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Comments:

I am writing in support of Alternative 5; the No Action Alternative. As I understand this issue, if the Forest Service doesn't choose this option, and instead decides to ruin the river as we all know it, then they aren't even coming close to doing their job. The facts are so evident about how destructive the Stibnite Gold Project is to the river as a whole and yet are being blatantly ignored. This ignorance will not be tolerated by the people who love the South Fork of the Salmon and who have respect for the environment.

Mining in itself is the most destructive industry, but gold mining in particular holds the disgusting title for causing irreversible harm to the freshwater ecosystems nationwide. And yet, this is deemed okay to the company based in Canada, Midas Gold Corporation. Who, frankly, needs to be educated on the permanent damage they are inflicting on our river. By adding another mine, 162.5 acres of wetlands will be destroyed, 630.3 acres of riparian areas will be destroyed, 20.8% of chinook salmon critical habitat will be destroyed in the analysis area, and it will create 446 million tons of potential acid generating and/or metal leaching materials. And that's not all, mine access roads would cross 71 different streams, exposing each stream to the risk of hazardous material spills and increased sedimentation, and tribal and recreational access will be restricted in the 3,423 acres footprint and 13,446 acres of public land within the operations Area Boundary for 20 years.

Meadow Creek, which is the planned area to be sucked dry by Midas, is currently a productive spawning habitat for chinook and resident habitat for bull trout. And Meadow Creek has already been restored and reclaimed by the Forest Service and EPA, so why endanger this clearly important site again? The environmental footprint that could be created in this one area is enough to not support this project, but the fact that a whole river could be irreparable is unacceptable.

There is no version of this plan where damage isn't placed on one of the best rivers in Idaho. And Midas's plan of "restoring the site" is an impossibility that will never be achieved and can never be guaranteed. My idea for "restoring the site" is to choose Alternative 5 and not allow the problem to happen in the first place. The EPA, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Forest Service have already contributed to reclamation in the heavily mined Stibnite area. Additionally, the Nez Perce Tribe spends 2.8 million a year on salmon restoration on the South Fork Salmon basin. Don't let their efforts go to waste, choose Alternative 5.