

2. *Introduction to environmental effects assessment. Speaker: Bill Slater*

a) What are the important environmental effects assessment concepts?

- Scope and affect of a project and the assessment
- Planning in the early stages of the project
- Possible mitigations and limits of acceptable change
- Best management practices (common sense)
- Integrated resource management approach
- Monitoring, follow-up, reclamation and adaptive management
- Degrees of accountability and duration of effects
- Valued ecological and cultural components (VECC's)
- Precautionary principle
- Sustainable development
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Risk-based decision making
- Maintaining a healthy environment and economy
- Use of traditional knowledge and public consultation
- Holistic view to include short and long term effects
- Small and large scale effects
- Compensation
- Reconciling different interests
- Current conditions
- Coordination of decision making
- Timely process
- Transparency of process
- Relationships and communication
- More detail where there is less certainty
- Other land uses

b) What questions do you still have about environmental assessment?

- What are reasonable timelines, what makes an efficient process?
- Role of cost-benefit analysis in determining significance?
- How do we create a process that it is efficient and fair using limited resources?
- How do we determine public interest?
- How do you deal with thresholds and cumulative effects for small and large scale projects?
- How do you determine spatial and temporal boundaries?
- How do you maintain objectivity in assessments?
- Would all stakeholders have equal capacity to participate?
- How will monitoring and adaptive management be integrated into project assessments?
- How will D.O.'s consistently apply assessment practices and measures?
- What do you do if the proponent does not provide technical information?
- How do you acquire, evaluate and use Traditional Knowledge and integrate it with scientific knowledge at all stages of the assessment process?
- How will YESAA be implemented for existing mining projects?
- What do you do when there is a large degree of uncertainty and the effects of development could be major?
- How do you engage communities in ecological research as a capacity building opportunity?
- Mitigation vs. planning?
- How do you standardize environmental standards to varying perspectives and priorities?
- Why were the additions made to YESAA?
- What are the timelines for public input?

- What is the commitment and who funds to statistically examine the environmental effects of a project?
- Who/how is it decided if the information is adequate enough to do the assessment?
- Crisis decision making is not neutral.
- How will deposits / bonds cover rehabilitation?"
- We already have degraded environments, how do we improve?
- How do we compare alternatives?
- How to treat people as part of the ecosystem?
- How effective is monitoring? What are the effects of monitoring?
- How do we ensure scientific rigor is applied in assessments?
- Base line data – how is it for Yukon, what is enough to ensure adequate science can be conducted? How much historical data is there?
- Can you really say "NO"?
- What does the "precautionary principle" mean, when is it integrated in YESAA?
- How will social, environmental and economic assessment processes coordinate to jointly define scope of a project?
- When it comes to defining "significance" – who decides what tools are used, how to use professional judgment which is unbiased, and what is the magnitude of significance? What weighting is given to different values to determine significance?
- Policy considerations and influence of those involved in the process?
- Intrinsic value of environmental assessment?
- How do you know if you have chosen the correct VECC's and how are they prioritized if there is overlap or lack of critical information to justify priorities?
- How do you arrive at the "top 10" environmental issues that need to be addressed?
- How do you proceed if the local community does not agree, without undermining their position?
- How do you deal with "unpredicted" effects?
- How do you make real decisions based on real impacts, which are not politically or financially motivated?
- How is the YESAA Board held accountable constitutionally for the rights of First Nations and other individuals? How will they mitigate effects?
- How will information be collected so that it can be used by others?
- Defining the client?
- Who should bear the costs? Should project proponents become another level of service which provides (akin) to local governments?
- How do you measure if there is enough economic impact to justify the environmental impacts?
- Compensation and enforcement considerations?
- Jurisdictional overlaps?
- Determining feasibility of a project?
- Should EA's include policy decisions?
- Why do EA's include value judgments?
- Could the steps that have been developed for EA be applied to SE assessments?