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Organization:

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Comments: Payette National Forest,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public feedback on the proposed Stibnite gold project. As a local McCall resident and avid whitewater kayaker I have a deep and personal connection to the Salmon River drainages and want to ensure that they are protected for generations to come. As a Registered Nurse in Valley county, I am particularly concerned about the environmental health impacts of this proposed mining project and its effects on all life downstream.

After reviewing the draft DEIS I am very concerned that in the event of hazardous material being spilled into the waterway, which the DEIS states is likely to occur, that mitigation and protocols for clean up are not sufficiently addressed or defined. The analysis area, which appears to end at the confluence of the EFSF and SF Salmon river, is too small and does not sufficiently address all the downstream effects. The DEIS vaguely states that "Spills could result in indirect impacts to outlying areas from releases to tributaries of the nearby watersheds or groundwater." Table 4.9-13 Lists 71 streams that could be potentially impacted on transportation routes to the mine. Why does the analysis area not include more of these potentially affected areas and the wildlife and resources potentially affected?

The current plan to treat surface water for the foreseeable future to meet state water quality standards relies on the assumption that whatever company mines the site will put money into a trust fund to support operational costs to treat the water forever. How much money will be placed into this fund and how is the number decided upon? According to the model the contamination will still require treatment 100 years from now, how will you assure the public that we will not be paying for this when the allocated funds run out? The DEIS also assumes, without showing any data to back it up, that chemical reactions causing the contamination's will slowly decrease to a point where contaminants will be below state standards. What will you do if state water quality standards change and become more strict over time; Or if the contamination's do not decrease overtime as suggested? Figure 4.8.8.2.3 states, again without supporting evidence, that it is unrealistic to bring water quality up to a standard that is better than what exists currently at the mine site. This is very discouraging that Midas openly admits before the project has even begun that they have no intention of improving water quality. The goal is restoration not just reclamation right? I believe we need to come together as a community and insist that the stibnite site be cleaned up.

Lastly, Recreation and tourism is a huge deal to Valley County. The local community relies heavily on it to support our local economy. As a whitewater paddler I have been fortunate enough to kayak rivers all over the United States and in multiple different countries. The South Fork of the Salmon is by far the most beautiful, exhilarating river I have ever experienced. It is rapidly growing in popularity, with people traveling from all corners of the globe to paddle its waters. In addition to whitewater it is an anglers paradise; a backpackers oasis; An area for people to see wild animals and unpopulated wilderness. 79% of Idaho's residents participate in outdoor recreation; and recreation opportunities, especially in Valley county, is a recruitment tool for businesses to attract and retain workers. (Source: Idaho Business for the Outdoors, 2020) This is too important of a tourism resource to not be considered. I cannot find a report, analysis, or any information at all on how the Stibnite proposal will affect tourism and recreation, or the related economic benefits to local communities. Please provide this missing information as related to the Stibnite Alternatives and a management plan for recreation in the area for each alternative.