

Notes from the Inter-Agency Coordinating Team October 27th Meeting

Participants:

Chris Hanks	BHP
John Witteman	BHP
Scott Williams	BHP
Darren Unrau	DIAND Operations
Roxanne Beavers	DIAND Water Resources
Greg Cook	DIAND Environment & Conservation
Tasha Stephenson	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Anne Wilson	Environment Canada
Laurie Bruno	Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board
Brett Hudson	GNWT – Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
Zabey Nevitt	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency
Robin Staples	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

Meeting began at 1:30

Greg chaired the meeting and led a round of introductions.

Round Table Updates:

John began by giving an update on BHP operations: Mining has begun at Koala & Koala North and continues at Panda. At the Misery site, they have received fisheries authorization for King Pond and have begun dewatering. The fish out of King pond resulted in very few fish being caught and didn't justify the expense. John also noted that BHP did not find any tagged fish during the fish out, and concludes that they may die out and new fish enter every year. The fish that were caught from King pond were placed into Cujo lake. Next year BHP may fish out Fox, but will be talking with DFO regarding fish out. BHP will hire an aboriginal firm to do this. John also noted that dissolved oxygen in Cujo Lake was low in winter. He believes that government should consider doing research on shallow lakes in the arctic.

At Misery Lake the total suspended solids levels are now too high and the water will need to be treated with Percol before it enters King pond for polishing. There were some questions raised regarding the discharge method from King to Cujo. This updated land treatment process, which is a similar process proposed for Fox, is going to be used to remove the nitrogen before it enters Cujo, which has low dissolved oxygen under ice. John said that this land treatment plan would be sent to everyone in writing and a monitoring plan would be discussed with the regulatory authorities. John also mentioned that the Fox land-treatment report would be sent out in December (after the vegetation reports have been completed).

John also noted that the BHP environmental workshop would be held February 5th and 6th this coming year with aquatic issues being discussed on the 5th and wildlife issues on the 6th. Two days are being planned rather than the previous four. There will also be a number of posters made up for the workshop including one for reclamation. IACT members, environmental groups, aboriginal organisations, and individuals from other mines will be invited to attend. Reports will be out in early January so that they can be reviewed before the workshops. Nick Jones will also be coming to discuss the studies on grayling in the diversion channel. John also discussed some of the other ongoing studies and said that a CD version of most of the studies done to date will soon be sent out to everyone.

John also mentioned that a young grizzly cub had to be killed at the Misery camp on October 20th. The cub could not be hazed or deterred from visiting the site, and before making the decision to kill the cub the situation was discussed with RWED. The cub was very skinny (half average weight) and the sow was also seen to be in poor physical condition.

In addition, John noted that the tailings characterization study and the acid base accounting program are ongoing. They have drilled through waste rock dumps to install thermistors and determined that these waste rock dumps are super-cooled and effectively freezing water that is entering the waste rock dumps. John offered the prediction that it will be 100 years before the voids are filled.

BHP is no longer discharging to Cell B and plans to get a drilling rig out to drill there this winter.

BHP's Helen Butler will be attending the next meeting of the Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency to discuss reclamation.

Robin introduced himself as the new communications assistant with the Independent Environmental Monitoring agency and briefly described what he has been working on. He mentioned that the 5th issue of the *Monitor* newsletter would be sent out sometime in late November.

Tasha described what DFO has been working on in regards to BHP and noted that she has been involved in post expansion review meetings on no net loss and habitat compensation. She asked how comments on management plans would be used.

John replied that comments will be reviewed and used for future management plan updates, as the plans are dynamic. Plans required in the water license such as the Contingency, QA/QC, Waste Water and Tailings Management, Waste Rock and Ore Management Plan, and Abandonment & Restoration plans still require approval by the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board (MVLWB). John also indicated that BHP will be modifying its application for a type B license to a type A license, as water storage requirements now exceed that permissible under a type B license.

Tasha then questioned the monitoring of pit wall samples.

John noted that they sampled the waste rock pile instead, as sampling was not carried out on pit-samples. They also measured temperature with temperature cables. John mentioned that in Panda, Koala, Beartooth there is only granite present, there is schist in Sable and Misery, and Pigeon has diabase.

Scott also added that at Misery there would be samples taken on all the potentially acid generating rocks.

Tasha then enquired about the pit wall slope at Misery.

John noted that they would have to make the pit walls less steep for safety reasons and this would therefore generate more waste rock, BHP would rather build the waste rock dump higher than increase the footprint of the waste rock pile.

Tasha finished her update by noting that the first project under the fish habitat compensation fund has been approved and is being carried out by the North Slave Metis Alliance on enhancing Prelude Lake on the Ingraham Trail. She also mentioned that the Dogrib have indicated that they are willing to modify their proposal and that the Lutsel K'e band are also interested in doing some work with DFO. The second round of proposals has also been received and is being reviewed. She finished by briefly mentioning the DFO and BHP December court preliminary hearing.

Anne started by noting that she has distributed the OEMP within her department for comments. Anne also noted that Simone is still working with BHP and the University of Saskatchewan on the kimberlite toxicity study in Long lake. In addition, the seep survey bioassays for this season are done and results have been delivered to BHP.

Zabey began by stating that the directors have started reviewing the OEMP. Zabey then discussed the February workshops, noting the Agency's directors preference for longer workshops.

John responded by saying that the focus of the workshops is on impacts, effects and significant changes at the mine, and that two days should be adequate to cover these issues. He also noted that presentations will not be as lengthy and environmental reports will have been delivered before the workshops.

Scott added that the workshops can be more compact and that information can still effectively get out to those involved. BHP will review the effectiveness of the two-day format for future years.

Zabey also mentioned the appointment of a new director to the Agency; Dr. Marc Stevenson, appointed by the NSMA. He also noted that the Agency is collecting photos relating to BHP for newsletters and annual reports, and would be pleased if anyone could contribute.

Chris started by discussing ongoing traditional knowledge studies, including Natasha Thorpe's Thesis project titled "Contributions of Inuit ecological knowledge to understanding the impacts of climate change to the Bathurst caribou herd in the Kitikmeot region, Nunavut" and the Dogrib report on Biodiversity. Chris also mentioned that he has brought up the issue of the Agency's open director seat to the Lutsel K'e band. He also noted that the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB) closed the public registry closed on the Sable, Beartooth and Pigeon environmental assessment on September 29th. Some information might be requested from different organizations from the MVEIRB. He added that Derek Chubb has taken over from Tina Markovich for environmental assessment and permitting; Tina has returned to engineering.

Greg began by noting that the OEMP was circulated and that comments are to come back through DIAND. He also noted that the quarry management plan is available at DIAND and can be sent to anyone who is interested; copies were sent to the inspector and DIAND land administration. Comments on the other plans that are required under the water license (i.e. abandonment & restoration, QA/QC, contingency and waste management) can be directed to MVLWB. Greg mentioned that Marie Adams is in charge of looking at the EA. The issue of cost-variance reports and abandonment and restoration issues in general was mentioned. Greg also noted that the MVEIRB has submitted a list of license recommendations to the MVLWB in regards to Sable, Pigeon and Beartooth.

John noted that in the past BHP has used the Brodie model for reclamation but is examining the use of other models, specifically oil and gas reclamation models for establishing reclamation costs. The cost variance report will be completed by May 1, 2000.

Greg also mentioned the Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency's Annual Report, and requested that the other reviewers pass on their comments to DIAND so that they can be sent to the Agency.

Darren started by pointing out that he hasn't been to site since September as the information request on BHP files has been taking a great deal of his time. Darren also wished to confirm that the King pond dam and the seepage dam, at the Misery site, will be built this winter. Darren also noted that most caribou approaches were completed on the Misery road and that BHP was not depositing to cell B but to cell C. Darren noted that feedback on the OEMP would be sent to MVLWB and that he is still waiting to hear on BHP's winter programs.

John responded by confirming that the King pond dam will be built this winter but that the seepage dam for the waste rock pile at Misery will not be built this winter. The waste rock is being moved and seepage surveys will be done in this area. John also noted that sewage at Misery camp is being sent to the main camp, and fresh water is still being trucked to Misery camp.

Roxanne also noted that the access to information request is taking up much of her time and that she has just started reviewing the OEMP and the Gartner Lee review of the EAR for the Sable, Pigeon and Beartooth one of three reports prepared for the MVEIRB. She also received confirmation that the final report from the special waste rock seepage study would be due January 31, 2001.

Next meeting will be in the Environment Canada Boardroom at 1:15 on December 8th.

Meeting finished at 3:30pm.