



MiningWatch Canada

Mines Alerte

Newsletter

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The Betrayal of Environmental Assessment

If anyone still thought that the environmental assessment process was there to ensure that development projects would not destroy the environment and local economies, it's time to wake up and smell the bulldozers' diesel exhaust.

A recent spate of astonishing decisions on a range of mining projects has made it clear that the Federal government has decided that environmental assessment (EA) is a *pro forma* exercise that will not be allowed to so much as inconvenience mining companies. The only exceptions seem to be where aboriginal groups have a strong enough position to force a thorough assessment, such as the Dene in the Mackenzie Valley.

First Nations, environmental groups, and concerned individuals have repeatedly asked federal authorities and Environment Minister Stéphane Dion to ensure that EA, as a planning tool, supports existing land use planning and helps protect the environment and local economies. Clearly Minister Dion sees no problem. Meanwhile, the courts have been validating the government's cynical approach to environmental assessment.

To make matters worse, the feds have decided to "consolidate" environmental assessment as part of the Martin government's "smart regulations" initiative. By the time they're done "streamlining" the process there may not be much left.

Number 19: Summer 2005



Thabo Madihlaba and Thomas Akabzaa at AIMES conference in Lusaka. Photo: J. Kneen.

The Mines

On August 19, the Comprehensive Study of De Beers' Victor diamond project at Attawapiskat in the Ontario James Bay Lowlands concluded with a decision by the Minister of Environment that the project "is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects." Astonishing since keeping the pit from flooding will require pumping enough water to dry out up to 2000 square kilometres of muskeg.

On July 25, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) ended the environmental screening of Redfern Resources' Tulsequah Chief copper-gold-zinc mine in northern British Columbia with a decision that the project - you guessed it - "is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects." Astonishing since the project includes the construction of a 160-kilometre access road through the pristine Taku River watershed. As well, there is strong scientific evidence that the mine could cause extensive damage to fish and wildlife habitat, and the proponent had earlier halted work on a feasibility study because the project was not "financeable". Given that DFO officials had been having secret meetings with Redfern, the conclusion is unfortunately not surprising. The government tried to slip the decision through unnoticed. The only public announcement of the decision came

three days later from Redfern Resources, eager to boost their share price from 11¢.

Meanwhile, Northgate Minerals' proposed Kemess North copper-gold mine expansion looks set to turn Amazay Lake (Duncan Lake) into a tailings dump. On August 12, the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council met with federal officials and told them the current joint federal-provincial panel review should be immediately halted and a new process developed to include First Nations. Their position is that Northgate must present a development option that does not include killing Amazay Lake.

In the Stikine watershed, bcMetals' Red Chris copper-gold project will also kill fish habitat. The tailings area is located in a river valley at the confluence of two streams, in fish-bearing waters, and will require a Schedule II authorization under the Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (section 36(5) of the *Fisheries Act*) (see following article). The mine would process over 27,000 tonnes of ore per day, and is clearly on the Comprehensive Study List under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). Nonetheless, the federal Responsible Authorities – Fisheries and Natural Resources – have split the project so the mine and mill proposal is separate from the tailings area and explosives storage. This way, the most environmentally destructive part of the project, the tailings dump, will undergo a screening rather than a Comprehensive Study since it has no “production”.

In recent years we have seen other examples of cavalier disregard for the principles of EA, such as the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's (CNSC) 2003 decision to allow Cameco to breach the dike separating the Collins Bay A-zone pit from Wollaston Lake with no environmental assessment, ruling that this was part of “ongoing site remediation” and somehow covered by previous assessments. Likewise the CNSC claimed that Cogema (now Areva) did not need to redo the environmental assessment of its McClean Lake tailings disposal, even though the project design was completely different than the one that had been originally reviewed. The Inter-Church Uranium Committee Educational Cooperative appealed that decision all the way to the Supreme Court but was denied leave to appeal on March 24 of this year.

The Courts

Sacrificing Another of Canada's Lakes to Mining

MiningWatch Canada is participating as one of four representatives of the Canadian Environmental Network (CEN) in a multi-stakeholder review of the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMERs) hosted by Environment Canada (EC). The MMERs came into force on December 6, 2002. Most of the proposed amendments to the MMERs are relatively minor adjustments based on experience over 3 years. However, one of the critical amendments is the inclusion of a natural water body, Trout Lake, under Schedule 2, effectively reclassifying this fish bearing lake as an industrial waste dump for mine tailings from Aur Resources' Duck Pond Copper-Zinc Mine. This mine's operations will affect both brook trout and Atlantic Salmon. The position of the CEN representatives and of MiningWatch Canada is that it is unacceptable that yet another Canadian lake be sacrificed for the sake of a new mine. Schedule 2 in the MMERs already accommodates, and will

The McClean Lake court case is just one loss for the environment and the notion of environmental assessment as a means of integrating environmental protection into development planning. The courts have recently been supporting more and more restrictive interpretations of the law, effectively turning the EA process into a mere formality.

TrueNorth's massive Fort Hills tar sands project near Fort McMurray, Alberta, is the subject of a case before the Federal Court of Appeal. Environmental groups are appealing DFO's 2002 decision to limit the project's environmental assessment to an examination of one small creek within the project area, instead of investigating the impacts of the 10,600-hectare oil sands project as a whole. The proposed project would include the construction of an open pit mine, two bitumen-processing trains, an extraction plant, mine tailing and overburden sites, transportation corridors, and ancillary facilities including an electrical power plant. The mine's potential impacts include destroying half of the McClelland Lake Wetland complex, a critical migratory bird habitat, and tainting fish in the Athabasca River. The Sierra Legal Defence Fund (SLDF), acting for three environmental NGOs, is appealing the September 16, 2004 decision of the Federal Court Trial Division dismissing the groups' original challenge of the narrow scope of assessment.

On August 17, the Federal Court released a decision allowing the substantially revised Cheviot coal project to proceed without undergoing a new environmental assessment. The decision allows the massive open-pit coal mine development on the doorstep of Jasper National Park to proceed despite serious concerns from conservation groups from across the country and officials within the federal government. SLDF had launched the court case on behalf of five organizations on the grounds that the project had changed significantly since it was first proposed in 1996 and that an updated environmental assessment was required to address its effects. The conservation groups argued that the federal government's authorization of the first section of the mine should be quashed because it would result in the destruction of migratory bird habitat and contravene the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act. They are now reviewing the decision to determine if there are grounds for appeal.

accommodate, lakes that have been used as tailings dumps historically. Our position is that this practice should be rightfully recognized as something belonging in the past that should not be considered for new mines. EC has made us aware that other new mines are expected to request the right to use a lake as a tailings impoundment in the near future (the Meadowbank and Doris North projects in Nunavut, and the Kemess North and Red Chris projects in BC). CEN representatives are concerned that EC is fast-tracking the amendment process to meet Aur Resources' plans to start using Trout Lake for tailings in the summer of 2006. CEN representatives question whether their participation in the MMER review is sufficient for EC to claim that they have fulfilled the policy requirements for “national consultation”. CEN delegates are questioning whether enough work was done to explore alternatives to the use of Trout Lake as a tailings impoundment.

New Caledonia: International Nickel Symposium – July 2005

With an estimated 25% of known nickel reserves, the tiny South Pacific island of New Caledonia is a priority area for Canadian mining corporations Inco and Falconbridge. Both companies are currently engaged in major expansions, and both projects are characterized by social, political and environmental controversy.

The indigenous population, the Kanaks of New Caledonia, are struggling for the recognition of and respect for local indigenous rights and they do so against tremendous odds. (See MWC Newsletter #18 for background information.) In a parallel fashion, the unions representing the mine and smelter workers are also trying to determine how best to protect the collective rights of the workforce in a situation where environmental regulations, health and safety legislation and enforcement and vocational training are at a bare minimum.

Of ultimate concern is whether the legitimate representational structures of both the Kanaks and the workers can overcome their own suspicions of each other. The elimination of existing tensions and divisions in the search to find common cause is essential if the unfettered power of foreign mining corporations and a French colonial government that clearly will not easily give up its nickel colony are to be successfully challenged.

These issues formed the basis of an international symposium held in Noumea, the capital city, on July 7-8. In attendance were unionists from Canada (Steelworkers and the Canadian Auto Workers [CAW - Canada]), Australia, Belgium, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and France. These unions either have a contractual relationship with Inco or Falconbridge in their own countries or they have an affiliation relationship with USOENC (Union des Syndicats d'Ouvriers et Employés de Nouvelle-Calédonie), the largest of three unions representing workers in the New Caledonia nickel industry, through international labour bodies.

The Symposium had as its initial central focus a major study entitled "Nickel 2010: A New Era" which had been conducted by SYNDEX, a French consulting firm with a 20-year working relationship with USOENC. Panels focusing on environmental and social issues generated considerable debate with an audience that grew to approximately 350 people over the two days. At one point in that debate, a prominent indigenous spokesperson put it very forcefully: "If you want peace in this country, you must consult the Kanak people."

USOENC as a trade union also put forward a list of 30 propositions dealing with reclamation issues, abandoned mines, mine closures, environmental and industrial health and safety legislation, labour law and employment training. Absent, unfortunately, from the Union propositions was any reference to respecting or supporting Kanak indigenous rights as a minimal condition for economic development.

Following the conference, mine and smelter site visits to the SLN, Falconbridge, and Inco projects allowed the interna-

tional delegations to visually observe and investigate the massive projects that are in progress. In each case a central question was to what extent Kanak people will gain meaningful employment from projects that will define the New Caledonia economic reality for generations and decades to come. The companies are saying the right things on this point, but it remains a mystery why so many foreign skilled workers are being brought in for the construction phase of the projects when it only seems logical that Kanak and other local workers would benefit from learning these skills. A skilled and educated working class must know more than just how to mine and smelt nickel.

Environmental questions loom equally large in a country where mountain top upon mountain top is visibly scarred after a century of nickel mining. The Inco-Goro project is at the top of the environmental list of concerns as manganese effluent will be dumped into the pristine lagoons of a reef-surrounded island at levels of concentration that even Inco management cannot prove to be environmentally safe.

The Canadian joint union delegation did not pretend to have ready or simple answers for New Caledonians, indigenous or otherwise. This small island has suffered enough colonialism as it is. We did, however, assert three points that hopefully will prove of some political worth.

Firstly, it was pointed out that Canadian mining companies have become the "Ugly Americans" of the industry, especially in their overseas operations. The Sub-Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade investigation of the Canadian mining industry recommendations were

highlighted to the New Caledonian audience. It is that report which calls for more stringent regulations and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the industry complies with internationally acceptable social and environmental standards.

Secondly, the point was made emphatically that Canadian companies such as Inco and Falconbridge must not be allowed to get away with corporate behaviour in New Caledonia that they could not get away with in Canada. If an effluent cannot be dumped into the Niagara River or the lakes of Canada, then it cannot be dumped into the waters surrounding the coral reef in New Caledonia. It is the responsibility of unions in Canada and New Caledonia to work together, along with environmental organizations and other concerned citizens, to ensure that enforceable regulations are in place.

Finally, despite the difficulties and inevitable tensions, legitimate unions and indigenous organizations must walk the path of social justice together in their joint determination to leave a positive and harmonious social, political and environmental legacy for future Kanaky-New Caledonian generations.

– Report written by Ken Luckhardt, Member of MiningWatch Canada's Board of Directors, and participant representing the CAW International Department at the New Caledonia Nickel Symposium.



Ken Luckhardt, Dave Stewart and Vic Lalonde, members of the CAW delegation, with Saramin Jacques Boengkih of Agence Kanak de Développement, second from right. Photo: Ken Luckhardt.

Tailings Wash-out Results in Deaths in Jamaica

A “remediated” mine tailings area at Myersville, Jamaica became a watery grave for five people on July 16, 2005, when rains from Hurricane Emily washed their car off a road and over a precipice.

The bauxite mine, dug thirty years ago, belongs to Alpart and had been “restored, rehabilitated and certified,” according to Lance Neita, Alpart’s public relations manager. Jamaican National Works Agency (NWA) spokesman Stephen Shaw said that erosion had taken place at the site and guard rails should have been installed.

Falconbridge (formerly Noranda) purchased Kaiser Aluminium’s 49% share of Alpart on October 4, 2004. The other partner is the Jamaican government.

Falconbridge has bought into more than its share of environmental and social problems. Alpart, and other bauxite and aluminium operations in Jamaica have left a toxic legacy for many of the citizens. The company reports complaints on a very regular basis from the 18 communities in the vicinity of the plant. Alpart has been helping NWA deal with the incident.

Problems from the Alpart operations were documented in a case study undertaken by the University of Oslo in 2002. Among the problems they identified were:

- 1) There is no sector specific environmental legislation in Jamaica; and because the country is more concerned with tax revenues, mineral rights and ownership, there has been little attention paid to environmental concerns.
- 2) Regulatory requirements for environmental protection are often not met.
- 3) Mining companies are not required to restore land that was not formerly agricultural land. Most mining takes place on government lands and farming is not allowed on government lands. As a result, most lands are not restored. “It is dangerous to move around and the destroyed areas are unsuitable for alternative economic activity.”
- 4) Contamination of ground water is the main environmental problem. Odd Are Berkaak found in the 1980s that pollution from the Alpart plant was threatening the Nain-Pepper aquifer upon which the Mandeville water supply scheme was based. He stated that the pH of the liquid phase seeping into the aquifer was 14. Norsk Hydro sam-

pling showed pH values much lower than that, but Alpart employees were still concerned.

- 5) A study conducted by the World Bank showed significant evidence of increased corrosion within 3 km of alumina plants. Alpart has paid compensation to some families in the vicinity of the plant.
- 6) There are concerns about noise from the conveyor belt rollers, the level of dust from access roads and production kilns, and seepage from the mud disposal ponds.

The author of the report concluded that “the Alpart tradition has been to mute local protest rather than to eliminate the source of the environmental problem”. The Jamaican Bauxite Institute argues that restoration has been a huge success. However, “in many places where land has been restored, it has subsequently deteriorated.” The full report is available on line at <http://www.prosus.uio.no/english/publications/reports/2002-2/Rapp2.pdf> (see Chapter 5).

The Jamaican Bauxite Institute is funded by the companies and government to manage the complaints, but the farmers and villagers do not trust them to meet their needs.

There has been on-going protest in Jamaica about the health and environmental costs of the bauxite and alumina operations. In Canada, a website (www.jbeo.com) is dedicated to exposing these problems. The Jamaican Bauxite Environmental Organisation (JBEO) works with their fellow Jamaicans at home to raise funds for health testing., community clinics and other solutions to the problem. The problems they deal with range from resettlement issues, spills, inadequate water supply and dust events to sickness that appears to be related to the plant.

The person behind JBEO is Junior John, an expatriate Jamaican from St. Elizabeth living in Toronto. Junior with his friends in Jamaica has been an unrelenting thorn in the side of the aluminium companies for a number of years now; and was the instigator of a legal case demanding compensation for roof corrosion and human health from the Alpart dust. They now have independent technical experts monitoring dust emissions.

It remains to be seen if Falconbridge will live up to their rhetoric on environmental sustainability and deal with the dreadful legacy of bauxite mining and alumina production in Jamaica. Junior John and JBEO will need a lot of support to ensure they do.

Protected Areas: Testifying Before Indonesia’s Constitutional Court

Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch flew to Jakarta in June at the request of our partner organization JATAM [www.jatam.org] to testify as an expert witness before the constitutional court of Indonesia. At issue was the constitutionality of a Government Decree granting 13 mining companies an exemption from a prohibition against open pit mining in protected forests. Eleven organizations and 81 citizens were appellants in the case. In July the constitutional court upheld the prohibition against open pit mining in protected forests and denied 6 companies the exemption they sought, including Weda Bay of Canada.

Indonesia enacted *Forestry Act No.41* in 1999. The goals of the *Act* are: protecting watersheds; preventing salination of

water resources; preventing soil erosion and flooding; and maintaining the natural fertility of the soil. To achieve these goals the *Forestry Act* of 1999 bans open-pit mining in protected forests, among other measures. Soon after this law was enacted, the mining lobby in Indonesia went into high gear claiming undue hardship (for those companies with plans to mine in protected forests) and the creation of an investor unfriendly climate for international mining companies considering Indonesia as a place to do business. In all, some 158 companies claimed to be affected by this new law, but the international mining companies were reported to play the most aggressive role in defense of their interests by threatening to sue the Indonesian government if it did not reverse itself.

Canadian companies affected by the 1999 *Forestry Law* were Placer Dome in South Kalimantan's Meratus forests (Placer subsequently withdrew from this concession); Weda Bay Minerals Inc, which is developing a cobalt mine on Halmahera Island, North Maluku; and Inco, operator of nickel mining and smelting operations in South and Central Sulawesi.

In March of 2004, President Megawati Sukarnoputri issued a Government Decree "in lieu of law" (Perpu 1/2004), thereby invoking a state of emergency under Article 22 of the Constitution. While the Decree stipulates that all licenses and contracts for mining in forests made before the enactment of the 1999 *Forestry Act* are now valid for the remainder of the original term of the license or contract, only 13 companies were named as benefiting from the Decree because they had

"proven reserves and are economically viable." The majority of the lucky 13 are foreign owned companies including Inco and Weda Bay from Canada. In July 2004, the Decree was enacted by the House of Representatives as Law No.19/2004.

This history led to the constitutional challenge by civil society groups and the participation of Catherine as a witness before the court. Upon the advice of lawyers for civil society, Catherine presented broadly on the validity of protecting areas from mining and on mining's potentially major impacts. For the text of Catherine's presentation see our web site.

While in Indonesia Catherine also participated as a panelist in a press conference on this topic, together with Emil Salim, and met with the Environment Minister to discuss this issue and Submarine Tailings Disposal.

African Initiative on Mining, Environment & Society Meets in Lusaka

MiningWatch's Jamie Kneen attended the 6th meeting of the African Initiative on Mining, Environment and Society (AIMES) July 4-9 in Lusaka, Zambia. The conference was organized by Citizens for Better Environment (CBE) of Zambia in conjunction with Third World Network-Africa of Ghana. Thirty-one participants attended the conference, from Zimbabwe, Ghana, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Nigeria, South Africa, Canada, England, Guinea and Zambia.

The meeting reviewed the latest developments in different countries across the continent, and analysed various mechanisms to protect communities affected by large-scale mining projects. The group discussed human rights protection, for

example under the African Union; accountability and transparency initiatives such as Publish What You Pay and accounting for ecological debt; and reversing national mining and trade and investment policies that do not benefit national economies or host communities.

The group also committed to continue to work to make AIMES into a fully functioning network of organisations, academics, and community representatives, sharing information and working in solidarity to support each others' campaigns and initiatives. Further documentation will be made available as it is finalised.

House of Commons Committee tells Government "Regulate Canadian Mining Companies Abroad – Investigate TVI Pacific in the Philippines"

In a landmark report, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) calls on the Canadian government to ensure "socially and environmentally responsible conduct by Canadian companies."

In their 14th report, the Committee members state that they are:

Concerned that Canada does not yet have laws to ensure that the activities of Canadian mining companies in developing countries conform to human rights standards, including the rights of workers and indigenous peoples.

The Committee provides eight very important recommendations including:

- Make Canadian government support for companies, such as "export and project financing and services offered by Canadian missions abroad - conditional on companies meeting clearly defined corporate social responsibility and human rights standards, particularly through the mechanism of human rights impact assessments;"
- Develop "new mechanisms for monitoring the activities of Canadian mining companies in developing countries and for dealing with complaints alleging socially and environmentally irresponsible conduct and human rights violations.";
- "Establish clear legal norms in Canada to ensure that Canadian companies and residents are held accountable when there is evidence of environmental and/or human rights violations associated with the activities of Canadian

mining companies;"

- Strengthen "the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises" by "clearly defining the responsibilities of multinational enterprises with regard to human rights,...making compliance with international human rights standards obligatory,....working towards establishing common rules of evidence" and strengthening the "mandate of the Canadian National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines" so that it can "respond to complaints promptly,...undertake proper investigations,...recommend appropriate measures against companies found to be acting in violation of the OECD Guidelines."
- Develop "specific rules for companies operating in conflict zones.

This report is based on evidence that has been heard by the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development, related to the activities of Canadian mining companies, over several years.

TVI Pacific Philippines

The Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development (of SCFAIT) also investigated in hearings the activities of Canadian mining company TVI Pacific in the Philippines and concluded:

The Subcommittee is deeply concerned about the possible impact of the activities of TVI Pacific Inc., a Canadian mining company, on the indigenous rights and the human rights of

people in the area, and recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Conduct an investigation of any impact of TVI Pacific's Canatuan mining project in Mindanao on the indigenous rights and the human rights of people in the area and on the environment, and table a report on this investigation in Parliament within 90 days;
2. Ensure that it does not promote TVI Pacific Inc. pending the outcome of this investigation.

Catherine Coumans from MiningWatch Canada and two of MiningWatch Canada's partners from the municipality affected by TVI's operations, Mr. Onsino Mato and Mr. Godofredo Gallos testified before the Subcommittee.

In November 2004, preceding the formation of the Subcommittee, MiningWatch Canada hosted a delegation of four representatives from the Philippine municipality affected by TVI Pacific as part of an ongoing partnership with members of this community. During that visit, Catherine accompanied the delegation to a meeting with MP Ed Broadbent. Following this meeting Mr. Broadbent's office expressed

interest in having both Catherine and delegates from the Philippines testify before the Subcommittee on the human rights concerns of indigenous and community men and women, resulting from TVI's operations.

Immediately preceding the hearings of March 23, 2005, MiningWatch Canada received notification from TVI Pacific's legal counsel stating: "We also understand that representatives of Mining Watch are slated to appear next week before the subcommittee on Human Rights and International Development to provide further comment, if any, on the mine. TVI is concerned that Mining Watch has levelled serious and unwarranted accusations about TVI's activities. TVI hereby provides formal notice that if the Mining Watch website is not properly corrected and/or if any Mining Watch representative gives inaccurate and defamatory information at the forthcoming hearing, that TVI will commence action in the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta seeking damages for defamation."

Onsino Mato and Godofredo Galos from the Philippines decided to testify before the subcommittee *in camera*.

Book Review:

The Profits of Extermination: How U.S. Corporate Power is Destroying Colombia

by Francisco Ramírez Cuellar, translated and with an introduction by Aviva Chomsky.

Common Courage Press, Monroe, Maine. 2005. Paperback, 92 pages plus appendices. US\$14.95.

The Profits of Extermination looks at the links between foreign corporations and human rights violations in Colombia. Where corporations have sought access to Colombia's resources - oil, coal, gold, emeralds - they have used paramilitary violence, forced displacement, massacres, and disappearance as tactics to remove populations and secure their investments.

This book puts horrible abuses - massacres, assassinations, torture, and forced relocation - into context, presenting a substantial body of documentation to name the perpetrators. The real root of the violence is the conflict over natural resources, pitting Colombia's peasants and indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations against powerful transnational mining and petroleum interests. The title points at US corporations, but Canada does not come out looking good. Not only have Canadian mining companies been behind some of the most gruesome abuses, but the Canadian government has tried to help the Colombian government remove legal protection for peasants, small-scale miners, and mineworkers. In the late 1990s, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI), helped the Colombian government develop a new mining code that allowed foreign investors to take over small-scale miners' claims while also abolishing the state mining company Minercol and its union, Sintraminercol.

Francisco Ramírez Cuellar is president of Sintraminercol, the Union of Colombian Mining Workers; Aviva Chomsky is Professor of Latin American History at Salem State College and active in Colombia solidarity work.

To order call 800-497-3207 or use the form below.

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by Francisco Ramírez Cuellar, translated and introduction by Aviva Chomsky. US\$14.95.

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North American Indigenous Peoples Mining Summit – July 27-30, 2005

The North American Indigenous Peoples' Mining Summit brought Indigenous Peoples together from throughout North America to share their stories about how the mining industry has impacted their communities and to discuss strategies and solutions.

Technical experts were on hand to lead panel discussions and answer questions about the processes and impacts of hard-rock metallic, uranium, diamond and coal mining.

More than 50 people together traveled thousands of miles to attend the Edmonton Summit, from communities throughout Turtle Island. The Summit began with a Keynote Address by Andrea Carmen, the Executive Director of the International Indian Treaty Council entitled "Mining, Human Rights, and the Natural World Responsibilities of Indigenous Peoples". The keynote address was followed by a report from Guatemala by Francisco Cali Tzay, the Guatemala Representative to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on "Building North-South Solidarity to Defend Our Communities: A Report From Guatemala".

Panel topics throughout the next two days included workshops on the social, cultural, environmental and health impacts of coal, uranium, and hardrock mining, tribal consultation, mine closure and cleanup, U.S. and Canadian Mining Law and its impacts on Tribal lands and resources, communities facing new mine proposals and profiles in resistance, corporate

engagement, acid mine drainage prediction and prevention, fundraising strategies, mercury and mining, success stories, as well as mine reclamation and reclamation bonding.

After sharing information, training, resources and knowledge, participants offered each other support in technical and legal knowledge and trainings, negotiating strategies, campaigning, media, and community outreach. The gathering divided into working groups around coal, uranium, and hardrock mining.

The North American Indigenous Mining Summit was organized and hosted by the Western Mining Action Network (WMAN) and the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). In the coming months and years, WMAN and IEN will take the energy and ideas generated at this gathering and develop workplans and strategies to follow-up on the needs identified.

More information is available at the WMAN web site.



Francisco Cali Tzay addressing opening session
Photo Credit: Indigenous Environmental Network Staff

RESOLUTION

*Indigenous Peoples Caucus,
Western Mining Action Network
Cree Territory (Edmonton, Alberta Canada), July 30, 2005*

Whereas, the Indigenous Peoples Caucus of the Western Mining Action Network was formed to strengthen our alliances and inherent responsibilities to protect Mother Earth from the destructive impacts of irresponsible mining, in particular uranium, hard rock and coal mining. The caucus is composed of representatives from across the northern region of Turtle Island (Canada and the United States). Together, our voices are united as one to advocate for the health, safety and welfare of our communities to the decision makers in governments and industry.

Whereas, the North American Indigenous Peoples Mining Summit was convened in the traditional territory of the Cree Nation (Edmonton, Alberta CA) July 27 - July 30, 2005 to bring Indigenous Peoples together to share our traditional knowledge and understanding of western science as it relates to our individual community and collective concerns on mining practices, and;

Whereas, these Indigenous representatives from across Turtle Island registered numerous concerns on the hazardous impacts of irresponsible mining on the health, welfare and safety of our peoples, our communities, our lands and spiritual and cultural resources, and;

Whereas, there have been numerous violations of our inherent and human rights as Indigenous Peoples as given to us by the Creator both by the mining industry and governmental sectors, and;

Whereas, in order to protect these rights of all Indigenous Peoples and to safeguard against any future harms that threaten our physical and spiritual survival through the protection of Mother Earth and our natural world;

Therefore, be it resolved, we, as Indigenous representatives and organizations, hereby unite to discuss spiritual, cultural, social and environmental concerns that will not only directly impact Indigenous Peoples but impact the sustainability of all life and all peoples, globally and

Be it further resolved that, we as Indigenous representatives and organizations hereby unite to develop strategies and initiate immediate changes to educate and inform communities, the corporate world and government officials of the Indigenous worldview and that those harms caused by irresponsible mining affect the water, the air, the land and the overall sustainability of our earth and all life and these harms must be addressed and corrected immediately.

News from MiningWatch Canada

Web Site Redesign

www.miningwatch.ca has been completely redesigned, with more information about mining in Canada and around the world where Canadian mining companies operate. Information is more easily accessible by country, by issue or by company. The site will be officially “launched” on September 15. Visit us soon and often for the latest news.

New Documents

On June 28, 2005, MiningWatch released a study highly critical of the policies and practices of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). According to the report, Protecting Fish/Protecting Mines: What is the real job of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?, DFO – the federal agency mandated to manage and protect fish and fish habitat in inland waters – has allowed extensive destruction of fish habitat from mining development, ignoring its own mandate as well as public concern and advice from independent scientists. The report has generated a great deal of interest – over 2,500 downloads from the web site within the first three weeks – with feedback received from DFO, the mining industry, First Nations and environmental groups who have commented on accuracy, timeliness and balance of the report.

On July 5, 2005, MiningWatch submitted comments on the federal Environmental Assessment report on the Victor Mine. The comment demands a panel review and a delay in approvals for the mine, so that the affected First Nations will have time to create the capacity, land use planning and educa-

tion to benefit from the profits from mine over generations. The finding in the CEEA report of “no significant environmental effects” boggles the mind. The Victor Mine is an experiment in mining in muskeg using dewatering wells, for which there is no precedent. It is like mining a sponge in a bath tub. Comments from Wildlands League, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Muskegowuk Council can be read at www.wildlands.org.

Staff News

Susan Isaac will be leaving MiningWatch Canada at the end of August to look for other opportunities. She has been a wonderful asset to the organization, helping to streamline administrative systems and develop resources, as well as researching and writing the paper *Protecting Fish/Protecting Mines: What is the Real Job of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans?* She will be deeply missed.

Julea Boswell is starting September 6 in a new position: Administration and Resource Development Co-ordinator. Julea has extensive experience in this capacity, working with the arts and recreation communities in Ottawa.

We have had two summer students this year: Kelly Fritsch, a Masters student at Carleton, has been working on website redesign. Jamison Young, a law student at the University of Ottawa, has been preparing the background paper for a conference on regulating Canadian mining companies operating internationally to be held in late October.



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