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Comments: Hello,

I am writing as a concerned citizen. I have lived in Valley County, ID for three years now, and have decided to make it my home. The principal reason for me settling down here is the surrounding wilderness, nature, and recreation. It's clear that the Midas Gold Mine will affect not only the rural character of the landscape in Valley County (with a transfer station on Warm Lake Road, and increased industrial traffic), but will also be detrimental to the wilderness and natural world that brought me here in the first place. I have written some notes about the effects on fish population below.

I would like to speak specifically to the DEIS findings related to impact of the project on fish. The Proposed Stibnite Gold Project will irrevocably and irreversibly harm special status fish (DEIS p. 3.12.1). The DEIS indicates

that the Forest Service has preliminarily determined that this project will adversely affect fish including: bull trout (p. 4.12-87), Chinook salmon (p. 4.12-69), steelhead (p. 4.12-75); and may indirectly impact Westslope cutthroat trout (p. 4.12-93). Further, the DEIS findings conclude that the proposed project will result in a dramatic, direct loss of habitat: 20.8-26% of Chinook salmon habitat (range amongst all alternatives), and 27.5-69.5% of bull trout. Both Chinook salmon and the bull trout are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Further, the proposed project will result in changes in migratory patterns of fish, being required to pass through a fish tunnel. The various storage facilities (ie Tailings Storage Facility and Development Rock Storage Facility), will occur in and near Meadow Creek and Fiddle Creek, which would negatively impact critical areas that support native fishes threatened under the Endangered Species Act. These creeks serve as headwaters to support fish locally, as well as stream ecosystems and water quality downstream.

DEIS findings are indisputable in the ways the project will hinder the viability of fish habitat:

? Bull trout: "Total habitat availability for bull trout decreases along the timeline of the SGP. Post-closure, and a net decrease in quality and quantity of bull trout habitat would occur" (DEIS p. 4.12-83 and 4.12-87).

? Chinook salmon: "Following closure and reclamation, the overall net effect would be a loss of both quantity and quality of habitat for Chinook salmon" (DEIS p. 4.12-69).

? Western cutthroat trout: "Stream channel changes, direct effects to individuals, and changes to habitat indicators would negatively affect cutthroat trout in the analysis area through the loss of suitable habitat" (DEIS p. 4.12-93).

? Steelhead: "Negative effects ... are expected to be less intense for steelhead trout than those for Chinook salmon. Despite some improvement to access, 1.91 km of habitat in upper Meadow Creek would be blocked in perpetuity, and potential effects may cause injury or mortality to individuals. the net effect would be an increase in both the quantity and quality of habitat for steelhead trout" (DEIS p. 4.12-75).

The points above are simply a summary of points on the DEIS. From what I can tell from the DEIS, the water quality will also be adversely affected for communities downstream of the Gold Mine. This includes the whitewater industry and people that recreate in the Salmon River drainage. In a time when regulation of our wild spaces is being chipped away day after day, it is important to take a stand for what is scientifically proven, and right.

Thank you

