, and reasonably so. We, as a local community and as a nation need more people doing the right thing on all

fronts. I believe that the Midas Gold project can be one such beacon--a project with the potential to bring together left and right, liberal and conservative, conservation and economy. The amount of thought, care and inclusive discussion the team from Midas Gold has put forth with this project is exemplary. The opportunity for discussion and input fostered by the regional community agreements, the establishment of the Stibnite Foundation to open community access to project details and impacts and the "open door" policy of the leadership at the company is something I've never seen before, and it is extremely refreshing to see in these divided times. The time is right for this project.

Technical:

As for the technical consideration of the DEIS, I would encourage you to move forward with MODPro/Alternative 2, in your assessment. This project outcome would achieve the following benefits:

- *Reduce the project disturbance area by 72 acres
- *Remove a proposed development rock storage facility
- *Backfill the Midnight and Hangar Flats mine pits, thereby reducing the pit lake depths by roughly 75%
- *Enhance water quality design elements
- *Benefit stream temperature mitigation elements
- *Benefit road and utility mitigation elements
- *Reduce vehicle trips by roughly 20%
- *Maintain recreational access, and being a good neighbor to the communities of Cascade, Yellowpine, McCall and Donnelly

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you consider my inputs about the project, and move approvals forward, consistent with your internal processes.