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First name: Emma
Last name: Cole
Organization:
Title:
Comments: As an Idaho local and an individual that values the rivers and waterways of the state, I am submitting my comment in support of Alternative 5, the No Action Alternative outlined in the Stibnite Gold Project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I am writing as a concerned citizen and stakeholder of the public lands on which the mine is proposed. The lands that belong to the people, not to our government and most certainly not to Midas Gold. The Forest Service is directed to manage in the public interest, and it seems quite apparent that it is in the best interest of the public to leave the South Fork of the Salmon Watershed untouched.

The DEIS explicitly outlines the detrimental impacts that the Stibnite Mine will have to this ecosystem. Apart from Alternative 5, all proposed alternatives presented will adversely affect federally listed endangered Bull Trout, as well as Chinook Salmon and Steelhead and their habitats. The proposed gold project has the potential to damage as much as 70% of critical Bull Trout habitat that to this point has been left generally undisturbed. Aside from fish, the water quality and water quantity of the Salmon River watershed are likely to be severely affected and likely contaminated as well. I'm sure that these facts are not new information to you, but I am submitting my comment to assure you that we the people are not blind or ignorant to the threat our lands and waterways are under.

The South Fork of the Salmon River introduced me to the wonders of overnight river trips, and provided insight into the pristine wilderness that we as Idahoans so dearly cherish. The immense impact that this watershed has had on me is not short of the negative impact that Midas Gold will have on the native fish, outdoor recreation, and the economic vitality of the local communities of the South Salmon. The detrimental effects of the Stibnite Gold Project will not go unnoticed by the thousands and thousands of visitors to our national forests and public lands. Not to mention that ultimately, this mine will impact the Main Fork of the Salmon River, which will impact the Snake River, which ultimately effects the Columbia River Gorge that drains into the Pacific Ocean. The renewed Stibnite Mine will not be without consequences, and we cannot pretend that the impacts of this mine will affect only the immediate footprint of the mine.

What happens when the increasing amount of seismic activity impacts the soil and debris that have been displaced as a result of mining?
If Midas Gold goes bankrupt in this process, who will clean up the Stibnite mine site as Midas has promised to do so?
Will Midas Gold be held liable for the impacts they have on the threatened species in the Salmon River?
There are so many unanswered questions, and questions to which insufficient answers have been provided.

As the Payette National Forest and the South Fork of the Salmon River are finally healing from the scars of past mining activity, we cannot take on the unacceptable risk that the Stibnite Gold Project will subject our wilderness to. I urge you to please protect OUR public lands. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please support Alternative 5.

Sincerely,
Emma Cole