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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Marsha Rich, a resident of Chichester, New Hampshire. I am aware of the proposal of Midas Gold to operate a gold mine in Valley County, Idaho and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement issued by the United States Forest Service that is open for public review and comment through October 28, 2020.

I first came to Idaho on a Salmon River rafting trip almost a dozen years ago. On that first visit I fell in love with the Idaho wilderness. I have returned every summer since, and several winters as well. My two adult children have moved to the region and through their employment and recreation spend considerable amounts of time in the Idaho back country rafting, kayaking, mountain biking and skiing.

Given what I know about the DEIS, I am extremely concerned with the shortcomings around the Reclamation, Mitigation and Remediation sections. Midas is proposing an open pit mine, which would divert the East Fork from its channel, excavate 3 massive pits, and impact over 3 square miles of land with industrial development. The modeling within the DEIS clearly indicates that unhealthy levels of arsenic, antimony, mercury, and other metals will contaminate water for decades to come.

When the mining is over, millions of tons of toxic sludge behind a 400 foot-high rock tailings dam will remain. The mine will damage a fragile high elevation environment. It threatens a web of economies that depend on clean water. It could result in near-perpetual water treatment and environmental clean-up. All of these impacts will have a long-lasting, deleterious effect on the Idaho wilderness and river environment. This in turn will negatively affect the residents of Idaho and beyond, who benefit in so many ways from this unique and irreplaceable environment.

I hope and trust that you will consider these comments as you review the Midas Gold proposal.