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Title:

Comments: Hi, my name is Alex Benjamin. I am Middle Fork guide, an engineer, an avid white water kayaker, and a local Boise, ID resident. Wild places are disappearing at rates never before seen on this earth, and the time for opening up the land to extractive industries ought to be a thing of the past. A huge concern for me as a citizen of ID and the planet is climate change and the global loss of ecological diversity we are currently experiencing. In ID and across the west fire seasons are growing in intensity and length year after year. Scientists agree that climate change is a huge contributor to the record breaking fire seasons we are seeing. Open pit mines emits 8 tons of CO2 for every ounce of gold produced. If Midas Gold produces gold at the rate they hope that would be increasing Valley County's emissions by 800%. I want to live here in Idaho and be able to raise a family here knowing that we're going to have clean air to breath, and not be choking on wildfire smoke. Gold is not an essential resource, and the mine does not give us a sustainable boost to our economy. There is a boom/bust associated with extractive industries. Midas Gold will invest the bare minimum here in ID and take their profits with them when they go, leaving us the mess to clean up and the original resource (the land) tarnished. Instead we could rely on the steady tourism economy that the Salmon River drainages already provide to ID. Idaho's Recreation and tourism generates \$7.8 billion in consumer spending and supports 78,000 jobs; 79% of Idaho's residents participate in outdoor recreation; and recreation opportunities is a recruitment tool for businesses used to attract and retain workers. People are drawn to Idaho for our wild expanses of untouched land and rivers. Let's not destroy a resource that is already making money and jobs for this state so Midas Gold solely can profit. I'm also concerned about the impact of this mine on our ID biodiversity and habitat loss. We are home to the highest elevation native salmon and steelhead population in the world. These fish are already teetering on the edge of extinction due to the Snake River Dams and they need every other advantage available to survive, namely a sustainable habitat. The South Fork of the Salmon is crucial habitat to these federally recognized endangered species. We can not risk their lives and well being with a mine that may have the best interests, but will still dramatically change the SF ecosystem. The DEIS even acknowledges that it will adversely affect Chinook salmon and steelhead. They acknowledge they will decrease habitat and change the water temperature and quality - these are critical parameters that these endangered species work within. Every fish counts and we can't afford to lose a single one on account of a completely nonessential gold mine. The DEIS acknowledges that "exceedances of the NMFS and USFWS and other applicable criteria for antimony, arsenic, copper, and mercury are anticipated to extend indefinitely post-closure." What is whatever profit they hope to incur measured against water that has been polluted indefinitely. Finally as a guide and avid recreationist I'm concerned about what this mine will do to our outdoor recreation industries and opportunities. The DEIS acknowledges recreation tourism is an important resource for local communities/economies, however does not go into detail about how recreation will be impacted by the Stibnite project and does not provide recent sources (sources are out of dates, esp. In the context of Idaho's booming population, noting its value of recreation). I would like to see information on impacts to economic and social cultural benefits of recreation to local communities and state, national, and international visitors in a supplemental DEIS that can be reviewed.

Thank you for your time and I hope you deeply consider the decision before you. These are our American public lands, why not let the American people decide what happens with them. People are voicing their concerns, please listen to them. Please realize the priceless value of an pristine river system that generates benefits far beyond what can be measured in GDP (though it also does bring in considerable GDP through tourism as I have mentioned). Please don't trade this resource that belongs to all of us for a quick buck. The river remaining untouched and is will offer us our return 10 fold (immeasurably honestly) compared to whatever profit the mine is able to generate.