

The Independent Environmental Watchdog

A Canadian Experiment in EIA Follow-up

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The Independent Environmental Watchdog

- **Ekati Mine™ project description**
- **Monitoring requirements for Ekati mine**
- **Community involvement in follow up**
 - **Stories**
 - **Lessons**
- **Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency - www.monitoringagency.net**

Ekati Mine

- **Diamond mine (Canada's first)**
- **Gem quality diamonds**
- **Northwest Territories**
 - Arctic barrens, 300 km NE of Yellowknife
- **Construction from 1996**
- **Operation from October, 1998**
- **Surface mining of kimberlite pipes (usually under lakes)**
- **Processing plant on site**



Ekati Mine Location

Panda Pit Ekati



Photo

BHP
Diamonds

Ekati Mine Project Description

- **Dewatering lakes for access to kimberlite pipes**
- **Explosives use (introduces nitrogen (ammonia) into waste rock)**
- **Waste rock sent to waste rock piles (AMD)**
- **Kimberlite is processed on site to extract the diamonds and then the residue (tailings) is disposed of into Long Lake tailings pond**
- **Work camp for several hundred staff (“hotel” accommodates 600 persons)**

EIA Review for Ekati Mine

- **Full panel review 1994-1996**
- **1996 project approval**
- **Major affected people, aboriginal groups**
 - **Kitikmeot Inuit Association (Kugluktuk)**
 - **Dogrib Treaty 11 Council (Fort Rae)**
 - **Akaiicho Treaty 8 (Lutselke and Yellowknife)**
 - **North Slave Metis Alliance (Yellowknife)**
- **Approval subject to Environmental Agreement**
 - **BHP (proponent), GNWT, Canada**

Monitoring Requirements for Ekati Mine

- **Water Board - water quality monitoring**
- **Fisheries authorisation - fish studies**
- **Renewable Resources - wildlife monitoring**
- **Operating Environmental Management Plan - monitoring programs (spills, safety, etc.)**
- **Impact Benefit Agreements with aboriginal groups (bilateral) - socioeconomic aspects - independent of Environmental Agreement**

Community Monitoring for Ekati Mine

- **Focus on**
 - **Wildlife – caribou**
 - **Wildlife – wolverine**
 - **Monitoring Agency liaison role**

Caribou



Photo BHP Diamonds

Community Monitoring Caribou

- **Caribou are the major VEC in the North**
- **Bathurst Caribou herd**
 - **300 000 animals**
 - **Migrate through mine site (up to 70 000)**
- **Elders on site visits**
- **Community observations**
- **Annual monitoring workshops**
- **Caribou management board**

Community Monitoring Caribou

- **Site visits to observe and offer advice**
 - **Airport avoidance**
 - **Road design**
 - **Tailings pond concerns**



Photo RWED

Government of
the Northwest
Territories

Community Monitoring Caribou

- **Community observations**
 - **Caribou fitness**
 - **Caribou injuries**

- **Caribou monitoring program**
 - **Radio collars**
 - **Community objections**

Tailings Pond



Community Monitoring Caribou

- **Monitoring workshops**
 - **Aboriginal input**
 - **Government, industry, Agency input**
 - **Review monitoring results, adapt monitoring programs**
 - **Wildlife and aquatic effects (plus air quality and reclamation)**
 - **Annual events**

Elders visiting the poster display at the Workshop



Community Monitoring Archaeology



Community Monitoring Wolverine

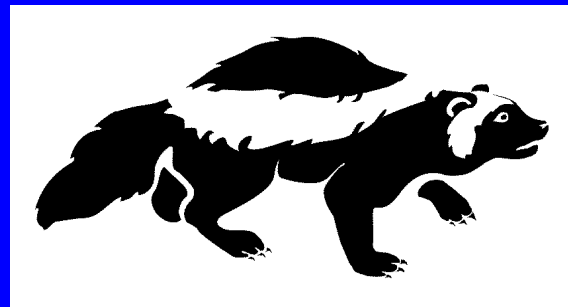


Community Monitoring Wolverine

- **Significant adverse cumulative impact**
 - **Ekati, Diavik and Winter Road operation**
 - **Poor food handling results in about 15 animals killed or relocated over three years of a population of about 15-20 animals**
 - **Ekati and winter road food handling appears to be better now – not Diavik**
- **Regular monitoring via snow tracks**

Community Monitoring Wolverine

- **Need to identify wolverine tracks**
 - **Get best tracker in NWT - Allen Niptanatiak, of Kugluktuk (300 km north of mine)**
 - **Known as best wolverine trapper in the area**
 - **Commutes by snowmobile to mine site**



Community Monitoring Lessons

- **Community role in influencing monitoring is considerable**
 - **Concern with dust on vegetation – new monitoring program**
 - **Concern with tailings pond – vegetation to avoid attracting caribou (use of TK)**

Monitoring Lessons

- **Community and technical monitoring a powerful tool**
 - **Community monitoring discussed**
 - **Much detailed technical and scientific monitoring also done**
 - **Combination has been effective in avoiding major impacts to date**
 - **Combination appears to be satisfactory to communities**
 - **Role for Independent Watchdog**

Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

- **Public watchdog for environmental management at the Ekati mine**
- **Seven members: BHP, GNWT, Canada, and four aboriginal groups**
- **Seven board members appointed by seven members**
- **No “representation” - all board members have the same common mandate**
- **Budget about Can\$500 000/a provided by Mine operator - initially some funds came from governments**

Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

- **In order to meet its mandate the Agency:**
 - **monitors and reviews environmental management plans and reports by BHP and government agencies**
 - **analyses issues to promote the identification, evaluation and management of environmental impacts**
 - **reviews the activities of regulatory agencies and their interactions with BHP**
 - **monitors the progress of traditional knowledge studies funded by BHP and conducted by aboriginal organisations**
 - **facilitates interaction between BHP and aboriginal organisations to integrate traditional knowledge into BHP's management plan**

Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

- **In order to meet its mandate the Agency:**
 - participates in technical workshops involving environmental management at the Ekati mine
 - meets and corresponds regularly with BHP and regulators about environmental issues at Ekati
 - reviews and comments on regulatory approvals sought by BHP that relate to environmental matters
 - reports to aboriginal organisations and the public at large
 - maintains a publicly accessible library of all materials regarding environmental management of the Ekati mine

Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

- **In order to meet its mandate the Agency:**
 - publishes newsletters, a web site, a brochure and annual reports
 - holds an annual general meeting for members of the Monitoring Agency

Western & Northern Canada Affiliate International Association for Impact Assessment

- <http://www.iaia-wnc.ca>
- Memberships \$30/a – forms available
- Holiday social
 - Monday, December 2
 - 17:00 to 19:00
 - Saltlick Steakhouse, lower level
 - 101 8th Ave SW