

The

EKATI MONITOR

Issue 19, April 2019

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IEMA's 2017-2018 Annual Report!: Summary Brochure, Technical Report, and Plain Language Report—all available digitally on our website, or in hard copy at the office or by request.

Agency Activities

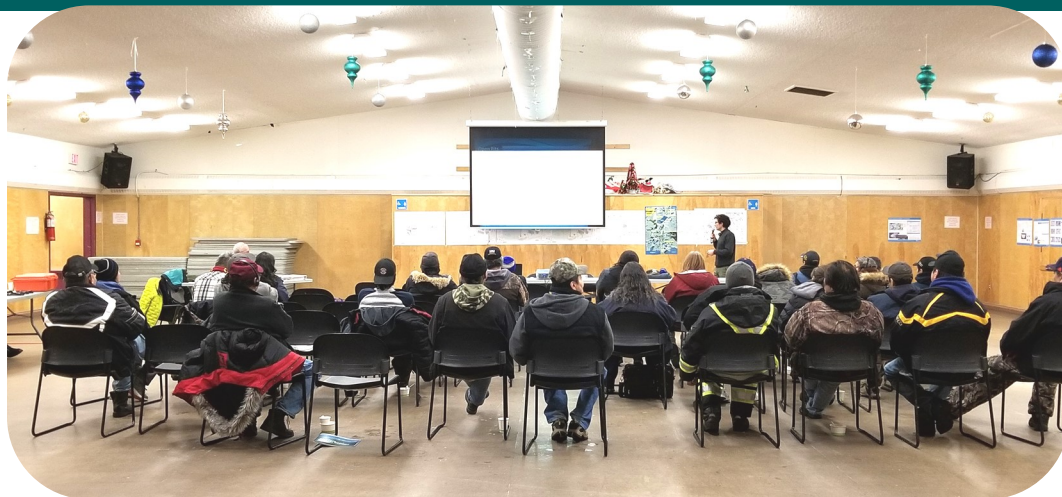
- ▶ The Agency has been busy reviewing a number of reports and projects since our last newsletter. See **Project Updates** inside for more information.
- ▶ The Agency's 101st, 102nd, and 103rd Board Meetings were held in September and December of 2018, and March 2019, respectively. The annual Agency Ekati site visit was held in conjunction with the September 2018 Board meeting (see **Agency Annual Ekati Site Visit** inside for more).
- ▶ IEMA took Ekati's *Draft Interim Closure & Reclamation Plan (Version 3.0)* on the road this winter! We visited society member communities across the NWT and Nunavut and delivered a summary of what's in the Plan, which encouraged excellent discussion with those in attendance. The purpose of the info sessions was to increase awareness of closure planning amongst those who will be using the land and water in the area long after the mine is closed.
 - See our **ICRP Community Info Sessions** summary inside.

ICRP Community Info Sessions

As the deadline for comments on Ekati's Interim Closure and Reclamation Plan (ICRP), Version 3.0 approached, Agency staff and select directors visited 5 communities throughout January and February of 2019 to provide an overview of this latest version of the Plan, and to promote discussion on the topic.

The Agency would like to sincerely thank the communities that hosted our info sessions (Whatì, Behchokò, Dettah, Łutsël K'é, and Kugluktuk, NU), and to all who came out to share their questions and concerns. Some key themes that came up included; caribou safety, water quality concerns, and waste rock storage.

Below: Info session in Behchokò on Jan. 14, 2019. **Right:** Final info session in Łutsël K'é on Feb. 5, 2019.



ICRP V 3.0 — Agency Concerns & Comments

The Agency has a number of concerns in terms of each mine component; waste rock storage areas, water quality/pit lakes, the Long Lake Containment Facility, processed kimberlite, buildings and infrastructure, as well as wildlife. Over 50 recommendations and comments were submitted by the Agency to the Wek'èezhii Land and Water Board (WLWB) in March, 2019. These comments can be reviewed on the WLWB Online Review System (<https://bit.ly/2UH44pg>).

Some of our overall, site-wide concerns are related closely with wildlife concerns (particularly caribou) and how they will use and move through the site after it is closed. These site-wide concerns include:

Waste Rock Storage Areas (WRSAs):

- Uncertainty around some of the temperature, geochemical and water quality model predictions.
- Piles need to be designed to make sure that they are stable forever not only 100 or 200 years.
- Use of 'Total Carbonate' to determine acid generation potential of mine rock.

Wildlife:

- The site must be safe for wildlife to use forever.
- Uncertainty around Dominion's intentions for removal of some infrastructure and roads.
- Uncertainty about entry/exit to landscape features such as pit lakes and waste rock storage areas.

Pit Lakes

- Uncertainty around long-term water quality predictions.
- It's unclear how many of these lakes will have littoral zones (shoreline) created, or be left with steep sides.
- Predicted water quality after closure are based on operational benchmarks — closure benchmarks should be stricter.



Director Jesse Jasper joining in the discussion (top right of image) in Dettah on January 10, 2019.

Agency Annual Ekati Site Visit

On September 18, 2018, Agency staff and directors travelled to the Ekati mine site, 200 km north of Yellowknife. The Agency toured the areas we were most interested in seeing this year, including the solid waste facility. It was great seeing their industrial composter (*see image below, left*). Because of their efforts at waste mitigation, they have been able to reduce the use of their incinerator, which is very good for air quality in the area.

The annual site visit is an important opportunity for the Agency to see firsthand how projects are proceeding, and to ask questions and

receive answers from our Dominion Diamond colleagues in real time.



Left: View of the industrial composter in the solid waste facility at the Ekati site. Right: Blasting of the ore in Pigeon pit.

Project Updates

→ Jay AEMP & ARF

The Agency provided comments in January of 2019 on Dominion's Aquatic Effects Monitoring Program (AEMP) design plan, which outlines the monitoring programs for the Jay project, and the Aquatic Response Framework (ARF), which sets criteria (e.g. low action level) that are compared to the sampling results. If a level of a substance is exceeded, Dominion is required to look into the exceedance and submit a response plan detailing how they will address the exceedance. In our comments about the design plan, the Agency highlighted that selenium levels in sediment and fish tissues are increasing and therefore recommended that the ARF should include a selenium sediment action level.

→ Interim Closure & Reclamation Plan Version 3.0

Dominion submitted an update to the ICRP (Version 3.0) to the WLWB, which was released in October 2018. Version 3.0 incorporates Dominion's latest thoughts on closure planning, including additional pits and associated infrastructure since the 2011 version. The Agency has long identified the importance of the ICRP to communities, and with this in mind the Agency conducted ICRP community info sessions this winter. (*See previous page for more information about our info session tour.*)

The Agency submitted comments on March 7, 2019, and a 3 month extension request was granted for Dominion's responses. We expect them on July 5, 2019.

→ WROMP 10.0

Waste Rock Ore Management Plans (WROMPs) are the management plans for the waste rock piles, and provide useful data regarding current conditions of the piles, sampling results, and predictions. The WROMP 10.0 incorporates reviewer comments from several previous versions. In reviewing the document, the Agency was disappointed that Dominion has not used the WLWB directed approach to determine the potential acid generation of waste rock onsite.

The Agency submitted their comments on February 21 of this year. Dominion provided responses on March 7, 2019, and can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/2U7pxHH>

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Bill Slater Appointed by North Slave Métis Alliance

STAFF

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Who Are We?

IEMA (the Agency) is the public watchdog for environmental management at the Ekati mine. The Agency was set up in 1997 under the Environmental Agreement, which requires Dominion Diamond Mines ULC (Dominion Diamond) and the federal and territorial governments to protect the environment and land-based way of life of Aboriginal peoples of the area.

We make recommendations to Dominion Diamond, government and regulators on how best to protect the environment at Ekati. We are set up as a non-profit society in the Northwest Territories. The Agency's Board has seven Directors appointed by our Society Members:

- Akaitcho Treaty 8 (Łutsel K'e and Yellowknives Dene First Nations)
- Tłı̄chǫ Government
- Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KIA)
- North Slave Métis Alliance
- Government of Canada (Crown Indigenous Relations & Northern Affairs Canada—CIRNAC)
- Government of the Northwest Territories
- Dominion Diamond Mines, ULC

Our Directors are independent of their appointing parties and work together in the best interests of the environment and the people affected by Ekati.

We have two staff members and a resource library of information about Ekati in our office in Yellowknife. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns about the Ekati mine.

Ekati Facts: Waste Rock Storage Areas

Height: Ranging from 50-70 m tall

Number at Ekati Site: 6 (Sable, Pigeon, Beartooth/Panda/Koala, Fox, Misery, and Lynx)

Area (as of 2018): 1345 hectares, or 13.5 km²

What are they?: Waste rock storage areas (WRSA) are designed to store the huge amounts of waste rock excavated during open pit mining of kimberlite ore.

They are permanent landscape structures that will remain in place following the closure of the mine. They are designed to be physically stable, both during mine operations and in the long term, promote the establishment of permafrost, and achieve a reasonable balance between surface footprint area and height.



Part of Pigeon waste rock storage area seen from above. At 70 m in height, it is the tallest WRSA at Ekati.