

Donlin Gold Project EIS

Informal meeting with Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which manages the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge

Bethel, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Conference Room

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

Attendance:

For USFWS:

Tom Doolittle, Deputy Refuge Manager	Dan Gillikin, Fisheries Biologist
Steve Miller, Fisheries Biologist	Paula Hartzell, Supervisory Biologist
Brian McCaffery, Education Specialist	

For the EIS Team:

Don Kuhle, Corps	Sarah Yoder, ADHSS
Jenny Blanchard, BLM	Taylor Brelsford, URS
Tami Fordham, EPA	Moxie Alexie, URS

This was an informal meeting, called while the scoping meeting team was weathered in.

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.

- The Refuge is in the formative stage of developing its list of issues. These will be directed through the USFWS Anchorage office.
- The new infrastructure in Bethel has long-term implications for the 30 year life of the mine.
- Can the mine manage water treatment in perpetuity?
- Will the EIS address direct and indirect effects of the mine such as the risk of fuel spills offshore affecting walruses, marine mammals, and marine birds?
- Is a limestone buffering material site in the Holitna River basin still under consideration?
- The EIS must address climate change and water levels in the Kuskokwim River.
- What are the implications of climate change for the new port infrastructure? What about erosion patterns?
- Climate change is already having significant effects on the Bering Sea coast. A recent storm surge (September 2005) carried fish well inland (10 – 15 miles). In the future it could be a fuel spill that travels inland like this.
- The EIS should use state-of-the-art quantitative analysis for emissions from the project heat sources.

- Is a new mining operation opening up again in NYAC a part of the cumulative effects in the region?
- What is the electrical power required to operate the mine?
- When did scoping meetings start?
- The Refuge will comment on cargo coming into Bethel; the Refuge has a mandate to conserve fish and wildlife, water quality, and to protect or enhance subsistence.
- We are concerned about low water levels in the Kuskokwim River when barges are not able to make it even to Aniak.
- We have concerns about mercury abatement.
- Noise levels must be analyzed during construction and during operation of the mine.
- What if additional or other valuable minerals are discovered during operation of the mine? Will more material and fuel be needed? Would there be more barge traffic for supplies and to move the minerals?
- The EIS should study fuel delivery to Dutch Harbor then to Bethel. It may have an impact on sea mammals, such as seals.