



The Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board's mission is to conduct fair and timely environmental impact assessments in the Mackenzie Valley that protect the environment, including the social, economic and cultural well-being of its residents.

June 2012, Vol. 8 No. 6

Hydro and Oil/Gas Frac'ing Operations Tour - May 29-31, 2012

On May 27th, the Review Board travelled to Fort St. John, BC to take part in information sessions and field tours of hydro dams and oil/gas operations upstream of the Mackenzie Valley.

BC Hydro facilitated the first day, which included an information session on the proposed "Site-C Project" (a third dam on the Peace River) and two comprehensive tours of both the W.A.C Bennett Dam and Peace Canyon Dam. The tours gave the Review Board a first-hand look at large-scale hydro projects, along with an understanding of the proposed Site C Project.



Pictured above: Review Board members and Staff with BC Oil and Gas Commission and Shell Canada representatives, in front of Akita's 45 drilling rig, located approximately 30 kilometres outside of Fort St. John, BC.

The BC Oil and Gas Commission facilitated the next two days of the tour. The Review Board met with Commission representatives for an information-packed day concerning oil and gas activities, particularly related to hydraulic fracturing (frac'ing) operations.

The Review Board spent the third day touring a drilling rig, multi-pad producing well site, frac water pond and a final stop at a waste processing facility. The event-filled day gave the Review Board a look at what is involved in a fracturing development.

The Review Board thanks both BC Hydro and the BC Oil and Gas Commission for their information sharing and amazing hospitality shown over the three days.



Ongoing environmental assessments

Click headings to visit the Review Board's public registry for that particular assessment

Thor Lake Rare Earth Elements Project - Avalon Rare Metals Inc. EA1011-001

Status: Review Board scheduling technical session for mid-August.

This proposed rare earth element mining project is at Thor Lake, 100 kilometres southeast of Yellowknife on the north side of Great Slave Lake. The development includes a hydro-metallurgical facility at the former Pine Point mine site on the south side of the lake. On March 2nd, 2012 the developer submitted its remaining responses to the January 2012 information requests. The Review Board reviewed the responses and asked the developer to provide clarification regarding the submitted water quality data. The developer submitted adequate responses on May 18th, and the Review Board is now scheduling a technical session for the week of August 13-17, 2012.

NICO Project - Fortune Minerals Ltd. EA0809-004

Status: Review Board and parties preparing for public hearings from July 27 to August 2.

This proposed open pit and underground cobalt-gold-bismuth mine is located approximately 50 kilometres northeast of Whati. The information request phase of the environmental assessment is complete. Technical reports are due from parties by June 15th. The Review Board will hold public hearings in Whati on July 27th, in Yellowknife on July 30th and in Behchoko on August 1st and 2nd, 2012.

Yellowknife Gold Project - Tyhee NWT Corporation EA0809-003

Status: Review Board has extended the date for Information Request to June 29th, 2012. Developer is required to submit responses to these parties IRs after this date.

This is a proposed open pit gold mine 88 kilometres north of Yellowknife, near the former Discovery Mine site. In late August 2011, the Review Board issued a number of information requests to the developer related to water quality. The Review Board has granted IR extensions for parties. After that time, the developer is expected to respond to these IRs and also submit an updated Project Description in preparation for the future technical meeting.

Giant Mine Reclamation and Remediation Project - Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada EA0809-001

Status: Parties preparing technical reports, due July 11, 2012

The Contaminants and Remediation Directorate of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is proposing to remediate and reclaim the Giant Mine site within the City of Yellowknife. The development includes the future disposition of 237,000 tonnes of arsenic trioxide currently stored underground and 16 million tonnes of contaminated surface tailings. On May 7th, the Review Board issued three additional information requests dealing with questions about Baker Creek, long term funding, and project oversight. Responses were received on June 11th, 2012 and have been posted on the public registry. Parties are now preparing their technical reports for submission by July 11, 2012. The public hearing will be held in Yellowknife at the Tree of Peace building September 10th to 14th, 2012. Shuttle buses to and from Dettah will be provided.



Ongoing environmental impact review

Gahcho Kué Diamond Mine - De Beers Canada Inc. EIR0607-001

Status: Developer preparing technical session follow-up reports.

The proposed development is a large open-pit diamond mine approximately 280 km northeast of Yellowknife, NT. The Review Board established the Gahcho Kué Panel to evaluate the impacts of this development. De Beers is preparing reports as follow-up to the May 22nd to 25th technical sessions. Focused second round information requests will be accepted from parties two weeks after the developer's reports have been submitted. The due date for focused second round information requests from parties is anticipated to be mid-July.

Ministers preparing response

Mineral Exploration Program - Encore Renaissance Resources. EA0506-005

Status: Report of EA issued in November 2007. Ministers referred the decision back for further consideration in April 2010. Review Board released Reasons for Decision with modifications to measures in November 2011.

This is a proposed diamond exploration program in the area of Drybones Bay. In November 2007, the Review Board recommended the development proceed to the regulatory phase, subject to the measures outlined in the Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment. In April 2010, the federal Minister, on behalf of responsible ministers, referred the Report of Environmental Assessment back for further consideration.

Following a public hearing in September 2011, the Review Board further considered the evidence and revised most of its measures. The revisions clarify the responsibilities of government for implementing the measures, as well as the intent and desired outcomes of the measures. The Review Board's recommendation to approve the project with the revised measures was resubmitted to the federal and responsible ministers for acceptance on November 16th, 2011.

Mineral Exploration Program - Sidon International Resources Corp. EA0506-006

Status: Report of EA issued in February 2008. The federal and responsible ministers preparing response.

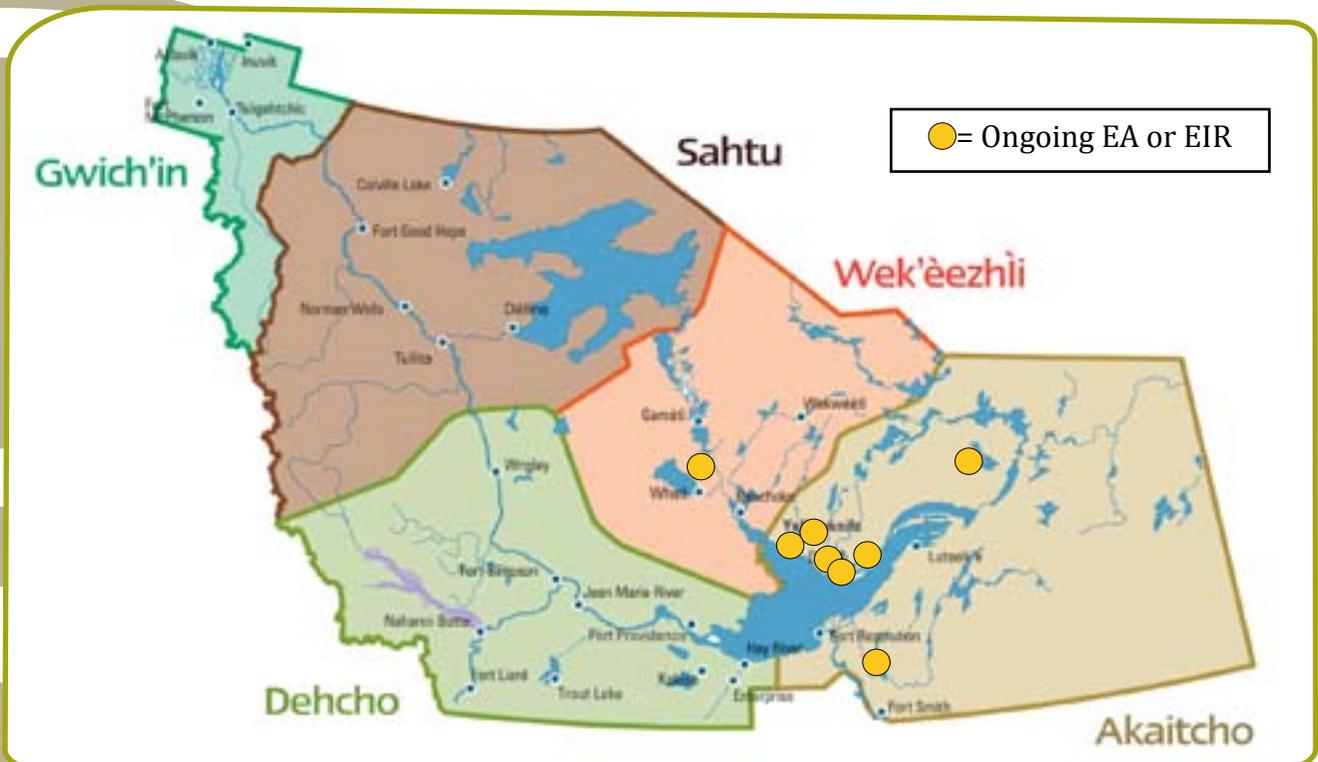
This is a proposed mineral exploration program at Defeat Lake. In February 2008, the Review Board recommended the proposed development proceed to the regulatory phase, subject to the measures in the Review Board's Report of Environmental Assessment and Reasons for Decision. In May 2010, the federal Minister advised the Review Board that the federal and responsible ministers need more time to review the report.

Environmental assessment adjourned

Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion Project - Dezé Energy Corporation Ltd. EA0708-007

Status: Report of EA issued March 2010. Ministers referred the decision back to the Review Board for further consideration in December 2010. Temporarily adjourned March 2011 at the request of the developer.

This development is a proposed expansion to add 35 megawatts of power generating capacity to the Taltson Twin Gorges Plant, and includes a 690 kilometre transmission line to the diamond mines. The Review Board approved the development with measures to mitigate environmental and cultural impacts. In December 2010, the federal Minister, on behalf of responsible ministers, referred the Report of Environmental Assessment back to the Review Board for further consideration. However, in March 2011 the Review Board granted an adjournment at the developer's request. The Review Board is waiting for an update from the developer on the status of the Taltson Hydroelectric Expansion project and its best predictions for when the developer will ask the Review Board to resume the environmental assessment.



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