

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/8/2020 6:00:00 AM

First name: Brian

Last name: Hines

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to give my support for Midas Gold Idaho's permitting of the proposed Stibnite Gold Project because in the absence of governmental action, they offer the best hope of fixing this badly damaged mining district and restoring its natural habitat. Thanks to Midas Gold offering tours of the site as part of their community outreach efforts, I was able to witness first-hand the damage wrecked upon the Stibnite mining district that resulted from decades of mining under nearly non-existent governmental regulations. Unfortunately, there has been no indication that either the state or federal government intend to rectify this situation. However, fortunately for the community, the private sector is willing to step up: enter Midas Gold. They have designed a responsible mining plan which will also restore this neglected site by repairing damage the area's fisheries, landscape and water quality suffered at the hands of past mining activities. Rather than wait until mining is completed to begin restoration, the company has already begun to take initial steps like planting trees, recycling some 4,000 pounds and reducing sedimentation. With fisheries suffering much of the damage, Midas Gold included details in their Restoration and Operations Plan to permanently connect fish with their native spawning grounds for the first time in over eight decades. This includes plans to remove existing barriers to fish migration, re-establishing fish habitat and spawning areas and restoring stream channels impacted by previous mining on the site. Water quality is another part of the district's natural habitat that has suffered damage over the years. One of the main tributaries - Meadow Creek - currently passes by millions of tons of tailings from World War II abandoned by past miners. Midas Gold's belief is that those tailings are leaching metals into both groundwater and surface water. In order to address this problem, they plan to reprocess the tailings and properly store them in an engineered lined facility to prevent any additional metals leaching. It's clear that absent Midas Gold's intervention, the Stibnite mining district would remain neglected with continued deterioration of water quality and fisheries. It's for these reasons, the U.S. Forest Service should adopt alternative 2 laid out by Midas Gold in their modified Plan of Restoration and Operations.