Donlin Gold Project EIS
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
October 8, 2015
Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center
Bethel, Alaska

EIS Project Team Attendees
Taylor Brelsford, AECOM Senior Planner
Donne Fleagle, AECOM Senior Specialist, Rural Community Engagement

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
William Brown, Eek
James Charles, Tuntutuliak
John Andrew, Kwethluk
Michael Peters, Marshall
Lester Wilde Sr., Hooper Bay, Chair
Dale Smith, Mekoryuk
Anthony Ulak, Scammon Bay
Annie Cleveland, Quinhagak
Dorothy Johnson, Mountain Village
Raymond Oney, Alakanuk
Greg Roczicka, Bethel
Robert Aloysius, Kalskag
David Bill Sr., Toksook Bay

Community Members & Federal Staff Members:
Mike Williams, Chair of Yupiit Nation, Chair of the Kuskokwim River Tribal Fisheries Commission
Pat Samson, Translator
Pat Snow, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
Gene Peltola, Orutsararmiut Native Council Executive Director
Robert Sundown, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
Spencer Reardon, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
Plus approximately 27 additional agency and public participants

Status Report on the Donlin Gold Project Draft EIS:
Using a presentation approved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Taylor Brelsford and Donne Fleagle provided a status report on the Donlin Gold Project EIS on Thursday, October 8, 2015, at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center in Bethel. The presentation focused on promoting participation in reviewing the Draft EIS, to be released on November 30, 2015. Topics included: major issues addressed in the Draft EIS, organization of the Draft EIS, proposed locations for meetings on the Draft EIS, and methods for submitting comments.

Issues Raised:

Question: Why is there a need for a 40 million diesel fuel storage facility if the natural gas pipeline is bringing in the energy supply?
Response: In earlier project design, barges were going to bring in 110 million gallons of diesel a year for the haul trucks and the electrical generators. In the current design, the natural gas pipeline provides fuel for the electrical generators. This reduces the barging and storage volume to 40 million gallons of diesel fuel each year for the haul trucks.

Statement: *There are going to be many meetings in the period January - April, including at least two with pre-season management meetings for fisheries on the Kuskokwim River. Please try to avoid creating a conflict with those meetings or maybe even piggy-back onto some of those. Most of us are going to be focusing on the potential effects to subsistence.*

Question: How large is the physical document and will any of those be in hard copy?
Response: Since the document is so big, we will rely on electronic publication. The Draft EIS will be approximately 3,000 pages long with the appendices being about that long as well. We will print and send throughout the region up to 500 copies of a very thorough Executive Summary, with a copy of the CD for the full Draft EIS in a pocket attached to the document. We will include a brief Executive Summary translated into Yup'ik.

One other tool to help people find what they need in the Draft EIS is a 2-3 page summary of each resource section, called a synopsis. These will summarize key findings, and guide the reader into the full analysis, without having to read through dozens to hundreds of pages of technical analysis.

A small number of hard copies will be printed for the Draft EIS, based on the Corps requirements in our contract. It will be in several volumes and could be a stack of paper 5-6 inches high.

Question: How are the barges going to cross the narrow swallow part of the river and get past Birch Creek when the summer has 1/10 of the water volume?
Response: There is a Donlin Gold barge load management plan to monitor the river flow, using the stream gauge at Crooked Creek, and to adjust the loads to lighten barges in reduced flow periods. For some shallow areas, the management plan uses a strategy of breaking the barge tow of four barges into two smaller trips. The barge would tie up on the bank, then the tug would ferry two barges through the shallow area and come back for the other two.

At some levels of severe low water, there would be no barge passage through shallow areas. Donlin Gold examined river flow data and prepared an analysis, or a modeling exercise, to see how often the water flow would have been sufficient to transport the cargo and fuel needed for the project. The modeling reviewed 60 years of stream flow

data from the Crooked Creek gauge, and concluded that there would be the necessary 110 days for barge traffic 90 percent of the time.

Question: Will the Yukon River be impacted in any way by this project?
Response: Jobs will be an indirect impact in the Bering Coast and Yukon River villages. Since these villages are part of the Calista Region and would benefit from the shareholder hire provisions, there will be jobs and related impacts in these communities too. However, the direct impacts to waters, habitats, fish, wildlife, and subsistence would occur on the Kuskokwim River.

Question: What about the road from the Yukon to the Kuskokwim that AVCP has promoted. How is it related to the Donlin Gold project?
Response: The cooperating agencies asked about this and we looked into it carefully. AVCP obtained funding for a preliminary study of alternative routes. According to the engineer that prepared this study, the proposed road is on hold because there is no funding available. For the Draft EIS, we treated it as a distant future project, not one that would occur in time to be part of the Donlin Gold Project.