



Giant Mine Environmental Assessment

IR Response

Round One: Information Request - NSMA #19

May 31, 2011

INFORMATION REQUEST RESPONSE

EA No: 0809-001

Information Request No: NSMA #19

Date Received:

February 28, 2011

Linkage to Other IRs:

Date of this Response:

May 31, 2011

Request:

It seems that the existing situation is being treated as a baseline for a new project, and as if the Crown was not responsible for (permitting if not encouraging) the damage in the first place. The proposed reduction of predicted ongoing negative and potentially catastrophic effects is being treated as if they were positive effects. The reduction of the magnitude of a negative effect does not create a positive effect. There seems to be little focus on the proposed continuation of loss of use of lands and waters for traditional uses. Please explain, quantitatively, and with illustrations, which areas of the land, air and water will remain unavailable and/or unsuitable for traditional use during the life of this project.

Reference to DAR (relevant DAR Sections):

8.10.3.1 Positive Effects of Remediation on Traditional Land Use

Reference to the EA Terms of Reference:

3.4.3 Cultural Impacts

Response:

Post remediation conditions are represented in Figure 6.1.2 *Conceptual Post Remediation Site Conditions* in the Developer's Assessment Report (DAR). Following implementation of the Remediation Project, the arsenic storage areas will be fully frozen and the freezing system converted to a passive system, such as thermosyphons, to maintain the frozen state indefinitely. A fence will be constructed around each of the arsenic trioxide storage areas and any associated infrastructure. The enclosed areas will remain under the control of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT), as outlined in the INAC-GNWT Cooperation Agreement referenced in Section 1.1.4 of the DAR.





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The water level in the open pits will be maintained below the bottom of the open pits to prevent the formation of contaminated pit lakes. Access to the open pits will be restricted by fencing or berms to ensure public safety. All openings to the underground, including those in the pits, will be permanently sealed where warranted by safety issues.

A new Water Treatment Plant will be constructed and will be operated year-round. The discharge point for treated minewater will be moved from Baker Creek to Yellowknife Bay following the construction of a new outfall and diffuser.

Hazardous materials will be placed in engineered facilities and, with the exception of buildings that may be preserved for their heritage value within the Townsite, all existing structures will be removed.

Soils exceeding industrial soil contamination criteria will be removed or covered with clean fill to make these areas suitable for industrial uses.

The tailings and sludge impoundments will be regraded and surfaced with covers to allow vegetation to establish and for the reclaimed areas to eventually be available for traditional or public use. All quarries, borrow pits and waste disposal areas will be regraded and covered to promote drainage and revegetation in areas not consisting of exposed bedrock.

Various options for the remediation of Baker Creek are currently being developed. The designs will take into consideration input from Aboriginal and local residents that will be obtained through future consultation activities. The selected approach will physically stabilize the creek and improve both the quantity and quality of habitat. In this regard, the Remediation Project is expected to result in a gradual increase in numbers and diversity of fish, animals, wildfowl and native vegetation present in the drainage area of the creek. However, traditional use of the fisheries may need to be discouraged, depending on the level of residual arsenic contamination.

Future land use will also be restricted to those activities that will not interfere with or affect remediation efforts on site or any engineered remediation structures (e.g. tailings cap covers, freeze infrastructure, water treatment infrastructure.)

