
PRESS RELEASE

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Nez Perce Tribe Opposes Proposed Stibnite Gold Mine

Stibnite Gold Project in Central Idaho Threatens Tribal Resources and Restoration Efforts

Lapwai, Idaho -- On October 9, 2018, the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (“NPTEC”), the governing body of the Nez Perce Tribe (“Tribe”), adopted a Resolution formally opposing the proposed Stibnite Gold Project. This project would be an open-pit gold mine within the Tribe’s aboriginal territory in central Idaho. The mine, proposed by Midas Gold Corp., a Canadian company, and its subsidiary, Midas Gold Idaho (collectively “Midas Gold”), poses a threat to the Tribe’s Treaty-reserved resources and the livelihood, health, and socio-economic well-being of Nez Perce Tribal members and surrounding communities.

“For the Nez Perce Tribe, the value of the land, wildlife, and resources will always be worth more than any amount of gold. History has proven that mining scars the landscape and damages natural resources. Damage to our natural resources will have long-term impacts on everyone, and the impacts will still be felt by people here long after the company, and gold, have left the country. We encourage surrounding communities to take a hard look at Midas Gold’s claims,” stated Shannon F. Wheeler, NPTEC Chairman.

The open pit gold, silver, and antimony mine would occupy approximately three square miles in the headwaters of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, 35 air miles east of McCall, Idaho. The East Fork South Fork Salmon River is a tributary to the South Fork and main Salmon rivers, the Snake River, and the Columbia River. Midas Gold proposes to extract between 4 and 5 million ounces of gold during the estimated 21 to 28-year life of the mine. Midas also proposes storing approximately 100 million tons of toxic mine tailings and 350 million tons of waste rock at the site in perpetuity.

Historic mining has already affected the headwaters of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, modifying salmon spawning areas and lowering water quality. The Tribe's Department of Fisheries Resources Management currently spends \$2.5 million dollars annually on hatchery supplementation, fishery research, and watershed restoration near, and downstream of, Midas Gold's proposed mine. The Tribe's work to restore Chinook salmon runs in the South Fork Salmon River watershed sustainably contributes to the area's economy and quality of life.

The negative impact of the proposed mine on the water, natural resources, and recreation economy of the region underscore the Tribe's opposition to this massive project. The enormous project would dramatically alter the area's physical landscape by mining approximately two square miles of previously undisturbed land. This would create a footprint almost three times the size of the historic Stibnite mine site, destroying upland habitat, degrading wildlife security, and damaging the surface water and groundwater regimes. The proposed access route will also increase traffic in, and access to, a now remote area, which is partially roadless and borders the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

"Midas Gold claims its mine will restore the damage done by previous mining in the area. However, the mine Midas Gold is proposing will be far larger than previous mines at the site. And, gold mining, by its very nature, destroys and contaminates resources and habitat---resources and habitat that the Tribe heavily relies on and is currently working to restore. The Tribe, the United States, and the state of Idaho have already poured millions of dollars into restoring this area," continued Chairman Wheeler. "Allowing Midas Gold to move forward with their proposed mine will undo the hard work of so many. We have yet to see a mine that does more good than harm and it is our responsibility to look out for our future generations. This mine, if approved, will surely be to the detriment of those future generations," concluded Chairman Wheeler.

"The Earth is part of my body...I belong to the land out of which I came. The earth is my mother."
– Toohoolhoolzote, a Nez Perce Chief

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