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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello, my name is Opal Almerico, I'm 17 years old, and I've lived in Boise Idaho for my entire life. The reason my parents chose to settle down in Idaho of all 50 states is because of the pristine public lands, outdoor recreation, camping, natural hot springs and more! I have grown up spending time outdoors, and was taught to value all living things. This is why I feel the need to speak out on this issue.

Last summer I had the opportunity to go up to YellowPine Idaho with 14 of my fellow classmates, and get a tour of Stibnite Mine from 2 Midas Gold representatives. In the beginning of this experience they had me convinced that this project would truly uplift the surrounding community, and result in more good for the land and economy than bad. Once I took a closer look at their drawn out plan, I came to the realization that this was far from the truth. This is a boom and bust situation, once they get what they came for they will leave, resulting in a decline in jobs. Not only is it not a sustainable solution to job demand in rural Idaho, their restoration plan will never be able to truly return the land to how it was and instead destroy the surrounding ecosystem of the south fork of the salmon river.

During our tour they showed us the previous mine's tailing site, this helped me forever remember the lasting impacts a mine has on a natural area. No vegetation has grown there for 20 years, it is uninhabitable land. Seeing the actual size of the Glory Hole (main mining pit) helped me put into perspective the significance of the mine, and how much of an impact Midas proposed expansion (doubling the size of the disturbed mining area) will make on the surrounding land that has no past history of mining and remains untouched. The land is not restored, and will never be how it once was.

We must ask questions such as, what does this mine mean for the surrounding biodiversity of the salmon river? What does it mean for the bull trout spawning in Sugar Creek just a couple miles from this mine? Why do we act entitled to the land's minerals, when it's at the expense of other living beings that have been here longer than we have?

The significant issue I'm most concerned with is the Destruction of Sensitive Plant Species. It states in the DEIS- "construction and operation of mine infrastructure may impact habitat for sensitive plant species". These are plants that are vital to the surrounding ecosystem, and would be devastating to lose. According to Idahorivers.org, "Midas Gold's proposed project would destroy over 20% of critical habitat for Chinook and Bull Trout in the project area." The Alternative I am advocating for in this public comment is Alternative 5. "No action. No mine" I am also requesting that there be a comment period extension.

Thank you for your consideration, and allowing me the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Opal A. Almerico