

## **Donlin Gold Project EIS**

Quinhagak Scoping Meeting

Village Corporation Conference Room

Thursday, February 28, 2013, 1:00 pm

### **Attendance:**

Well over 40 residents attended the scoping meeting held in Quinhagak. Don Kuhle of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made a presentation about the Donlin Gold Project EIS. Cooperating agencies participating by teleconference included the EPA and Alaska Department of Natural Resources. In addition, an epidemiologist from the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation was able to attend.

### **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.*

- Will written comments be accepted in the process?
- Regarding the pipeline where it crosses under the Kuskokwim River, we are concerned about breaks/leaks in the pipeline during major earthquakes.
- We have been pushing for the health impact assessment (HIA) for years, need to be sure that it is included in the Donlin Gold EIS.
- When did the State decide to prepare a HIA? What categories will the HIA cover? It cannot just cover the workforce onsite; it needs to cover impacts to the communities of the region.
- Concerns about management of mercury. Where will the mercury be located or stored?
- Water and air quality will need to be monitored before, during and after mine closure.
- Make sure that water quality is monitored after closure of the mine.
- We have concerns about managing mercury, cyanide, and acid rock drainage. Will there be cyanide in the tailings? Where is the federal certified site where the collected mercury is to be shipped out to?
- There must be extensive monitoring because of the prevailing winds and the water flows.
- What are the risks of exposure to contaminants during a life span? These are picked up in the ecosystem.
- The pit lake design has steep angles of cut, so there will be no sediment to seal off contaminants. It will be constant hazard. The EIS should use examples from around the country, i.e., angles of slopes and capping the pit lake, to analyze how to get the pit lake back to a natural state so doesn't threaten water quality in other streams.
- The reclamation bond is not adequate.

- The metallurgy report shows arsenic in the rock. This will be released in the autoclave. Can it be captured?
- The mill process uses cyanide, which can take up base metals. What are the risks of these hazardous chemicals?
- Does the State have air and water quality standards for the area now? Water quality standards need to be established before startup of the mine in order to know the impacts.
- For people in our area subsistence is very important. What would happen if there was an oil spill on the Kuskokwim River? Accidents can happen good example is the oil spill in Bethel years ago.
- Mercury is very dangerous.
- Donlin looks good for jobs, but this land and water is ours, we use it to feed our families it is our food.
- People here and in Goodnews Bay, Platinum and Eek represent Unit 10 in the Calista Region. Are you just talking about the Donlin Gold project, or will this EIS analyze other minerals in Unit 10? We have concerned with operations if additional mines were considered.
- We have concern for our lifestyle, hoping this is not to be done right away. We are not in favor of opening a mine rights away. We want to protect subsistence.
- How will increased barging on the Kuskokwim River affect the fish run? The salmon going upriver? This is a key issue for the EIS.
- This mine will not only affect Crooked Creek and the immediate area, it will affect the whole region.
- You say you are doing the mine the right way, but there is no right way when something [catastrophic] happens.
- I went on the Nevada trip and it made me really think, because at and near the mine site there was nothing, no birds, no animals, and no vegetation. Will it be this way with the Donlin project?
- The project will affect the fish, and even if good may come from the project, we are concerned about effects on subsistence.
- The whole idea is to work together, to find solutions. You should bring people to the meetings who can answer questions.
- What are the differences between platinum mining in the 1930s and the proposed Donlin Gold Mine?
- Is Donlin Gold proposing a specific process, using chemicals to separate gold from the ore?
- The younger generations don't eat as much from the land and things are changing. What are our children going to do to make their living? Fishing is good, but not enough. Mining is not enough for the young generation. We must do the best we can for the younger generation.

- The Emergency Response Plans are critical for this project. There should be funding for local communities to assist in responses.
- I witnessed mining on the Arolik River and at the KowKow mine. When the mining was in operation, the Arolik was muddy, and the salmon no longer came. Then, when the mining shut down, the fish came back, and we now use the rivers for subsistence. [This appears refer to the Trail Creek mine, a placer gold operation before 1919 on a tributary of the Arolik River. Information at: <http://www.mindat.org/loc-200404.html>]
- The project would affect 16,000 acres of wetlands, which is quite a lot. The EIS should explain compensatory mitigation, and what will be required of Donlin.
- There have very few village meetings regarding the Donlin Gold Mine Project. Most of us know very little. At an AVCP contention 2-3 years ago, held without village meetings first, there was a resolution to endorse the concept of the Donlin mine. We didn't have time to learn more about the operation. There should be village meetings more often. We now have only one month to submit comments regarding the Donlin Gold Mine.
- We have not learned of Calista's exploration agreement. What are the benefits to shareholders? The mine will operate for 27 years, but the workers are the only ones to benefit.
- Elders were recently arrested for subsistence fishing. The runs are declining and we will see more of this. If something happens, it may affect the ocean where the fish come in. The Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge said that salmon spend 2 years close to the shore, so they could be affected by the mine.
- What are the human impacts, from employment? Many people are unemployed, and families are hurting. We are trying to transition to your [Western] way of life and away from living in the past. Many of us depend on our grandchildren, and thankfully they help out. But we don't know the effects of things like acid rain and whether it will affect the land and resources around here. Time is running out.