

September 14, 2007 IACT Site Visit

Eric Denholm--BHPB
Charity Clarkin--BHPB
Julie Ellison-BHPB
Gavin More--GNWT
Clair Singer--GNWT
Lionel Marcincoski--DIAND
Malcolm Robb--DIAND
Mark Casis--DIAND
Kevin O'Reilly--IEMA

This was a one-day site tour to focus on the Sable, Pigeon and Beartooth water licence renewal. We flew up in a Twin Otter and back on the 737 crew change flight. Weather was good, overcast but no snow on the ground with fall colours at their prime. Unlike most visits, there was no safety orientation and not one PowerPoint presentation.

Eric provided a very brief orientation for the day in one of the upstairs meetings rooms. Lutsel K'e and NSMA had already been to the mine site with community visits also planned or completed (NSMA on September 13 and Lutsel K'e September 25). The company had been to Kugluktuk and a site tour was to take place the week of September 17. Arrangements were still being discussed with YKDFN and the Tlicho Government.

The SPB licence expires in August 2009 along with three land use permits (for Sable Pit, the Sable Road and Pigeon Pit). The company will not be proposing any changes but some minor wording needs to be clarified for consistency with the other main water licence. The renewal application will be submitted in January 2008. Other questions were invited and I asked about the status of the chloride discharge criterion for the SPB drainage. Eric said that the company is waiting for the WLWB to pass along the comments from two independent technical experts on this issue and that when the comments are received, the company will put together the standard table for further discussion.

The actual site tour started at the Beartooth pit where a small viewing area has been constructed (not seen by us on any previous tours). Nothing of note here other than the kimberlite in this pit does not appear as dark as that in the Fox pit. Next we were taken over to the core camp where a helicopter pad is located. The group was broken down into three smaller units for a helicopter ride over the proposed Pigeon pit, Sable Road route and up to the Sable, Two Rock and Horsehoe Lakes area. Not much of note on this trip other than there was not as much relief to the landscape as I had expected.

After lunch, we went over to the Pigeon culvert. Rock-filled gabion safety berms have been placed along the top of the roadway over the culvert. I asked and was allowed, to go down to the culvert itself, something I had not previously been able to do. Some quiet discussion of over-engineering took place. Interesting that the current BHPB staff have no idea of why the culvert was build that large... Back to the camp for check out.

September 21, 2007 IACT Meeting

Eric Denholm--BHPB
Mark Wen--Rescan (consultant to BHPB)
Lionel Marcincoski--DIAND
Mark Casis--DIAND
Jason Brennan--DIAND inspector
Julian Kanigan--DIAND
Velma Sternberg--DIAND
Jason MacNeil--GNWT
Claire Singer--GNWT
Anne Wilson--EC

Zabey Nevitt--WLWB (left before discussion of the SPB licence)
Ryan Fequet--WLWB (left before discussion of the SPB licence)

BHPB gave two PowerPoint presentations; an overview update, and another on the SBP licence (see attached pdf files after shrinking and conversion). I won't recount all the details here but BHPB again promised the LLCF water quality work sometime this fall. A new organizational chart was presented and there was a substantive discussion on the Adaptive Management Plan (due on or before November 30).

There will be specific triggers proposed for the contaminants outlined in the licence. I asked about how others would be added and based on what, but got some evasive answers (I even hinted that the LLCF water quality modelling and predictions would be helpful). A generic, rather than specific, toolbox or set of actions will be specified but not tied to individual contaminants that exceed thresholds or trigger points. I asked whether BHPB intended to include any type of biomonitoring for the AMP (e.g. zooplankton abundance, species composition or indices) and was told that there is too much natural variability. I suggested that biomonitoring might show things that could be missed otherwise and the company said they would consider this. I gave Eric a copy of the letter we sent in October 2006 setting out our suggestions for the AMP.

- the small diamond recovery operation has stopped as it was not working well so there will likely be no need to dig up any waste kimberlite in the rock piles
- the AN building is leaking again but since fixed using wooder patches (the inspector is watching this closely)
- GNWT is still in the process of hiring a staff person for the Environmental Agreements implementation
- EC will be doing some sediment coring and drilling at Ekati this upcoming winter to determine whether there are any organochlorines to be found (an indicator of past incinerator emissions)
- SPB licence discussion (see attached file)

Summaries Prepared by Kevin O'Reilly, IEMA