

## **Donlin Gold Project EIS**

ONC Environmental Summit, Bethel

Brief presentation regarding results of public scoping meetings

Thursday, May 23, 2013, 11:00 am

### **Attendance:**

Don Kuhle, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Amanda Shearer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Taylor Brelsford, URS; and, Moxie Alexie, URS, traveled to the Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) Regional Environmental Summit in Bethel for an evening presentation on May 22, 2013 and a morning presentation on May 23, 2013. There was strong attendance at both presentations and there were two different audiences. The Thursday May 23, 2013 presentation during the Summit agenda had at least 50 attendees, made up of village representatives from throughout the region. Don Kuhle made a presentation describing the proposed Donlin Gold project and the scoping process. Taylor Brelsford presented the results from the public scoping period for the development of the Donlin Gold Project EIS. There was also a KYUK radio call-in program on the afternoon of May 23, 2013.

### **Issues Raised:**

*This is a brief summary of issues and comments during the morning session on May 23, 2013.*

- Presentation started at approximately 11:00 am.
- A meeting participant asked what are the plans for tailing pond ruptures? Don stated that a lot of people voiced concerns about that and it will be addressed in the EIS.
- A meeting participant asked how many miles will the proposed mine be from Crooked Creek? The answer was 10 miles.
- A meeting participant gave an example from Newfoundland last December (2012) where a tailings pond ruptured and let contaminated water into a community that was 2 miles away. The participant asked would you be prepared to bring in drinking water? Don stated that through the evaluation, URS will be looking closely at Donlin's plans. Donlin should have emergency procedures if a spill happens and be prepared to do what's necessary.
- A meeting participant stated that the long term plans need to ensure that the tailings pond is monitored over time for future generations. Don stated that there are bonding requirements for Donlin to set aside money and that their monitoring plans will be reviewed in detail.
- A meeting participant asked how soon or how long until Donlin gets a permit? Don stated that the schedule currently shows the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to be published in November 2015. The Corps and other agencies will use the EIS to make their permit decisions. It is likely that approximately two months after the FEIS is published then a Corps of Engineers permit decision will be made.

- A meeting participant stated that everyone appreciated a thorough look at the environment, but what about the history of the company in past projects? Don stated that the EIS looks at the project as proposed by the applicant. The Corps regulations require us to permit the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA), which includes a safe and well designed project. Taylor stated that technical team realizes how important the resources are to people in the region. These experts are experienced and committed to a good analysis. We will look at the scientific literature, including comparisons of the science behind mines around the world for key cases.
- A meeting participant asked how do you break rocks? Explosion? How will it affect the atmosphere? Don stated yes, they will use explosives, and also crushing to break up the rock in the mill. Dust from that will be considered for the effect on air quality. The Corps has received a lot of questions regarding air quality monitoring to track what's happening and adequately controlling dust into air emissions.
- A meeting participant asked if Donlin would give public access to all of their plans. Don stated yes, all the information provided from Donlin in the permit applications is already on the Donlin Gold EIS website and other materials will be added as the EIS goes forward.
- A meeting participant said thank you for the presentation and for discussing the concerns about boom-and-bust. As you observe, we are eating our subsistence foods (duck soup) right now. Don stated thank you, we will be considering potential impacts to subsistence foods as the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is prepared.
- A meeting participant asked about water testing? Don stated that yes, for years Donlin Gold has been doing water quality testing. URS has gone through all that information to identify data gaps, and we are still in that process. A meeting participant asked if they will test the Kuskokwim River water also? Don stated yes. Taylor stated that the baseline studies are a big body of science. The Army Corps has to look critically to see what information is still needed to fully address the issues raised from the Donlin permit applications.
- Presentation Q&A ended at 11:44 am.