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First name: Hayley

Last name: Stuart

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Linda Jackson, Vicki Christiansen, and NEPA review committee,

My name is Hayley Stuart. I am a whitewater kayaker, high school teacher, environmentalist, and a concerned citizen. I am writing in reference to the Midas Stibnite Gold Project DEIS.

First I'd like to mention that the South Fork of the Salmon is a special and unique free-flowing river whose importance must be acknowledged and valued. Many of our nation's rivers have been, and continue to be, contaminated by active and inactive mines, even ones that have been closed for generations. Once these sites begin to leach into their surrounding environment, it is nearly impossible to contain the chemicals and remediate the area.

My first concern is for the trout and salmon species that inhabit the South Fork of the Salmon River. According to American Whitewater, the South Fork represents a critical habitat for Chinook, Steelhead and Bull Trout, who would be impacted by increased water temperatures caused by the Stibnite Project. The South Fork of the Salmon has the potential to be protected by the Wild and Scenic River Act, and with so many rivers in America already contaminated, fragmented, and ecologically decimated by industry, I believe it should be protected. We are losing valuable watersheds like these every year, without truly considering the long-term cost.

For that reason, I would like to request three things in this letter:

To extend the comment period on the DEIS to the full 120 days

For Midas to provide a supplemental Draft EIS that includes more information

To support Alternative 5- no action, presented in the current DEIS

I am worried that the current DEIS does not contain sufficient information regarding environmental impact and mitigation strategies. Ensuring safe water quality is of the utmost importance ecologically and socially. What would happen if there was a spill of cyanide or other toxic chemicals? What mitigation measures would be taken? If groundwater was contaminated by a spill, who and how many would be impacted and what would be done? Furthermore, how does this project negotiate with Native American (Nez Perce) rights? Are they being included in these discussions? A supplemental Draft EIS is absolutely critical to make an informed decision on this issue. This is a sensitive issue, and there is a lot of convoluted information surrounding it. The public needs more time to be able to digest and react to the resources provided and have a transparent dialogue with Midas so we can all take the appropriate amount of time to consider adequate contingency plans or better alternatives.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

Sincerely,

Hayley