



Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

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Re: Highlights from the Environmental Workshop December 7, 2011

The Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency (IEMA) hosted a workshop to discuss the use of Traditional Knowledge (TK) at the Ekati diamond mine. We have attached a summary of the workshop for your information. The presentations made at the workshop will be available on our website shortly. We thank BHP Billiton (BHPB) for collaborating on developing the agenda and participating fully in the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to review BHPB's use of TK in environmental management at Ekati and giving community representatives an opportunity to discuss their own TK projects, including work with BHPB.

The workshop was well attended by community and government representatives. The Agency has a mandate to convey the concerns of Aboriginal peoples to BHPB and government and to make recommendations concerning the integration of TK into plans and programs at Ekati. This letter and the attached summary help fulfill that mandate.

Although the Agency was present at the workshop and participated in it, these recommendations came primarily from other participants – our Society members – but are supported by the Agency:

1. BHPB should provide significant wildlife incident reports directly to communities and other interested parties.
2. BHPB should better document its use of TK at Ekati in improving environmental management.
3. There would seem to be some value in bringing together the people working on various TK documentation projects to share information and methods, especially building useable databases and Geographic Information Systems.
4. There is a strong interest in the use of TK in closure planning at Ekati and the Agency strongly encourages everyone to work together. A TK working group, as proposed by BHPB, would be a good starting point.
5. There is still considerable confusion in the communities around what will happen to the Ekati pits at closure. BHPB should spend more time with the communities explaining what is in the closure plan, especially how the pits will be closed and managed.

The Agency is aware of the recent TK Strategy for Ekati and we commend BHPB for beginning to build stronger relationships with communities. This will be particularly important as closure planning progresses.

We look forward to your response to the above recommendations. We would be happy to discuss any of these matters at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Bill Ross
Chairperson

cc: Society members
Bruce Hanna, DFO
Lisa Lowman, Environment Canada
Mark Fenwick, EMAB
Dave White, SLEMA