

NICO Community Scoping Issues- Whati, April 27th, 2009

The following issues were identified on the cards used in the above session. The Review Board will consider the points raised when deciding which issues the environmental assessment should focus on. Review Board staff has organized them, and grouped them under general headings as follows:

Water

- Impacts on water are a major concern
- Tailings leaks into waterways
- Impacts on water quality in Marian Lake

Wildlife

- Location is good animal habitat
- Keeping wildlife out of tailings ponds and mine site
- Impacts on caribou, moose and game (including rabbits and ptarmigan)
- Impacts on furbearers in area – marten, lynx, wolverine, muskrat
- Risk of contaminants in wildlife
- Increased hunting access from Yellowknife
- Traffic on road- killing wildlife, affecting wildlife movements

Fish

- Impacts on fish from changes in water
- Increases in contaminants in fish

Impacts on Traditional Land Use

- Impacts on hunting and trapping
- Impacts on fishing downstream
- Impacts on spring hunt
- Impacts on land users (including cabin owners) at Hislop Lake
- Traditional travel route through Hislop Lake (Idaa Trail)
- Hill is traditionally used for reconnaissance of waterways below

Participation Challenges

- Needs approval from grassroots and leaders, in each of four communities.
- It should be up to communities whether or not they are connected by road
- Need to caucus within community prior to taking a position
- Decisions on this mine are very important to the community

- Challenging time for community to become sufficiently engaged
 - New Tlicho government
 - Upcoming elections
 - First major project near Whati
 - First project on Tlicho governed land
 - Fewer Elders for group discussion
 - No Elder caucus about NICO yet.

Access

- Lack of clarity on road requirements (seasonal vs all-weather)
- Effects on cost of goods and fuel
- Increased access to, and use of, drugs and alcohol
- More hunters from elsewhere
- Ice road provides preview of social problems
- Increased pressure on community infrastructure
- Increased demand for nurses, teachers, other social services
- Makes it harder to have socially and economically sustainable communities
- In-migration from workers from elsewhere

Economic Effects

- Impacts of increased engagement of wage economy on local housing costs
- Elders and young families particularly vulnerable
- Young families incur dept, layoffs+ debt = crowding (moving back in)
- Housing problems make social problems worse at family level
- Lack of employment potential beyond entry level jobs, few management level jobs
- Need for long-term benefits in communities- education, management jobs
- Lack of experience in money management in communities
- Joint venture opportunities
- Opportunities after diamond mines are gone
- Diamond mine IBAs did not have long term benefits for future generations
- Diamond mine IBAs did not have benefits experienced at the community level

Closure and Reclamation

- Legacy of abandoned contaminated sites in region (eg Rayrock)
- Lack of community confidence in industry commitments
- Need for precautionary approach for ensuring thorough clean-up post-closure
- Post-closure tailings containment and risks to water
- Post closure exposure of wildlife to contaminants on site

Accidents and Malfunctions

- Risk of spills on site and in transport
- Handling and management of processing chemicals, particularly cyanide and sulphuric acid