

## Wetzel, Kimberly

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**From:** Craig, Bill  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 03, 2013 3:59 PM  
**To:** Wetzel, Kimberly  
**Cc:** Brelsford, Taylor  
**Subject:** FW: additional///comment read at nikolai village council meeting (UNCLASSIFIED)

Bill Craig  
URS Alaska  
3201 C Street, Ste 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Direct 907-433-6718  
Mobile 907-441-7207

-----Original Message-----

From: Kuhle, Don P POA [mailto:Don.P.Kuhle@usace.army.mil]  
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2013 3:40 PM  
To: Brelsford, Taylor; Craig, Bill  
Subject: FW: additional///comment read at nikolai village council meeting (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

An additional comment from Mr. Runkle.

-----Original Message-----

From: John and Marty Runkle [mailto:runkleinak@hotmail.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2013 3:25 PM  
To: beverly.gregory@tananachiefs.org; Kevin Whitworth; Kent VF Grace; NICK Alexia; NESTORNAOMI; jacque ESAI; Sharon Runkle; John and Marty Runkle; City of Nikolai; kimball9999@yahoo.com; shane spearman; (bobbyfithian@gmail.com); jerry and rebecca reichlin; (windyfork@hotmail.com); KERRY ALLES; DENIS; BILL MERCHANT; MTNT; (mayorlyman@gmail.com); Dave Mushovi; MARK NORDMAN; Kuhle, Don P POA; (mmsadmin@mtnt.net); Bob Kepp; BARNEY<KITTY; BRETT; teresa\_lowrey@yahoo.com  
Subject: FW: additional///comment read at nikolai village council meeting

Also to be noted is the fact that the very same exact route proposed thru the foothills of the Alaska Range IS the spring caribou calving area for the Rainy Pass/BigRiver herd and the fall migration stopping area to feed and rest for literally 10,000's upon 1000's of crane.

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From: runkleinak@hotmail.com  
To: jacque.esai@gmail.com; silverfox6981@yahoo.com; runkleinak@hotmail.com; cityofnikolai@yahoo.com; kimball9999@yahoo.com; shanes4220@yahoo.com; bobbyfithian@gmail.com; reichlin@gci.net; windyfork@hotmail.com; kerry.alles@gmail.com; denis.gardella@gmail.com; billmerchant@alaskaultrasport.com;

dschenkenberger@mtnt.net; mayorlyman@gmail.com; dmushovi@blm.gov; mark.nordman@iditarod.com; don.p.kuhle@usace.army.mil; mmsadmin@mtnt.net; kepp4955@aol.com; anselment@mcgrathalaska.net; brett\_gibbens@dps.state.ak.us

Subject: comment read at nikolai village council meeting

Date: Wed, 3 Apr 2013 14:03:40 -0800

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I would like to share some information with you regarding the proposed construction project by the "Donlin Creek Mine" to lay a 313 mile gas pipeline from Anchorage to Crooked Creek located on the lower Kuskokwim River in order to supply a gold mining venture. Please keep in mind that from the beginning of time the Alaska Range and the Kuskokwim River and valley have never in the history of the world or mankind ever been impacted by a construction project as large as the Donlin Creek Mine proposed pipeline. The Kuskokwim River is major a salmon spawning river consisting of dozens of tributaries that support annual spawning of many different species of fish. The river system also supports a variety of marine mammals and many species of birds. It is the last major river in North America that IS NOT connected to a major road system. Many people along the river, especially native Alaskan elders still today drink the water from the river, rather than well water. Every possible precaution should be taken to prevent contamination of the river water supply.

The proposed Donlin Creek Mine gas pipeline involves huge environmental disaster potentials for local inhabitants and the Kuskokwim River Valley geographics located between Nikolai and the Alaska Range. The proposed route would cross open exposed tundra that is home to caribou, black and grizzly bear, moose and a variety of smaller game and birds. It will also have an effect upon the dall sheep that come down off the mountains in the winter to feed at the lower elevations very near the proposed route. None of the animals that normally inhabit this area of the Alaska Range will hang around when there is this massive of an influx of people and machinery. It is a known fact that the strip of land the mine wants to use to bury their pipeline is a nesting area for ptarmigan and several species of migratory birds. These birds nest and hatch their young in the tundra. Silvertip Camp which is located along the Khuchaynik Creek in the Western Alaska Range is a subsistence, traditional and customary gathering location for many people from Nikolai. It is also a family commercial guiding camp for Philip and Dora Esai, John and Marty Runkle and their extended family members. There are currently 4 licensed guides in their families contributing to their annual income. Philip Esai, now age 74, began hunting there at age 12 with his uncle and grandfather. Philip established his commercial guiding camp at Silvertip in 1971 after becoming the first Alaska Native licensed registered guide in the state of Alaska. Philip and his wife have been at Silvertip every year together for at least the last 42 years. He and his son in law John Runkle, also a registered guide of Alaska, hold a BLM-FLPMA lease and a Special Recreational Land Use Permit issued to them in 1987. The first lease issuance by the BLM of its kind in the Alaska Range. There is over 100 years of established use in the "modern time period" at Silvertip Camp. There are 2 Doyon designated historical sites very close to the current camp location. The 6000 foot tall mountain located directly above Silvertip called "Tsemokesh", has served as a visual landmark for Athabaskan peoples for over 100 hundred years. The campsite itself was a major gathering place for the native people in the fall time where they would hunt, preserve their catch and wait for freeze up before moving on to their respective winter trapping camps. The proposed route of the pipeline is only 2 miles below the Silvertip Camp. Donlin has proposed a 3.08 hectares which is about a 10 acre gravel pit at the creek crossing 2 miles below Silvertip Camp on the Khuchaynik Creek. This is near the "bluffs" where their family members spot for game animals to this day, both when guiding and during subsistence hunting. All along the proposed pipeline route at each stream, river and creek crossing the Donlin Creek Mine has proposed to open gravel sites. Some of which are very large. This would include each and every creek bed the Esai and Runkle families hunt, guide and gather along. Donlin has planned that every 5 miles along the route there will be a pipe storage station to stock the 14" diameter pipes needed for the next 5 miles of installation all along the route. This is very large and heavy pipe. Included along the route will be fuel storages, equipment shops, heavy equipment to be used along the route to lay pipe, grading, hauling of rock, ect. The proposed

route will produce a huge visible footprint upon the land. From the Farewell / Windy Fork to the Big River there are 2-300 man camps planned, 6-30 man camps and a 5000 foot runway at Big River. Construction improvements are planned at the existing Farewell runway to upgrade it. Donlin plans these runways in order to bring in the massive equipment needed to do this type of project.

A 200 foot wide route will be cleared for the trenching equipment to lay pipe. A 50 foot right of way would be maintained and brushed out every 10 years for the approximately 27 1/2 years life of the mine. A total environmental nightmare. The Runkle and Esai families as well as many other concerned people with land and camps along the route submitted comments for the first EIS (environmental impact study) period regarding the construction of the proposed gas pipeline. Our family members will forever oppose this development. The Donlin Creek Mine will not employ any local hire on the pipeline construction. Rather they propose to contract a Texas based pipeline company which they proclaim has the experience necessary to complete a job of this magnitude. There will be NO taps installed anywhere along the line for distribution of gas to McGrath or Nikolai or anywhere else, ever. There is no low cost gas coming to Nikolai. They appear to be another mining company sweet talking everyone here at local meetings held by them to meet with the villagers to establish relations, give away raffles of gas, give away coats and caps, sandwiches, fresh fruit etc, take group photos and talk nice. The very real bottom line is all they really want is the billions of \$\$\$\$ in gold in that hill located near Crooked Creek on the Kuskokwim River. The mine will use on a daily rate 227 megawatts of power. More power used than Fairbanks and its surrounding boroughs that use 217 megawatts. If you look for the Donlin Creek Mine website you can navigate to their home page and find pipeline and facilities construction, section 8.0, 222 pages of gravel sites, map locations of crossings, etc. This is all public information, but Donlin did not openly tell us these things. Donlin did mention the pipeline but left a lot to us to discover on our own. NO ONE has contacted us at all regarding the crossing just 2 miles below Silvertip Camp. There has never in the history of the earth been a project of this magnitude to come through the Kuskokwim Valley. The Kuskokwim River is the last river in North America that is not connected to a road. A pipeline project with a footprint of this size is in essence, a road across this valley. Almost every one of the streams and rivers running down out of the Alaska Range are salmon spawning tributaries and host a number of other fish species as well. If a fuel spill occurred during construction or any other contamination upon the environment, the salmon that come up the entire length of the Kuskokwim River could be negatively affected. There are very few positive results of this proposed pipeline project being allowed to come through this valley. But there will be many negative results. As professional guides our business and way of life will forever be altered by a pipeline footprint. Our clients come to Alaska the "Last Frontier" to see unspoiled wilderness and natural beauty. Not to look at a 200 foot wide path where some company laid a pipeline. The big runways that will be in place along the route will allow more air taxi businesses and transporters to bring more hunters in to compete with all the local people for moose and other game. Trappers with airplanes or river floaters can come in and compete for our local area natural resources. There are already over 50 hunters at Farewell every hunting season that compete for the Nikolai people's resources. That is why we are on registration hunts here already and size restrictions on moose in the Alaska Range. The life span of the mine is just too short and does not benefit the local people nearly enough to justify the destruction of the wildlife habitat, the footprint upon the land itself and way of life lived daily by the people of this area. I encourage you to oppose this pipeline openly with comments of opposition to Donlin Creek Mine, State of Alaska senators, legislators, environmental groups, people in government or anyone you know that can force Donlin to look for other alternative sources of power and out of this area with a pipeline. We are not opposed to the development of the mine itself, but the Donlin Creek Mine group must realize that they need to seek alternative energy sources somewhere else. I have read a good deal of their plan for the construction of the pipeline from their own website and it involves a physical and everlasting change to this beautiful and never before touched pristine wilderness landscape that is inevitable if they are allowed to build the proposed pipeline. We, the residents of the Kuskokwim River Valley have one of the last truly untouched areas of this kind of wilderness remaining in North America. It is not worth it to allow the proposed pipeline to cross this wilderness. No one here at Nikolai or surrounding communities will get rich from the mine and its gold, but do stand to lose from the huge environmental impact upon the Alaska Range and the potential impact upon the valley itself. Please research this issue and stand up for your way of life.

Respectfully submitted by,

John Runkle,

34 year resident of Nikolai, Alaska

Subsistence hunter, fisherman and trapper

Licensed Registered Guide #651 of the State of Alaska

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Caveats: NONE

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