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Comments: The Stibnite Gold Plan of Operations will have far reaching impacts on the environment and the socioeconomics of the communities within Valley County, Idaho. I am very familiar with many sections of the Salmon River. I count myself lucky to have explored the Middle Fork of the Salmon, the South Fork of the Salmon, the Main Salmon, and various tributaries on multiple occasions. I have kayaked the Middle Fork of the Salmon River 6 times, the Main Salmon 3 times, and I have kayaked the South Fork of the Salmon 2 times. I do not live in Idaho, but I count myself as one of the lucky individuals who have experienced the rivers in this watershed. The South Fork of the Salmon and its tributaries may not enjoy the same protections as the other sections, but I believe the river is a resource that should be preserved.

The Salmon River and its tributaries provide some of the most pristine recreation in the Western US. It is beloved by: rafters, fishermen, hunters, land conservation employees, and more. Thanks to these recreationalists, the river is a major economic driver in Valley County for both sport fishing and whitewater rafting, and is of significant cultural importance to the Nez Perce Tribe. But this area serves a purpose far more important than recreation. It supplies habitat for endangered salmon and trout. The South Fork Salmon River is habitat for endangered and threatened species and one of only four drainages in the Columbia basin that supports wild populations of native steelhead. As the native population of steelhead is dwindling, we should act to preserve what natural and pristine territory they have left. A project the size of the Stibnite Gold Project will drastically impact some of the nation's greatest forests and rivers and have irreversible, long-term environmental and socioeconomic impacts.

The mine proposal includes a re-opening of historic mining operations in the Stibnite Mining District near Yellow Pine, Idaho. The operations at the mine site plan to include open pits, mills, and a diversion of the river itself. Midas' pre-feasibility study discusses the engineering necessary to prevent this storage from leaking the cyanide, arsenic, and antimony expected to be present in tailings from this mine. The placement of this tailings pond within the stream bed at the head of the South Fork is a source of great concern in the event of an unintended release. Unintended release will affect water quality for the South Fork, as well as the Main Salmon, and potentially the Snake and Columbia rivers downstream. I do not find it acceptable to reroute the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River to re-open the mine, nor do I find it acceptable for the tailings storage to be placed inside the rerouted river bed.

I stand with American Rivers, Idaho Rivers United, and the South Salmon Alliance in opposition to the Stibnite mining project on the South Fork Salmon River, and urge the U.S. Forest Service to protect the clean water and Wild and Scenic values of the Salmon River. The environmental impact of re-opening pit mining would be catastrophic and irreversible. The economic gain is not worth further harming this unique and fragile ecosystem.