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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Allison Fowle, and I'm a resident of Boise, Idaho. I have spent significant time in the area of the Stibnite Mine over the past several years, totalling about 100 days in the area. I have visited the area to recreate as a hiker, backpacker, and angler, as well as to learn more about Midas Gold's proposal to mine for gold and antimony. I have toured the site twice with Midas Gold in my capacity as a high school educator, bringing teens to the mine in order to help them form their own opinion on the issue. In doing so, I've spent countless hours researching the mine, interviewing stakeholders and experts (ranging from Midas representatives, to Nez Perce Tribe members, to hydrologists). Through this process of vigorous exploration and information seeking, I have become concerned about several aspects of the proposal, a few of which I will describe below.

Recreation

In Section 3.4.3.3.17, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) states that "communities near the analysis area are rural and rely heavily on tourism and the trade industry to support their economies." However, the DEIS does address the impact that the mine would have on recreation. I would like to request information on how the mine would impact the local tourism and recreation economy.

Roads

According to Section 4.16.2.1.1, the Yellowpine Route would be used until the Burnt Log Route is constructed. However, there are no planned modifications to the Yellowpine Route in order to make it safe for the project. Not only is this route dangerously close to sensitive streams (as described in Alternative 2), but it is also unable to handle this volume and type of traffic. I drive this route several times a year to visit the area, and even a single truck traveling the route can make conditions dangerous for other drivers; I have often had to back up nearly a quarter mile so that a truck can squeeze past me on a narrow, exposed section of road. Further, use of this route by trucks in winter is dangerous, and the plan includes no runaway truck ramps.

Stream Temperature

Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 all note increased stream temperatures (up to 4 degrees celsius) as impacts of this project, which would adversely impact species such as bull trout and chinook salmon. These projections do not account for inevitable temperature increases resulting from climate change. How much hotter will streams at the site become with the impacts of mining and climate change?

Transparency

I am concerned that the public will not be made aware of incidents and non-compliance at the mine site while the mine is in operation. Will the public still have access to see what is going on during mining? With so many agencies monitoring different aspects of the project, who will be the watchdog that ensures that Midas Gold is obeying the law and following the approved plan? I would like to request that the public be made aware of every instance of noncompliance and incidents/accidents occurring as part of the mining project.

Thank you for inviting and reviewing public comments; I appreciate the opportunity to ask questions and share concerns. Finally, I would like to state that Alternative 5 (no action) should be selected. This mining project is simply not appropriate for its location; the risk to wildlife, water quality, recreation, and aesthetic value is simply too high.

Thank you,

Allison Fowle

