

Donlin Gold Project EIS

Johnny John Sr. School, Crooked Creek,
Donlin EIS Presentation to High School Students
November 18, 2014

Project Team Attendees:

Donne Fleagle, URS
Taylor Brelsford, URS

High School Attendees:

Six students, two teachers and a teacher's aide participated.

Overview:

At the suggestion of the former Kuspuk School district Board member, Dennis Thomas, Donne Harris-Fleagle and Taylor Brelsford were invited to give the Donlin EIS presentation to the High School students. Donne made the presentation and Taylor offered additional comments a few times through the slides.

Dennis Thomas opened and closed the discussion by emphasizing that the High School students would be directly affected by any decision regarding the Donlin Gold project and so they should pay close attention and learn as much as they can.

The students had all heard of the Donlin Gold project, with varying levels of familiarity with the project details. They were quite interested in the review of environmental impacts through the EIS. A graduating senior, who works summer with the Kuskokwim Native Association fish monitoring weir, knew a great deal about the project and concerns regarding barging impacts on fish stocks.

Questions:

Question: How long is the pipeline and is it buried?

Response: 315 miles, and buried except for two earthquake fault crossings.

Question: How deep is the pipeline buried beneath the rivers (when installed using Horizontal Directional Drilling)?

Response: The pipe is buried well below the river bed, including consideration of ice scoring during breach up. The actual depth varies depending on the subsurface rock or gravel in which it is installed.

Question: Is there a permanent road alongside the pipeline?

Response: No.

Question: What type of job do I need to get to voice my opposition to the pipeline?

Response: No special job is required. When the Draft EIS comes out for public comments next fall, the public meetings would be a great time to provide your comments.

Question: How far is the pit from Crooked Creek?

Response: The pit wall would be as close as ¼ mile from the modern Crooked Creek channel. The historic floodplain would be closer. Careful engineering of the pit wall is critical to stability and avoiding any problems related to Crooked Creek.

Question: What is the scale of the barging, and how does the EIS analyze impacts to fish?

Response: Donne drew attention to the diagram of a barge train, and the text in the slide about the number of barge trips. She also noted the fish studies (rainbow smelt and juvenile salmon) as described in the presentation. Taylor talked about how the analysis looks at the propeller wash and barge waves and evaluated the potential to disrupt juvenile fish, particularly in the narrow parts of the river.

Question/Comment: I recognize the benefits of jobs in the region, but this is just short term, up to 31 years. It is too risky.

Response: This is an important question of balancing benefits and risks in the region. Please be sure to get your comments in the Draft EIS.