



**Mackenzie Valley
Environmental Impact
Review Board**

Summary Record

Tulita Community Hearing Regarding the Northrock Resources Ltd. B-44 Environmental Assessment (EA)

Date: May 15th, 2003
Location: Community Hall
Tulita, NT
Attendees: *A list attendees is available from the MVEIRB*

Call to order:

Todd Burlingame, Chair of the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board, called the hearing to order at 6:20 pm.

Opening Remarks:

Todd Burlingame, Chairs, welcomed participants and introduced staff and legal counsel. Mr. Burlingame then delivered the PowerPoint presentation entitled "Tulita Community Hearing" (attached) outlining the EA process and format for the community hearing.

Presentation by Northrock Resources Ltd.

Matt Law, Northrock Resources Ltd. Project Consultant and support staff provided an overview of the project and emphasized project time constraints and the proposed Keele River Access route preferred by Northrock Resources Ltd.

Matt Law noted:

- Exclusive access via the Keele Access Route had been obtained by Northrock Resources by virtue of an existing agreement with the Tulita District Land Corporation; but the company is willing to limit access by others if that is a public concern that should be mitigated.
- Northrock Resources is sensitive to identified culturally important sites in the area.
- Northrock Resources will examine the entire access route from an archaeological perspective.
- there is a \$5 million extra cost to use the Little Bear River access route which would be a 150 km longer distance.

- That the Keele River access route has been previously used; therefore, would not be opening a “new” route, per se.
- Ice testing at the Mackenzie River crossing last winter indicated at seven test locations found 5.5 feet depth or greater which confirmed their confidence in their ice bridge design.

Question: Participant – Noted there is no response from Northrock Resources on questions of trappers compensation. How can the SLWB ensure that issue is addressed?

Response: Todd Burlingame – that this question needs to be addressed with the SLWB directly.

Question: Participant – what combustible materials and volumes would be produced. Hamlet should be contacted to make arrangements for disposal?

Response: Northrock Resources – paper and other wastes would be in the amount of 4-5 tons.

Question: Participant - what does the company intend to do to prevent exposed embankments from erosion?

Response: Northrock Resources – drainage channels, seeding, straw mats. These alterations would be looked at to mitigate the possibility of erosion.

Question: Participant – What discussion with trappers has taken place?

Response: Northrock Resources – have met with trappers and agreed to meet further

Question: Participant – What would be done with drilling wastes?

Response: Northrock Resources – If drilling waste didn’t meet Alberta standards it would be hauled away for appropriate disposal.

Question: Participant – What is the potential for salt water? If so, how would it be treated?

Response: Northrock Resources – We are not anticipating salt water. If encountered it would be hauled out.

Question: Board Member – What is the dollar value that will be spent in the Sahtu?

Response: Northrock Resources - Of the \$18.5 million projected cost, more than half, ie. greater than \$9 million, would be spent in the Sahtu region.

Question: Participant – Why isn’t NorthRock proposing to use existing routes into the drill site? If new routes are being opened up all the time, it will negatively impact the land and wildlife.

Response: Northrock Resources – The Little Bear River route will require more time to access the drill site than is available for a one winter season operation. The existing route would need to be widened, would require more water for winter road construction and cost a lot more money. Access to large lakes for water sources requires additional access road construction as well (to meet new DFO requirements that lakes of a minimum size be used as water sources).

Question: Participant - Why can't you build the road in one season and then use it the next season?

Response: Northrock Resources - This is only a temporary winter road that needs to be rebuilt each year.

Question: Participant – Who did Northrock consult with regarding this project in Tulita and in general?

Response: Northrock Resources – On July 18, 2002 approximately 10 people were in attendance for a general public meeting in Hamlet office. Also:

- July 30, 2002 – met 10 people in Tulita
- Sept – meeting in Yellowknife with 5 people who were leaders with the Tulita District Land Corporation.
- Oct – met in Calgary with 4 people from Tulita
- Various site fly-overs.

In total, 3 formal meetings were held with community residents/leaders.

Question: Board Member – Would the company use the community to assist with the archaeological survey of the access road to the Summit Creek site?

Response: Northrock Resources – We would have community representatives assist in the archaeological assessment of the access route.

Question: Board Member – How much of the approximately \$9 million spent in the Sahtu would be on local labour?

Response: Northrock Resources – About \$4.5 million of the project cost to be spent in the Sahtu would be spent on labour. Northrock would spend as much as they can on local labour.

Question: Participant - What kind of chemicals will Northrock be using? Will employees be given masks? Is the company safety conscious? Was NorthRock involved in any of the other drilling operations near Tulita?

Response: Northrock Resources - Northrock drilled a well in the Tulita area 3 years ago. There are safety meetings with each shift change and masks are provided. The company is very safety conscious.

Question: Participant – Why did the project cost increase from \$14 to \$18.5 million over the past year?

Response: Northrock Resources – Northrock got more information in the last year on pricing of construction. Fuel prices have increased as have the cost of accessing drilling equipment.

Question: Participant – Isn't climate change creating greater uncertainty regarding the feasibility of constructing an ice crossing at the Keele River access location?

Response: Northrock Resources – This was a warm year. Northrock is confident that next winter will be not as warm. Actually, there is a greater climate risk at the Little Bear River.

Question: Participant - Did Northrock ever check the Little Bear River “old access” route to see what wildlife (moose, etc.) is using it? Have any wildlife counts been undertaken?

Response: Northrock Resources - Northrock will check the area with the DIAND land use inspector to ensure the environment is properly restored. No, Northrock has not done any wildlife counts.

Question: Participant – a) What did archaeological studies show?

b) Is there more information related to erosion studies?

Response: Northrock Resources – a) Northrock did an archaeological study of 4 sites south of Stewart Lake and identified culturally sensitive sites through the Traditional Knowledge workshop it conducted last year.

b) Erosion will be mitigated with snow pack used on the hills. Monitoring and mitigation response will minimize erosion.

Question: Participant - Who was consulted on NorthRock’s Traditional Knowledge studies?

Response: Northrock Resources – Northrock consulted with Gordon Yakeleya on who to consult with. The company met with 8 people. The project was discussed and input was invited. Comments were collected and included on the NorthRock report.

Statement: Frank Andrew, Chief, Tulita First Nation Council

- Doesn’t believe it is as difficult to build the Little Bear River access road as the company says it is.
- Concerned about the animals that would be affected by opening up the Keele River access.
- Should have good interpretation here (at this public hearing) so the elders can better understand and ask questions.
- A lot of young people here go to Court. We want a better life for our children.

Question: Participant - Are there any negative things the company is aware of that was not raised in the assessment report?

Response: Northrock Resources – Northrock referenced the tables identifying the negative (and positive) impacts in their Developers Assessment Report. Referenced the possible introduction of non-native plant species with their equipment and their plans to ensure equipment was well washed before transporting north to Tulita. Other similar examples were cited.

Question: Participant - How much time was actually spent on the land or water in writing the report?

Response: Northrock Resources - Principal staff have been on-site in the area 4-5 times over the last year. Consultants were also used to conduct on-site evaluations. Northrock invited additional information from others that would add to their understanding of the area.

Question: Participant – Did Northrock spend any time with elders discussing sacred sites affected by this project?

Response: Northrock Resources - referenced the specific people that Northrock contacted.

Question: Participant – Has NorthRock entered Exploration License 397 with the Tulita District Land Corporation?

Response: Northrock Resources - Yes, this has been signed and provides access to the drill site. The license is still valid. As a result Northrock has land access to the Keele River access route to Summit Creek.

Statement: Participant – We don't want you to destroy our land. We want Northrock to use it safely. Northrock needs to talk to people who have traditional knowledge of the area.

Statement: Participant – I was born in the Stewart Lake area. I have the same concerns as others about the development in this area. I have worked with outfitters in the area for 30 years. Tulita people should be the ones telling the Review Board where the animals are, and that they need to be protected. Northrock should use the Little Bear River access route. I want the area to be preserved for the future of the children. Need to preserve traditional hunting and spiritual sites in the area.

Question: Participant - Concerned that Northrock interprets the lack of 30 day response as approval of land access to the drill site through the Keele River access route. However, the public of Tulita is speaking out against the Keele River access. Even though the public doesn't want Northrock to use the Keele River access route, will they still go ahead, or will they use the Little Bear access?

Response: Northrock Resources - The risk of using the Little Bear River route is too great and expense is so high that it is unlikely NorthRock would proceed with the well. However, senior management of the company will need to decide that.

Question: Participant – Regarding compensation, is it the company's understanding that this includes not only trapping, but fishing and other wildlife harvesting?

Response: Northrock - Clarified that Northrock had only been advised of concerns regarding trapping compensation but understood the scope of potential compensation is broader than just trapping.

Statement: Participant – We want to see development happen. But we need to talk about our concerns with the company and come to an appropriate outcome.

Statement: Participant – The RRC and SRRB are the organizations that need to resolve the compensation issues. Northrock needs to advise people when they are available to talk about these issues. The company and the community need to have the right working relationship.

- Concerned that the offering of contracts/employment locally will pit Tulita people against each other.

Statement: Frank Andrew, Chief, Tulita First Nation Council

– The community and Northrock need to work together. There needs to be compensation for all of the animals that are affected, for all of the willows that are pushed down, for the water that is affected, etc.. All these impacts affect the traditional way of living by Tulita people. Everything is there – it is just this issue we need to sort out.

Closing Comments

Northrock Resources (Matt Law) – Difficult moving forward having heard the concerns expressed today in such depth. Northrock is not here to tramp willy nilly all over Tulita's country side. Still, hopefully it is possible to have a project that will be acceptable to the people of Tulita and Northrock. Northrock hears the desire of Tulita for the company to use the Little Bear River access route. Not sure that using this route is possible for a successful project. Thanked everyone for their time and effort in this EA process.

Next Steps

Todd Burlingame provided an overview of the remaining steps in the Board's EA process, then thanked all in attendance for their participation and adjourned the hearing.

Prepared by: Vern Christensen
Executive Director
May 15, 2003

Attachment (1)