

Inter-Agency Coordinating Team (IACT) for Ekati Diamond Project

March 28, 1998
Meeting #7

Attendance:

Mary Tapsell (Chair)	DIAND -Env. & Conservation
Kelly Robertson	RWED
Maria Healy	DFO
Scott Williams	BHP
John Witteman	BHP
Anne Wilson	EC
Darren Unrau	DIAND -South Mackenzie District
Greg Cook	DIAND - Waters
Matt Bender	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency
Jackie Morris	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency

Regrets: John Ramsey, NRCan

Round Table Updates:

Mary Tapsell: informed members that John Ramsey, NRCan has decided that he will no longer participate directly with IACT meetings due to difficulty in communications over the teleconferencing. John will pass issues along to Mary to bring up on NRCan's behalf, and he will continue to receive the records from the IACT meetings.

John Witteman: Update of things happening at site . . . currently 800 people at the camp; Dyke C is complete on Long Lake; progress on the frozen core dam is slow due to warm weather - to date 60 thermal siphons are in place; update on status of recyclable goods; aerators are now in place in Kodiak Lake hopefully will see increases in dissolved oxygen content; 2 wolverines were live trapped and transported 150km southeast of the site - it was thought that some food may have been mixed with the landfill so they are working on improving education to contractors.

- Contingency Plan will be distributed next week. Each copy will be numbered and updates will be provided accordingly

- Aquatic Effects Monitoring Plan is being printed

- OEMP is complete, hope to distribute on April 1, 1998. At this point there was a general discussion about the draft documents that BHP had recently released for review by the agencies. The agencies had not expected such an early release of the OEMP so it was agreed that it was pointless to comment on the draft OEMP material that had been released in March and that all agencies would save their comments for the OEMP that BHP is releasing in April.

John asked how many copies agencies would require: preliminary estimates are - DIAND 8

copies, GNWT 4 copies and Monitoring Agency 5 copies.

John requested a letter from the agencies to “close” the file on the Construction Phase Environmental Management Plan. (Mary to contact Monitoring Agency & GNWT to discuss this letter).

- Currently finishing off the Annual Report requirements for the EA and it will be forth coming.
- will be submitting the monitoring program for the Diversion Channel to DFO next week.

Matt Bender: The Agency had a Board of Directors meeting March 14 & 15. A new director, Kevin O’Reilly, has been appointed by Treaty 8. The minutes from the meeting will be distributed soon. Peter McCart passes along his thanks again to BHP for such a detailed and impressive tour of the BHP site (March 11 & 12).

The Monitoring Agency is still waiting to receive the A&R plan. There was general discussion around the table about the requirements written in the Environmental Agreement vs those for the Water Licence for the Abandonment & Restoration Plan. Mary mentioned that NRCan had expressed similar concerns and asked why they had not yet seen the A&R Plan. John Witteman wanted to stress that this is an Interim A&R plan and as such they did not feel it should be submitted as the “comprehensive” A&R Plan as stated in the Environmental Agreement. Mary reread Article VIII Section 1(A) “ BHP shall concurrently with delivery thereof as required by the Water License ...”

The discussion at the table showed that there were obviously some differing opinions on how the requirements of the EA are being interpreted. All agencies will have an opportunity to review the A&R Plan that was submitted to the Water Board when the OEMP is released.

Greg Cook: Currently completing a complete review of the BHP Water Licence and making some minor corrections to the existing licence. We have received BHP’s Annual Report as required by the Water Licence and are currently reviewing it. The Aquatic Effects Monitoring Plan will be reviewed when it is received.

Maria Healy: BHP recently met with DFO to discuss the Diversion Channel, Sediment Channels and grad student potential. This is Maria’s last meeting with this group, she has finished the term replacement assignment and Julie Dahl will be returning as our main contact Affective April 20, 1998. Anne Wilson asked BHP what the plans were for sedimentation.

John explained steps that are being taken to reduce sediments: installing new culverts, building a semi-circular berm in the lake to help stop sediments and also the use of silt curtains. Aquatic plants will be planted at the exit of the Diversion Channel into Kodiak Lake. BHP will be incorporating habitat to the Diversion Channel and monitoring the use. Trap nets will be set within the Channel.

Darren Unrau: currently reviewing the BHP Annual Report for the Water Licence to make sure

they are in compliance. Darren will provide a copy of his review to the Monitoring Agency. Darren reminded BHP that in their Annual Report for the Environmental Agreement, BHP must report on compliance of water licence and land leases requirements.

Mary Tapsell: most of the items Mary wanted to discuss have already come forward. Wanted to say thanks again to BHP for the useful and impressive tour they recently provided. Have been asked to do a brief presentation at an International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) meeting (April 16, 1998) about the BHP EA and associated monitoring plans. Mary will be contacting BHP and GNWT directly about this presentation to see if we should do a "joint" presentation.

Mary had some concerns about the flow of information from the Monitoring Agency to communities. Recently, DIAND has had requests from communities to fund activities to hire outside experts to review BHP documents. Since this is one of the main purposes of the Monitoring Agency, there seems to be some question as to if communities are being well enough informed of activities of the Monitoring Agency. Perhaps the Agency could consider a brief monthly newsletter or at least letters to the four aboriginal groups to keep them informed of documents under review and when reviews will be completed by.

Another recommendation might be for the Monitoring Agency's Yellowknife office to develop defined contacts in the Aboriginal groups that have a specific function to handle environmental matters. Mary is willing to work with the Agency to assist them in developing a list of contact names. This may be another method for improving information flow on the Monitoring Agency's activities to aboriginal groups.

Kelly Robertson: Nothing to add, the items she wanted addressed were discussed. Joe Handley made a presentation at the last Monitoring Agency Board of Directors meeting.

Anne Wilson: Nothing further to add - the Kimberlite Toxicity study has had a few minor changes made to it.

NEXT MEETING : FRIDAY, 1:00pm, MAY 1/98

Environment Canada's boardroom - 3rd Fl Diamond Plaza.