

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/27/2020 2:59:13 PM

First name: Karla

Last name: Miller

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Karla Miller I came to Long Valley in 1964 and live here now. My parents grew up here; in fact, my great-grandparents moved here from Finland in the late 1800's. I have relatives who homesteaded on the South Fork of the Salmon River. Creeks and ranches and roads are named for my family members. Suffice it to say that they saw this part of Idaho through some economic ups and downs. I have the distinct feeling that none of them would have approved of the boom, degrade, then bust plan that Midas Gold proposes without saying so. However, I can only speak for myself.

My experiences in the area of concern have been as a citizen who, from childhood onward, drove the precarious and beautiful roads along the South Fork and the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River. We camped and fished; soaked in the hot springs and learned the mountains. Later, I became a fire lookout for the Forest Service and grew more familiar and more in love with the specific area in question. I have spent time in these mountains and along these riverbanks. And I am concerned.

Firstly, I wish I had been able to read a printed copy of the DEIS. I'm not poor, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black or Latino; but I do live at the family ranch in Roseberry without internet. I've had to make considerable effort to participate in this process. That was an oversight.

Next, I don't trust the promises made in say...the Hazardous Materials section. Sentence after sentence contains specific words that sound good but conceal the problem. For example, the DEIS says, "Hazardous materials and chemicals would be transported to the mine site in USDT-certified containers by trained personnel and stored in designated areas employing secondary containment measures." Are 'certified' containers infallible? Are 'trained' personnel extra-smart and immune from human error? Are 'designated areas' in outer space, where they are no longer an issue? Are 'secondary containment measures' so much better than primary ones? What happens after that? The "Hazardous Materials Handling and Emergency Response Plan" is the thing I'm supposed to trust to deal with "accidental spills or releases of hazardous materials." The very statement is an admission that things can go awry in unanticipated ways. I'm supposed to be reassured because a 'plan' exists, even though the plan is probably to get the hell out of the area. Sure, Midas will try to "minimalize environmental effects." What kind of guarantee is that that the rivers won't be contaminated? That "there is little chance of wildlife being exposed to hazardous materials" does little to assure me. To be specific, hauling toxic reagents and fossil fuels both along the roads and at the mine site could result in spills with significant impact to fish (Chapter 4.12.2.3.2.1 and 4.7.2). Nearly the entire length of streams adjacent to both access routes (Burntlog and Yellow Pine) is within designated critical habitat for Chinook salmon, steelhead, bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout (Chapter 4.12.2). The fish, the wolverine, the grey wolf and the migratory birds--there is little chance they would survive this process unscathed and little chance that they were able to comment via email to voice their own concerns.

Lastly, economic impact of the Midas project does Valley County no long-term favors. Most workers (at least those who would make a living wage) would be from outside the area, commuting to the job site on roads that need to be maintained and spending their earnings in their own communities--not ours (4.21-9). Midas won't pay any property taxes, either, until after facilities are completed and operations begun. Thus, the actual construction activities would provide "negligible tax revenue benefits for the local area's economy" (4.21-8). The federal government would get most of the tax revenue once operations begin, followed by the State's coffers. Valley County would get approximately 30,000 a year, which is a relatively limited tax revenue increase for the local economy (4.21-26). The "dire consequences in the BUST cycle of the project (4.21-31...4.21-35) are understood and looming in a dark sky over the county, but "the DEIS offers no mitigations or ideas for reducing the impact of the projected massive disruption to the area's economy."

I am proud to stand in the boots of four generations of Long Valley residents who would not support the falsehoods and selfish motives of Midas Gold. They would (and I do) say, "We're fine without the mine. Save the South Fork!"