

NICO Community Scoping Issues- Bechoko, May 4th, 2009

Closure and Reclamation

- Past experiences with Colomac, Rayrock and Giant reduce faith in integrity of industry
- Need for reclamation of the site, with no remaining hazards to wildlife or water
- Time required for return of plants and water to a natural state
- Need for accurate baseline conditions, to serve as goal for reclamation
- Need to remove all structures
- Tliche involvement required when setting adequate security deposit
- Revegetation during reclamation must not introduce invasive plants
- Closure safety (on site and downstream) is a big issue

Accidents and Malfunctions

- Risks of spills on lakes and streams
- Chemical containment is a concern (processing chemicals and effluent)
- Risk of tailings leaks or overflow from containment structures
- Need more confidence in rigorous enforcement re: spills

Water

- “You can’t drink diamonds or gold”
- “Water is life. Water is sacred. Without water, we are nothing”
- Safety of drinking water is paramount
- People are concerned about run-off quality
- Potential contaminants in water
- Risk of tailings or processing chemicals entering surface waters
- Changes in water volume
- Potential impacts of hazardous chemicals on people and ecosystems
- Quality be of effluent from Peanut Lake
- Route of effluent flowing from the project
- Impacts on Marian Lake
- Cost of additional water treatment downstream
- Many important streams start in NICO area
- Some streams there flow only during freshet
- Very important groundwater steam runs close to the mine
- Use local knowledge and TK about hydrology in site planning
- Impacts on intake water source

- Impacts on water quality in Hislop Lake- Some streams enter Hislop from the plateau
- Impacts on downstream water in Bechoko
- Project may add to existing arsenic levels (already high)
- Impacts from blasting chemicals and fuel entering waterbodies
- Need for watershed monitoring
- Need for independent scientific review of developer's work on water
- Need for Tlicho input into baseline water studies

Wildlife

- Potential impacts on waterfowl (including possible contamination)
- Cumulative effects on caribou
- Impacts of NICO on furbearers, moose, caribou and bear
- Impacts on wildlife from exposure to contaminated water or vegetation
- Possible exposure of wildlife to tailings (fencing?) during and after project
- Muskrat use the area downstream and are important to trappers
- Need for Tlicho input into baseline wildlife studies

Fish

- Area around Marian River is an important area for fish
- Impacts on fish from contaminated water
- Fish migrate from Marian River (downstream of the project) upstream to Hislop Lake, used for fishing

Impacts on Traditional Land Use

- Hislop Lake has hunting camps and many burial sites.
- Important traditional portage(s) in the area
- Land is Tlicho guarantee of survival. "If it is contaminated or compromised, what guarantees our survival?"
- "Hislop Lake is very important, like our backyard".
- Visual impacts as seen from Hislop Lake and Marian River
- Hislop Lake is important for fishing.
- Muskrat use the area downstream of project and are important to trappers
- Option of traditional uses must be sustained

Dust

- Experience at other mines shows that fine dust from mine and roads can blow kilometers from source (especially from elevated mine site)
- Impacts to plants from dust
- Impacts of dust in streams
- If dust from tailings blows around, wildlife may lick dust from their feet and suffer from health effects or contamination

Participation Challenges

- Young people have observations and views about this mine that should be considered.
- The decision about this mine should be driven by the Tlicho people.
- First major project proposal since land claim.
- Metis are under-involved.
- Tlicho need to address existing social problems before approving new projects.
- Women are under-represented in scoping and their TK is under-used
- Road construction should require Tlicho agreement, with specific conditions for use

Social Effects

- Impacts on health of mine workers
- Impacts on health of residents in communities
- Risk of creating divisions between have and have-not communities
- Changes in communicable diseases in communities
- People in communities now can't afford their own houses in the face of current layoffs
- Short-term mine jobs only increase unsustainable debt
- When development brings new social problems, what facilities will there be for the youth?
- Need to expand services related to mental health
- Impacts of work rotation schedules
- Need for culturally appropriate considerations in the workplace (such as attending community events and funerals)
- Social sustainability- fair and lasting benefits

Economic Effects

- Need for many long-term Tlicho jobs at mines beyond basic entry level
- Fewer actual jobs will materialize than originally claimed
- Potential benefits to those laid off from diamond mines
- Ongoing monitoring of Tlicho employment levels
- Fair distribution of benefits- Metis and Tlicho
- Fair distribution of impacts and benefits (between shareholders and Tlicho residents)

Access

- Increased access means social problems (bootlegging, drugs and alcohol) that span generations
- Road to Bechoko resulted in increase in number of people in jail
- Bechoko's experience following road connection has been lower cost of living and increased traffic accidents and deaths, increased crime (including a historic abduction) and ruined land.
- Impacts on well-being of people in Whati and Gameti
- Roads can create divisions and disagreements between communities
- Concerns about new access to isolated communities are same as what Elders told Berger on the subject
- Need for careful transport of hazardous chemicals
- Tlicho control over roads is important, and should be basis of any agreement with the GNWT
- Need for clarity re: seasonal or all-weather road and effects on project design and timing

Other

- Potential for future expansion
- Need for precautionary approach