

Meeting Notes from the Annual General Meeting
of the Society of the
Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency
held on
June 26th, 2001
at the
Trappers' Lake Spirituality Centre

Participants

Society Members

Akaitcho Treaty 8:
Specifically Lutselk'e Dene First Nation:

Lorraine Catholique
Charlie Catholique
Joe Michel
Bertha Catholique
Ann Kendrick

Dogrib Treaty 11 Council:

Chief Archie Wetrade

Govt. of Canada:

Mary Tapsell, DIAND

Govt. of Northwest Territories:

Gary Singer, RWED
Brett Hudson, RWED

BHP Diamonds:

Scott Williams
John Witteman
Chris Hanks
Derek Chubb

Directors

Red Pedersen
Bill Ross
François Messier
Peter McCart
Tony Pearse
Marc Stevenson

Staff

Zabey Nevitt
Robin Staples

Opening Prayer

Joe Michel delivered the opening prayer

Welcome and Chairperson's Address

Red Pedersen, Chair, delivered the opening address.

Welcome to meeting and introduction of directors and staff, the Chair explained the purpose of the meeting; to report on activities of the Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency (the Agency) for the period April 1st, 2000 – March 31st, 2001, and receive member's comments on direction for the upcoming year.

The Agency would make some short presentations, and following this an opportunity would arise for members to make their comments. Bill Ross would present a summary of the Agency's Annual Report. The Annual report was described as the blue book delivered to all members, and further copies were available if required. The Chair described how in the near future an electronic copy would be available both on CD and on the Agency's upgraded website.

Following Bill, François would make a presentation on the annual audit for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, and budget for the current year. Copies of the complete budget and work plan were available.

The Chair described the formation of the Agency under the Environmental Agreement and its incorporation under the NWT Societies Act. The members were described, as well as the mandate and activities of the Agency.

The Chair then proceeded to highlight some of the activities over the last year, including; seepage meetings, presentations at water board and review board hearings, meeting with communities, the development of a paper on the future of environmental management in the north and the relocation of the Agency.

The Chair made special mention of his commitment to spend a portion of his year (up to 100 days per year) in Yellowknife to meet with the members and representatives from other organizations. He mentioned that so far this year he had spent 111 days in this function.

Particular reference was made to the Agency's newest Director: Dr. Marc Stevenson, and new staff Zabey Nevitt and Robin Staples.

Presentation of Annual Report

Vice-Chair Bill Ross presented a summary of the Agency's 2000-2001 Annual Report.

(Copies of slides used during this presentation are available as Appendix A).

Bill's presentation focused on introducing the contents, general observations and recommendations contained in this year's Annual Report of the Agency.

Questions

John Witteman asked whether, regarding the Agency's recommendation for winter under-ice monitoring of water quality parameters, Nanuq and Counts lake should be included and if so with what frequency.

Pete McCart responded by saying that Nanuq and Counts Lake should be included, and at a minimum once during the ice-covered period, and preferably in late April, when concentrations would be at a maximum. Weather conditions would also be favorable with longer days and warmer conditions.

John Witteman responded by mentioning that during March dissolved oxygen would be at a minimum with a low photosynthesis rate.

Presentation of Treasurer's Report

Secretary-Treasurer François Messier presented the Agency's annual audit (2000-2001) and budget (2001-2002).

(Copies of the slides used during this presentation are available as Appendix B)

François' presentation focused on describing the contributions and expenditures of the Agency over the previous year and declaration of year end balances. The presentation of the budget for the 2001-2002 year focused on highlighting variations to the previous year, and changes to the work plan that have caused these variations.

François mentioned the frugal approach the Agency has taken towards financial management.

Motion: To appoint McKay and partners as the auditors for the Agency for the 2001-2002 fiscal year.

Moved: Scott Williams

Seconded: Mary Tapsell

Carried Unanimously

Member's Statements

The members of the Agency proceeded to provide their comments on the Agency's activities over the previous year and provide recommendations for the upcoming year.

Government of Canada: Mary Tapsell started by passing on the regrets of both Tamarah Hamilton and David Livingstone of Environment and Conservation, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). She commented that overall she had heard positive feedback. She mentioned her appreciation of the Agency efforts to assist staff and directors involved in the establishment of the Environmental Monitoring Advisory Board for the Diavik project.

Mary continued by mentioning that DIAND is currently looking at how a single regional body can be established to look at cumulative project effects.

Mary also provided an update of the status of the consultation process currently underway for the environmental assessment of the Sable, Beartooth and Pigeon expansion. It was mentioned that a letter from the Minister is currently being drafted, and will be arriving shortly with BHP, following review by the responsible ministers.

DIAND is proposing to hold sessions involving industry, boards, agencies and aboriginal partners to look at the environmental assessment process, and how to improve efficiency.

François Messier asked if DIAND has been looking at consistency between the monitoring programs of different companies.

Mary responded by indicating that DIAND is currently carrying out a policy review of the use of Environmental Agreements as an instrument for the establishment of such programs.

BHP Diamonds: Scott Williams started with some positive feedback, including the increased communication between the Agency and BHP, which was leading to more comfort. He spoke of the positive contribution Red's time in Yellowknife had in communications, and his appreciation to Red and François for a smooth and efficient budget process.

Scott also expressed his thanks to Pete for his input into the review of the winter road activities and how he felt that this was the kind of direct interaction between the company and the Agency produced positive contributions for monitoring and management decisions.

Improved communications have led to a better understanding of the science of certain issues, and the comments provided are always appreciated, specific reference was made to the Agency's involvement in the Fox amendment.

Scott continued by highlighting his two concerns over the past year. Firstly, the Agency is regarded as a source of professional and good science. This means that people listen to what the Agency has to say. With this in mind Scott requested that the Agency exercise caution in the use of statements such as "significant adverse impact" as they put the company in a defensive position, and unable to concentrate on finding positive solutions.

Secondly, Scott requested that the Agency advise BHP, prior to their meetings, of issues that the Agency wishes to discuss. This will mean the company is able to bring the appropriate people and will increase the efficiency of the interaction. Scott also asked the Agency to indicate what subjects they would like updated on a regular basis.

Government of the Northwest Territories: Gary Singer introduced himself as the acting director of policy, legislation and communications for the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, replacing Kathryn Emmet. He indicated that the department is overall satisfied with the wildlife effects monitoring program, and communication with BHP and the Agency.

Gary agreed with early comments regarding the importance of moving forward with a regional monitoring body, and thanked the Agency for its contribution through its paper on the future of environmental management in the north.

François asked if the department had been looking at the consistency between monitoring programs for different companies.

Brett Hudson agreed that this was an important goal, to look at common monitoring protocols for monitoring, especially caribou, but the department was not there yet.

Mary Tapsell expressed a concern about the lack of RWED representation at the meetings of the Inter Agency Coordinating Team (IACT).

Brett responded by indicating that he would be attending IACT on a more regular basis.

Akaitcho Treaty 8: Lorraine Catholique introduced herself as the impact and benefits implementation officer for the Akaitcho Treaty 8, representing the Yellowknives and Lutsel K'e. She continued by expressing concern over the lack of action by the signatories of the agreement to the repeated calls by the Akaitcho Treaty 8 for separate seats for the Yellowknives and Lutsel K'e.

Charlie Catholique, Chair of the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation Wildlife, Lands and Environment Committee spoke of his letter to the board regarding the need for Lutsel K'e to have a seat on the Agency to effectively communicate his community's concerns and comments on monitoring and management at the BHP mine site.

Red indicated that he was available to meet with Charlie and the committee at any time to discuss the concerns of Lutsel K'e, and expressed his thanks to Charlie for the invitation to meet with the committee earlier in the year, and how it resulted in a very positive meeting.

Red continued by inviting all members of the Agency to make use of the office and staff of the Agency, and make use of the Agency's facilities if they needed a place to meet in town. *Red* offered the Agency's office as a possible place for Lutsel K'e and the Yellowknives to meet to discuss the appointment to the Agency.

Lorraine Catholique requested the three signatories of the Environmental Agreement (Government of Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories and BHP Diamonds) change Article 4, Section 4, a (i) of the Environmental Agreement to read "the Aboriginal Peoples shall each appoint a member for a total of five (5) members,..".

Mary Tapsell replied by indicating that this matter could be discussed at a meeting specifically to discuss this issue. She recommended that a letter be sent to the three signatories of the agreement, requesting the opening of the agreement to make the change.

Chris Hanks of BHP mentioned how the Agency was based on the monitoring board for the Island Copper development where many of the members of the board have remained for the life of the mine. The members of this board are now in the position of being some of the very few people who know the full history of the mine.

Red brought to the attention of the meeting participants the limited attendance and requested that members consider the timing of the meeting and finding a time of year that may be more appropriate.

Dogrib Treaty 11 Council: Chief Archie Wetrade of Gameti made a presentation on behalf of the Grand Chief Joe Rabesca and the Dogrib Nation. He started with apologies from the Grand Chief and other Chiefs for being unable to attend the meeting, but mentioned that they were attending the Deh Cho assembly.

Chief Wetrade spoke of the Dogrib people's desire for a single board to monitor all mines in the region.

He further expressed support for the work of the Agency and the Agency's recommendations; specifically those relating to the land, wildlife and water. He also thanked BHP for its commitment to fund Traditional Knowledge projects that support the desires of the communities, and BHP's commitment to taking elders to the mine site for caribou mentoring and archeological investigations.

Chief Wetrade expressed a desire to see more meetings held in the communities so the people could see the work of the Agency. Elders are concerned about the impacts of mines as they rely on the caribou, water and fish, and elders wish to work closely with the mines.

Kitikmeot Inuit Association: Red Pedersen highlighted some of the issues that had been raised by President Charlie Evalik at the recent Nunavut joint water board and environmental review board pre-hearing for the Jericho Diamonds project.

Red spoke of how the KIA supported environmentally responsible mining development, but the KIA does not want to have to make a choice between mines and the environment. He continued by expressing the KIA's desire to secure traditional knowledge in development management.

North Slave Metis Alliance: Marc Stevenson sent the regrets of President Clem Paul for being unable to attend. Marc made a brief presentation on issues raised with him by Clem. He spoke of the NSMA's support for the work of the Agency, and its relationship with BHP and the aboriginal members. However, he highlighted two concerns; firstly, the NSMA felt that it was not getting enough information to understand the whole story. A better communication process is required to improve communications with the members.

Secondly, concern was expressed about the limited involvement of the NSMA in monitoring programs.

Chris Hanks commented on the success of this year's caribou spring migration monitoring, and the input of more resources into this program. He specifically thanked Chief Wetrade for his comments.

Red Pedersen thanked all for their attendance at the meeting, and adjourned the meeting.
