

FROM :

FAX NO. :

EA 0405-002

May. 07 2004 04:32PM P1

CZN Expansion

From Preliminary Screening



CPAWS

CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY
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Mackenzie Valley Land
May 7, 2004 Board

File _____

Sarah Baines
Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
Box 2130
Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2P6
By fax: 873-6610

MAY - 7 2004

Application # MV2001L2-003
Copied To PLM/SB/SM/Reg

Re: Prairie Creek Abandonment and Restoration Plan (MV2001L2-003 and MV2001C0023)

Dear Ms. Baines:

Please accept this letter as comments of the Northwest Territories Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-NWT) on the draft Abandonment and Restoration (A&R) Plan listed above.

Background

CPAWS-NWT is part of a national non-profit conservation organization, dedicated to protecting Canada's wilderness. CPAWS-NWT has been involved both the permitting and environmental assessment process of this development since 2001. As mentioned in the A&R Plan, the Prairie Creek mine is located upstream of the Nahanni National Park Reserve (NNPR). NNPR is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and the South Nahanni River within the Park Reserve is a Canadian Heritage River.

In conjunction with Deh Cho First Nations and the Sahtu Dene and Métis, CPAWS-NWT has been actively involved in working toward expanding NNPR and protecting the South Nahanni River Watershed for several years. This is an area with globally significant wilderness values and natural features, which are recognized and protected by the national and international conservation designations listed above. It is because of the wilderness values and designations in this area that CPAWS-NWT is and will continue to be involved in the permitting and any future environmental assessment processes within the South Nahanni River Watershed.

3

General

Overall, the A&R Plan appears to be very general and does not contain detailed actions, timelines, or anticipated costs. The proponent argues that the pilot plant is a short-term project and that "no significant restoration costs are anticipated to be incurred". Although this may be the case if the potential mine is approved in the future, the proponent should still be required to identify adequate resources and develop plans to abandon and restore disturbances related to the activities described in the current water license and land use permit. At a very minimum, the A&R Plan should reflect a break down costs and actions of the current security deposit that is held by the MVLWB (\$100,000).¹

The 1992 DIAND report 'Northern Water Resource Studies: Mine Reclamation in the NWT and Yukon'² outlines seven steps in a design process for a developing closure plan: 1) evaluate and describe the pre-development environment; 2) describe the facilities and components that will comprise the mine site in terms of their physical and chemical characteristics; 3) describe the proposed reclamation measures to be implemented both progressively and post closure; 4) implement an impact assessment based upon the proposal and reclamation measures proposed. If site objectives may not be met alternative reclamation measures should be examined. If impacts prove to be unacceptable then alternative mine development may be considered; 5) establish monitoring and maintenance requirements; 6) prepare construction and phased development schedule with associated costs; and 7) outline how reclamation will be financially assured. The A&R Plan should provide additional information on points 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Specific Comments

- SNP stations that will be monitored during the proposed care and maintenance phase should be listed and identified on a figure in the A&R Plan.
- Page 3: The first sentence in the first paragraph of the Project Description states the "exploration program and water management program will be carried out entirely within the existing mill facilities, and wholly within the boundaries of the existing surface and mineral leases." The environmental assessment process evaluated the exploration program based on the initial application, which described proposed activities within 1000 m of the site. The permitting of the exploration license has been changed to reflect the 1000 m radius. Therefore, this sentence should either be removed and only reference the pilot plant and decline drill or be changed to be

¹ This security deposit was primarily based on DIAND's Water Resources August 25, 2003 submission.

² Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. 1992. Northern Water Studies: Mine Reclamation in the Northwest Territories and Yukon. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

consistent with the environmental assessment and permits that states the 1000 m radius.

- Page 3/4: After the pilot plant testing is completed, the proponent should be required to remove all surplus reagents required for the pilot plant operations from the site.
- Page 5: Has the exfiltration system and location been approved for use? The exfiltration system, main office, and service building should be depicted on Figure 2.
- Page 5: Is the oil-fired incinerator approved to burn plastics from the camp refuse? If not, the area where plastics/non-combustible materials will be disposed of should be identified and denoted in Figure 2.
- Page 6: Figure 2 should have a scale and a full legend denoting the different colors and buildings that will be used during the pilot plant and decline drill operations.
- Page 10: Figure 7 is not clear and the units need to be consistent. Is the freeboard limit incorporated? How many hours per day will the plant be operating? Has this figure been reviewed and approved by a Professional Engineer? Is this consistent with the information provided during the environmental assessment for a worst-case scenario?
- Page 12: In section 3.2.3, the procedures to maintain the existing petroleum and chemical storage areas in the care and maintenance phase are not clear. How will they be inspected and maintained? Are contingency funds available for inspections and maintenance? These areas should also be depicted in Figure 2.
- Page 13: In section 3.2.8, the proponent will be required to develop a Spill Contingency Plan or Contingency Plan. This section should reference that a Contingency Plan will be developed and implemented both during operations and in the care and maintenance phases.
- Page 14: Section 3.2.10 references maps in the A&R Plan. As noted, the maps need to be improved and should include all facilities and areas that will be used during the pilot plant and decline drill operations which are described in the A&R Plan.
- Page 14: In section 3.2.11, the proponent notes, "no significant restoration costs are anticipated". The proponent needs to identify projected costs, timelines and actions. For example, section 3 does not include a sub-section on monitoring and general maintenance requirements in the proposed care and maintenance phase or progressive reclamation activities during the active period of the licenses.
- Insert page numbers.

In conclusion, the draft A&R Plan should be revised prior to approval. If you have any questions about these comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 867.873.9893.

FROM :

FAX NO. :

May. 07 2004 04:34PM P4

Sincerely,



Jennifer Morin
Conservation Director
Canadian Parks and
Wilderness Society
NWT Chapter