

West Point First Nation Community Scoping Session Summary Notes Pine Point Mine Project July 5, 2021

This report summarizes the comments and questions from people in West Point First Nation, during the community scoping session for the Pine Point Mine Project environmental assessment on July 5th, 2021. Review Board staff facilitated the meeting in-person, at the West Point First Nation boardroom. The developer, Pine Point Mining Limited, participated online.

Presentation links

The Review Board presentation shown at the community meeting is here:

[MVRB community scoping presentation - West Point First Nation - July 5](#)

Pine Point Mining Limited presentation shown at the community meeting is here:

[Pine Point Mining Limited - community scoping presentation](#)

July 5 evening – West Point First Nation boardroom

Opening prayer and introductions

MVRB presentation – 10 minutes

Pine Point Mining Ltd. Presentation – 15 minutes

The following is a summary of questions asked by people in West Point First Nation, with responses by Pine Point Mining Limited except where questions are answered by Review Board staff as noted.

Q: I am not a miner, but fisher-person. We catch fish on Great Slave Lake right here. Water used to be different. 3 years ago, water became dark and muddy. Used to catch fish, but they became sick – skinny trout, big heads. Red spots on the suckers. Not sure how the fish are this summer, should ask the other fishermen about it.

Q: Are the old open pit ponds fenced?

A: There are some fences left behind by Cominco. We will be looking in the closure plan to see whether or not to keep it fenced.

Q- Do ducks land on the ponds?

A: Yes

Q- Spring hunting there. More snow geese and other ducks. Less swans. Not as many cranes. Mallards & brown-headed ducks the size of mallards – hardly any there anymore.

A: Interesting to know. See a lot of birds in the area.

Q- Seen ravens fly a lot there. West side – escaping from something?

Q: How do they get minerals from the ground? explosives?

A: Yes, mining using explosives to break up rock to transport to the process plant.

Q: Vibrations from explosive carry a long way. Do the vibrations carry to Great Slave Lake?

A: Vibrations will not reach Great Slave Lake. This can be measured. But we are 5-10 km away from the lake and use small explosions. Vibrations would not make it that far.

Q: Summer vs winter vibrations. Vibration carries much longer in winter. Ice cracking one winter. Would vibrations affect fish too? Has this been considered?

A: Has not been considered at this time. Consideration of this could come later in environmental assessment process and into the permitting phase. Have not considered it, and not sure if seasonal sound effect considered at other mines either.

Q: Is there clearcutting of trees around the mines site? Clearcutting kills birds and nests.

A: We try to avoid clearing when birds are migrating and nesting. We would go into an area with Indigenous people to help avoid nests if and when we can.

Q: How about wolves, fox, other animals?

A: Usually the larger animals tend to stay away from all the moving equipment, and explosions. We ask that people do not leave food lying around and dispose of waste properly at the camp and work sites.

Q: Is there dirty water running to Great Slave Lake?

A: We will not put water into Great Slave Lake. We will reinject it/pump it back into the ground or use the existing pits to store it.

Q: Is this the same mining process since the last mine was opened here? Or is it a totally different way of producing?

A: Going to be very similar to former mine. Similar sized pits, transport ore back to process plant. Will put waste rock in the pits if they are close enough.

Q: Where is the water accessed from?

A: Most of it will be recycled. We will take some from Great Slave Lake. Not a huge amount but will reuse it on-site.

Q: How far deep are you going?

A: Underground about 150 m deep. Open pits 100 m deep maximum.

Q: How will you get the water from Great Slave Lake?

A: Water will be piped, and recycled from process plant

Q: Is there arsenic in the tailings?

A: No arsenic in tailings, this is not a gold mine.

Q: Need to consider differences between lake water and groundwater.

Q: Do moose and caribou pass through there?

A: Yes, both are there. Caribou mostly around Buffalo River. GNWT has been tracking caribou. They tend to stick close to buffalo river and some west. Some around the mine. There are moose, but no one is tracking them, cannot comment on them at this point.

Q: How big is the tailings-pond?

A: PPML presentation slide 7, showing mined-out open pit shared on screen. Typical existing pits used for tailings 60-70m wide, 30m deep. Will use about 7 existing pits in a number of places, but they will not very big. Will encourage new plant growth on top of it.

Q: Scared for those ducks and scared to eat them now. They are traditional foods for us to hunt and eat them. Not safe.

A: Will totally cover the tailings in pits with waste rock.

Q- Do you have a net or cage over those tailings ponds?

A: There will be a pump to suck out water from small pond in middle of tailings when filling with tailings. Can put something over this to cover during operations, then when pit full will be covered with waste rock.

Q: Concerns about our sewage lagoon here and eating ducks. Not sure if they are sick or not.

A: As part of that work, we are going to have to look at the ducks and see how healthy they are now. Keep an eye on it for the life of the mine.

Q: Want to know about fish, ducks, muskrat, moose, fox, beaver, otters.

Q: How safe is that soil for the animals we eat when reclaimed after mining? Is it fenced in?

A: Soil for reclamation is saved. Organics are gone, but we reuse the soil.

Q: We are right by the lake. The water from mine area comes thru West Point headed down to the Mackenzie River. My concern is the linkage. The water is high now as well.

A: We will look at this before we start mining (baseline), and also as mining goes on. We will be monitoring during operations and closure to make sure things are not going thru to Great Slave Lake.

Q: All the wildlife is important in this area (besides the species listed). All connected to harvested foods and the in food-chain.

Q: Fishing in 1963. 500 yards from shore. Something in the water (film) from the old mine. People who used to fish there could not catch anything. Had to go far east to Paulette Bay. Same thing happened to those in Fort Res.

Q: What about the rain and rainwater? It goes towards the lake – runoff. Underground water as well.

Q: Not too long ago in the wintertime, went up hill to get some medicine. Did not find any but took some ice from a pond. Took it home and it took a very long time to thaw. Not like Great Slave Lake ice. Groundwater is different, as is its ice.

Q: Ted – When do you expect the mine to start operating?

A: 2025.

Q: Are you doing studies right now? And after? To see what happened and the process?

A: Yes, studies going on now are called baseline studies to show what it is like there now. Will continue through life of mine and after closure as well, to see if closure is going as we thought it would.

A: (Review Board staff) During permitting and licensing, the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board will also engage on closure and monitoring with communities.

Q: Are we going to be compensated for any damage to Great Slave Lake? Worried about water being polluted. If we lose the water, we lose our livelihoods & fishing.

A: If there is damage, yes, we would look at it, and how it affected the people and look at compensation. Our goal is to avoid damage to the lake.

Q: What is the highest toxin/toxic mineral? Asking because we did a study on traditional foods. Found to be high in mercury. Want to know highest toxins released from the mine.

A: Mercury is not in the rocks, or from our process. Tends to be high across northern Canada. Depends on fish eaten and age of fish. Mercury not found in our deposits. Sometimes when you flood an area mercury can be released from organic material. We are not going to do that, however.

Q: There could be some sinkholes in some places, there is lots of water out there now... This water could cover the vegetation.

A: Yes, there could be some. We know of some sinkholes, but do not see it as concern.

Q- When is our next meeting?

A: (Review Board) We will be back after the release of the Developer's Assessment Report. Pine Point Mining might want to talk about when they will be here?

A: (Pine Point Mining) I hope to be up in Hay River this month. Would like to have informal coffee and you tell me what you know. Or we could do it in the fall. Who is the contact in the community?

A: (WPFN) Wendy Ross is the WPFN contact.

Q: What is the terms of reference?

A: (Review Board) The Terms of Reference contains categories of subjects that Pine Point Mining needs to look at for the environmental assessment. Pine Point will need to look at this document and answer the questions in it to produce a Developer's Assessment Report.

Q: Can we bring up other environmental concerns? Or just the Pine Point Mine?

A: (Pine Point Mining) Many things are interconnected. Connections between mine and community, absolutely.

Q: Sewage lagoons - flowing into river past us. MVLWB was supposed to be looking into it last year, but we have not heard back from them.

There are flood-water issues right now – town trying to moderate the water flow, but someone along the highway is making trenches into the lake. Water coming back into the island. Old town streets getting water in their yards. Contaminated water in people’s backyards. Someone is also breaking beaver dams, bringing more water over. Lots of damage is being done. DFO is involved. Not sure if anyone else? Water is now coming inland.

Q -Water is coming in here everywhere and not going anywhere. Creeks have all be shunted around from where they used to be and diverted. Gravesites were disturbed when they were doing this island creation and dredging.

A: (Review Board) We will pass your concerns on to the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board

8:10 pm - next steps described, closing prayer, meeting closed

Participants List: July 5 – West Point First Nation

In person:

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board - Chuck Hubert, Catherine Fairbairn, Jeremy Freeman

West Point First Nation

Wendy Ross, William Michelle, Shannon Buckley, Nancy Michelle, Ted Cayen

Online:

Pine Point Mining Limited- Andrew Williams

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board - Mark Cliffe-Phillips

GNWT (Lands) - Melissa Pink

Government of Canada (CanNor)- Katie Bakker