

Donlin Gold Project EIS

Aniak Scoping Meeting
Aniak High School
Tuesday, January 15, 2013, 6:00 pm

Attendance:

Well over 40 people attended the scoping meeting for the Donlin Gold Project EIS held at Aniak, Alaska on January 15, 2013. Don Kuhle with the Army Corps of Engineers, the lead federal agency, presented an overview of the proposed Donlin Gold Mine EIS Project. Cooperating agencies were also in attendance such as BLM, EPA, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Two federally recognized tribes who serve as cooperating agencies were also in attendance: the Village of Crooked Creek, and the Native Village of Napaimute.

Issues Raised:

This is a brief summary of issues and comments. A complete Scoping Report with meeting transcripts and detailed analysis of all comments will be issued in May 2013.

- Increased barge traffic may have negative effects on subsistence activities and resources, including river bank erosion.
- The barge travel plans may not be adequate when water levels are low.
- If dredging took place, it would disrupt fish habitat on the river bottom.
- The pipeline would be too close to the river bottom where erosion could undermine the pipeline.
- Rupture or failure of the fuel storage tanks at the Jungjuk Port would allow a spill into the Kuskokwim River.
- Can the local villages hook into the natural gas pipeline to reduce heating costs?
- What are the effects of the pipeline corridor on traditional hunting areas and uses?
- Will air quality be monitored up and down the river during the life of the project?
- Airborne mercury emissions would have the potential for contaminating subsistence foods like berries even far away from the mine site.
- The EIS should consider cumulative effects with other projects, such as the proposed road from the Yukon River to the Kuskokwim River near Kalskag.
- What is the potential for acid mine drainage and how can this be avoided?
- Will a single plastic liner be adequate for the tailings impoundment? If there is a breach, like in some mines in Europe, the effects would be a disaster.
- A loophole in the Clean Water Act allows mine tailing or “fill material” to be placed directly into waterways. The EIS should consider the ramifications.
- The project should maximize local hire and train local residents for the many heavy equipment and welding jobs.

- The workers' schedule (two weeks on and two weeks off) would disrupt family life. Donlin should consider what was done in the past at NYAC [mine] where entire families resided year round at the camp, with schools and other amenities provided.
- Waste water must be treated. Acid-generating characteristics in the rock and the risk of leaching of other contaminants in the rock must be fully analyzed.
- Is there adequate containment at fuel transfer and storage sites?