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Comments: I write to you today in support of Midas Gold Idaho's Stibnite Gold Project. Midas Gold should be commended for their transparency and attention to safety, the economy, and the environment that is apparent in their modified Plan of Restoration and Operations (MOD PRO) analyzed by the U.S. Forest Service in their recently released draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The Stibnite Gold Project is estimated to create hundreds of direct employee jobs and support many other businesses and vendors in the state, bringing with it a substantial positive economic impact. The company plans to invest as much as \$1 billion in Idaho that will trickle out into the economies of our local communities. It's a tremendous economic opportunity we cannot afford to let pass by us. Especially right now, given the current economic downturn.

Midas Gold Idaho has committed to not only investing in our economy, but to restoring our environment as well. Past mining operations have left the area around the Stibnite site in disrepair for decades, particularly disrupting fish migration in the Salmon River and Meadow Creek. Midas Gold has planned to use the Stibnite Gold Project to restore voluntary fish passage past the Yellow Pine pit and improve habitat and spawning grounds in the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River and Meadow Creek. In your draft EIS, the Forest Service concludes that the Stibnite Gold Project will restore 1,218.9 functional units of wetlands, or a 40% increase in wetland functional units. That is a substantial win for an ecosystem on the brink.

During operations, fish will have a temporary ability to reach the upper portions of the East Fork of the South Fork and Meadow Creek via a fish-friendly tunnel. This will provide immediate access for fish passage for the first time in 80 years. Once the project is complete, fish will then have a permanent solution to swim to the headwaters via a completely rebuilt waterway through the backfilled Yellow Pine pit and access roughly 6 miles of existing, enhanced, and/or restored habitat.

Although Midas Gold did not create the environmental problems seen at Stibnite, we thank Midas Gold for its commitment to restore the area as part of their plans submitted to the Forest Service. Thank you for allowing me to comment on this very important project and I ask that you approve Midas Gold Idaho's Alternative 2 of their modified Plan of Restoration and Operations.