

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/15/2020 6:00:00 AM

First name: Sherry

Last name: Maestas

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Stibnite Gold Project as part of the U.S. Forest Service's permitting process. This is an important project for Valley County and will have a significant impact on the community. As someone who explores, plays and cares about this region of Idaho's backcountry, I want to make sure the Stibnite Gold Project is done the right way.

Salmon have been cut off from miles of high-mountain spawning grounds and rearing habitats since roughly 1938, when the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River (EFSFSR) was diverted around the Yellow Pine Pit. The only way for salmon to reproduce is by stocking them in Meadow Creek, where spawning occurs. We need to do better. As part of Midas Gold's proposal in Alternative Two, the company would design and install a fish passageway to help connect fish to their native spawning grounds for the first time in decades. The passageway would be built using best practices learned from successful examples used around the world. And it would be constructed before mining even starts. Once mining at the Yellow Pine Pit is complete, Midas Gold would begin full restoration of the river, creating a long-term solution for salmon to spawn upstream. In the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the U.S. Forest Service found that removing these historical barriers to migration will help local fish populations by increasing productivity.

This Stibnite Gold Project is a huge opportunity for Idaho. I am grateful for the tools the Forest Service has provided to review the DEIS and learn more about the project. These tools have given Idahoans sufficient time to comment. Please permit alternative 2 and continue moving the project forward so our citizens can reap the positive impacts.