Stibnite Gold Project

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Mining History

Stibnite Mining District

Coeur d'Alene

McCall

Cascade

IDAHO

Stibnite Gold Project
Mining Laws and Regulations on National Forest System lands

Federal Mining Laws

- **1872 Mining Law:** established the statutory right to search for, develop and extract mineral deposits on public domain lands open to mineral entry. The project is within the Stibnite Mining District where mineral entry is allowed.
- **Mining & Minerals Policy Act of 1970:** declared it in the national interest to foster and encourage private enterprise in the development of domestic mineral resources and reclamation of mined land.

Forest Service Regulations

Locatable Minerals - **36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228, Subpart A:** requires the Forest Service to:

- Respond to a mining Plan
- Evaluate that Plan
- Consider requirements to minimize adverse effects to the extent feasible
- Comply with applicable laws, regulations and standards for environmental protection
- Provide for Reclamation
- Further respond by following National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.
Forest Service Project Steps

Plan of Operations is submitted → Environmental Impact Statement is developed → Record of Decision is published → Permits and clearance from other Federal & State Agencies → Mine operations can begin
Cooperating Agencies

Government agencies having jurisdiction by law or special expertise on issues to be addressed, and that intend to Cooperate on the EIS include:

• The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
• The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
• Idaho Department of Lands (IDL)
• Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ)
• Idaho Governor’s Office Energy & Mineral Resources (OEMR)
• Valley County

Required permits include, but are not limited to, a Clean Water Act (CWA) section 404 permit to fill waters of the United States (issued by the USACE); and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) CWA section 402 permit (issued by the EPA or IDEQ).

The Forest Service is also Consulting and/or coordinating with other regulatory agencies and Tribes.
NEPA Process & EIS Timeline

During the Scoping Period, the public provides input regarding project and resource concerns. This input is used to identify issues to be addressed through alternatives developed or EIS analysis.
Purpose & Need

The purpose of the project is to provide for approval of a Plan, which would govern occupancy and use of NFS lands for operations that are reasonably incident to mining.

To provide for such approval, the Responsible Official needs to determine whether reasonable changes or additions to the Plan are necessary in order to meet the requirements of regulations set forth in 36 CFR 228 Subpart A and other applicable laws, regulations, or policies, prior to approval.
Proposed Action

• The Forest Service Responsible Official proposes to approve the Plan submitted by Midas Gold, with any modifications determined necessary through the analysis to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

• The Army Corps of Engineers would review the proposed plan and EIS for purposes of evaluating Midas Gold’s application for a Clean Water Act (CWA) section 404 permit.

• The EPA would review the proposed plan and EIS for purposes of evaluating Midas Gold’s application for a related NPDES (CWA section 402) permit. However, EPA is in the process of reviewing the State of Idaho’s application to implement the NPDES program in Idaho. EPA’s role in issuing any final permit will depend on timing of program authorization and the NEPA process.

• As described in the Plan, the Stibnite Gold Project would affect federal, state, and private lands. The proposed action by the Forest Service would only authorize approval of mining-related operations on NFS lands, because the Forest Service does not have jurisdiction to regulate mining operations that occur on private or state land. However, the EIS will consider and disclose environmental effects of mining-related operations that would occur on private and state lands.

• Connected actions related to the Plan, including but not necessarily limited to CWA permitting and potential amendments of the Payette and Boise Forest Plans, will be considered. Impacts of past, present, ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in the project area will be considered in combination with the impacts of the project to estimate the potential cumulative impacts of project implementation.
Project Description

The Plan, as submitted by Midas Gold, proposes redevelopment of the Stibnite site over the course of approximately 20 years as follows:

• Initial Redevelopment and Construction (2 to 3 years)
• Mining and Ore Processing (12 to 15 years)
• Closure and Reclamation (2 to 3 years)
• Final Closure and Monitoring (5* years)
Economics

Midas Gold has projected their proposed operations would produce:

• 4+ million ounces of gold
• 2+ million ounces of silver
• Antimony concentrates, containing approximately 100 million pounds of elemental antimony
• Professional and technical jobs, as well as indirect employment
• State, local, and federal tax revenues
Preliminary Issues and/or Resources to be Addressed

- access and transportation
- aesthetics and visual resources
- botanical resources, including wetlands and threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species
- climate and air quality
- cultural and heritage resources, including Tribal rights
- environmental justice
- federal land management and environmental protection
- fire and fuels management
- fisheries and wildlife, including threatened, endangered, proposed, and sensitive species
- geochemistry
- geology and mineral resources
- hazardous materials
- land use
- long-term, post-closure site management
- noise
- public health and safety
- recreation
- research natural areas
- roadless and wilderness resources
- socioeconomics
- soils and reclamation cover materials
- timber resources
- water resources (groundwater and surface water)
- water rights
Reclamation and Bonding

Per 36 CFR 228, Subpart A: Prior to approval of a Plan of Operations for mining on NFS lands, the authorized officer may require a bond to ensure performance of reclamation.

Reclamation: Requirements for reclamation of areas disturbed by mineral operations must be included in contracts and permits. Reclamation must be timely, complete and conducted concurrently with mining operations. Bonds shall not be released until reclamation has been certified by the Forest Service as complete.

Midas Gold’s Plan includes reclamation measures such as: reshaping topography, drainage systems, segregation of spoil materials, waste disposal, revegetation, soil treatments, motorized access, backfilling the Yellow Pine Pit, and restoring the EFSFSR channel to approximate pre-mining conditions, which would provide natural fish passage.

Reclamation measures may be refined through the EIS process. Reclamation cost estimating procedures and the types of financial instruments that may be accepted to assure reclamation will be disclosed in the EIS.
Infrastructure at the Project Site

Onsite Housing

- Two-week on/off work cycle
- Bus/van service minimizes commute time to mine
- Decreases road traffic & dust, lower accident risk & lower greenhouse gas emissions
- Accommodation for ~500 people Hotel style accommodation

Meal service, laundry, housekeeping, first aid, Wi-Fi, health services, recreation facilities, 24 hour food
Road Maintenance Facility at, or adjacent to, Landmark

Road maintenance & snow removal
  – Sanding/snowplowing trucks, snow blowers, road graders, and support equipment

Additional features:
  – Double-contained fuel storage area to support maintenance equipment
  – Covered stockpiles of coarse sand & gravel for winter sanding
  – Housing for road maintenance crews
  – Communications equipment & towers as needed

Located on previously disturbed land
  – Minimizes new disturbances and repurposes a legacy gravel pit
Access to the Site

Current Route: East Fork South Fork Salmon River
Travel adjacent to tributaries of the Salmon River, including Johnson Creek, then up the East Fork of the South of the Salmon River from Yellow Pine.

Proposed Burntlog Route (bypasses Yellow Pine)
• Intent is to avoid travel along waterways
• Burntlog Road extension would entail a combination of upgrading existing forest roads, and new road construction
• Inventoried Roadless Areas
• At time of mine closure, this route would be returned to pre-project configuration
Public Access Proposed in the Plan

- Access to Thunder Mountain via Warm Lake Road to Burntlog to Thunder Mountain Connector
- Close Stibnite Road at the north gate just past Sugar Creek
- Connect Horse Heaven/powerline road to Meadow Creek Lookout as a motorized trail

**Winter Access**

- Plow Warm Lake Road to Landmark, provide parking for visitors at Landmark
- Work with Valley County Parks & Recreation to support continued winter recreation access
- Groomed over-snow access to Landmark via Cabin Creek/Trout Creek trail
Logistics Center at Cascade

The “Scott Valley” Administrative and Transportation Facility (Warm Lake Road, east of Cascade, ID) would accommodate:

– Accounting & Human Resources
– Purchasing & Accounting
– Administration & Management
– Warehousing & Storage
– Laboratory

It is also intended to minimize traffic to and from site:

– Consolidate staff transport to the mine site
– Consolidate loads to be hauled up to site
– Reduce dust & sediment generated by vehicles
– Reduce risk of accidents along route
– Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles
Powerline

The old powerline to the mine site has been removed, but a corridor was retained for future use. This, in addition to construction of a new piece of the corridor, is proposed. This would require:

- Upgrading existing line from Lake Fork substation to a new substation near Johnson Creek airstrip
- Rebuilding line from new substation to Stibnite
- Rebuilt line follows existing and new route
- Rights of way and easements on public and private land may be required
Mining Sequence

1. Process legacy tailing & drain/open Yellow Pine Pit mine

Proposed general sequencing of mining is based on:
- Prioritizing fish passage to spawning grounds
- Restoring river using development rock from West End
- Balancing the different grade & ore types
- Maintaining a stable workforce & equipment requirements
- Economics of extraction and processing
Timeline for Public Scoping

45 Day Public Scoping Period that ends on **July 20, 2017** – written comments are requested by this date.

Additional public comment will be received following the publishing of the Draft Environmental Analysis

**How to submit comments:**

- By Fax ATTN: Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom- Stibnite Gold EIS at 208-634-0744
- By Email: Email to comments-intermtn-payette@fs.fed.us Include subject line: “Stibnite Gold EIS Scoping Comment”
- At this meeting: Comment forms are available to fill out and leave with the Forest Service tonight or mail via USPS.
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS): Mail a completed/stamped comment form or letter to: Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom- Stibnite Gold EIS Payette National Forest 500 N. Mission St., Bldg 2, McCall, ID 83638