

5 Project Consultation

The following section summarizes government, First Nations and public consultation activities undertaken during the exploration and planning phases of the Wolverine Project from 1994 – 2005.

5.1 Introduction

During the past 10 years, public consultation has occurred on various aspects of the Wolverine Project. During this period, several companies were involved with consultation activities including: Westmin Resources Limited (Westmin) and Cominco Ltd. (now Teck Cominco (Cominco)), Expatriate Resources Ltd. (Expatriate), and finally Yukon Zinc Corporation (YZC) (Section 1.2: Project History).

Consultation has occurred with government regulators, First Nations and the general public. Issues raised by each of these three groups during this process have been documented and are summarized in Appendices 5.2-1, 5.3-1 and 5.4-1.

Following submission of the EAR, YZC will participate in community consultations in the towns of Ross River, Watson Lake and Whitehorse.

5.2 Regulatory Agency Consultation

As part of the exploration and development process for the Wolverine Project, meetings between interested mining companies and territorial and federal regulatory agencies have focused on environmental protection and wildlife, First Nations agreements, waste management, air and water quality, and permitting and regulatory requirements.

Consultation first began in 1994 when a Regional Environmental Review Committee was formed for the Kudz Ze Kayah (KZK) project (1994-1998) by Cominco. Government agencies were also involved with the Wolverine project (1996-1997) and the Finlayson Project (2000), a proposal to jointly develop Wolverine and KZK. Expatriate met with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Environment Canada (EC), Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) Renewable Resources Branch and Department of Environment (DOE), and DIAND divisions throughout the environmental assessment and planning process of the Wolverine Project. Appendix 5-1 contains a summary of the information gathered at these meetings.

5.2.1 2005 Technical Committee Meetings

Most recently, YZC technical sessions with territorial and federal government representatives, and including the Ross River YESSA coordinator and consultants, were held between April and September 2005 to address requirements of the EA Guidelines, review field work programs and to discuss outstanding issues pertaining to project design criteria.

Previous and 2005 consultations guided the development of the 2005 biophysical field programs, geotechnical and geochemical investigations, the development of Environmental Management Plans and mitigation measures, and the development of follow-up and monitoring programs. Following each consultation meeting, the YTG

Executive Council Office distributed minutes to ensure that comments were accurately recorded and interpreted during that meeting, and then they were finalized.

During the early part of the consultation process in the mid 1990's with territorial and federal agencies and with First Nations it was noted that the major issue surrounding exploration and development in the Finlayson area would be the impact to wildlife, and specifically to local caribou herds. Based on this information, consultation efforts to gather information pertaining to wildlife was diligently recorded in 2005, as described below.

5.2.2 2005 Wildlife Consultation Efforts

The baseline wildlife assessment involved an informal consultation process to gather knowledge from individuals who are most familiar with the wildlife attributes of the project study area. Consultation specifically included discussions on VECC selection, impact assessment approach and baseline habitat assessment methods at the VECC level, issues and management concerns surrounding the project and selected VECCs, and available baseline knowledge and knowledge gaps for the selected VECCs in the study area. Individuals who were directly consulted are listed in Table 5.2-1.

The consultation process identified the following baseline data and information as part of the EAR:

1. key wildlife habitat areas delineated within the project area
2. survey and telemetry data and technical reports from extensive studies on the Finlayson Caribou Herd
3. survey data and technical reports from moose studies conducted within and in areas surrounding the project area
4. a list of bird species known to occur near Wolverine Lake and across the Yukon Territory
5. a list of wildlife species of concern in the Yukon Territory
6. Grizzly bear density estimates by ecoregion for the Yukon Territory, including ecoregion mapping
7. fur harvest data and current traplines within a regional context to the project area

Table 5.2-1 2005 Wildlife Assessment Consultation

Individuals Contacted	Title and Affiliation	Area of Expertise
Al Baer	Yukon Government; Coordinator, Wolf Management Program	Grizzly bears, Wolves
Bruce McLean	Yukon Government; A/Manager, Habitat Protection Habitat Section	EIA Approach / VECC selection
Helen Slama	Yukon Government; Fur Harvest Technician Habitat & Regional Management	Yukon trapper harvest / Fur bearing mammals
Jan Adamczewski	Yukon Government; Regional Biologist Liard Region	Wildlife biologist / local and regional wildlife issues
Jean Carey	Yukon Government; Sheep & Goat Biologist Wildlife Management	Thinhorn Sheep
Lee Foote	University of Alberta; Professor	Wetlands studies and beavers
Norm MacLean	Kaska Forest Stewardship Council; Chair	Biologist / local and regional wildlife issues / VECC selection
Randy Lamb	Yukon Government; Manager Environmental Affairs Section	EIA Approach / VECC selection
Remmona Maraj	Yukon Government; Carnivore Biologist Wildlife Management	Grizzly Bears
Rick Farnell	Yukon Government; Caribou Biologist Wildlife Management	Caribou / Finlayson Caribou Herd
Rick Ward	Yukon Government; Caribou Biologist Wildlife Management	Moose
Rob Florkiewicz	Yukon Government; Regional Biologist Southern Lakes Region	Previous regional biologist for the Liard Region / Finlayson Caribou Herd
Scott Herron	Canadian Wildlife Service; Northern Ecosystem Specialist	Migratory Birds / Song bird and trumpeter swan approach
Shawn Francis	Yukon Land Use Planning Council; Land and Resource Planner	Worked on previous assessment of the study area as a consultant / Land use planning in the Yukon Territory.
Wendy Nixon	Canadian Wildlife Service; Head, Environment Canada Wildlife Ecology	Migratory Birds

5.3 First Nations Consultation

The Wolverine Project area falls within the traditional territory of the Kaska First Nation and specifically the Ross River Dena Council (RRDC; Section 4.4: Social and Cultural Environment). Consultation with First Nations began in 1995, and has been in the form of regular meetings and the formation of advisory committees and technical working groups.

Early in 2000, in-depth community consultations were initiated to discuss preliminary findings of the environmental baseline studies. Overwhelmingly, the concerns that the RRDC had were in regard to impacts to wildlife and traditional land use. These concerns and the mining company responses are summarized in Table 5.3-1.

In 2005, several meetings were conducted in Ross River and via telephone in order to finalize the Socio-Economic Participation Agreement and the Traditional Knowledge Protocol Agreement. Individual logs are not provided for these discussions. Appendix 5-2 summarizes all other information gathered at First Nations consultation meetings.

Table 5.3-1 2000-1 First Nations Consultation Issues and Responses

Consultation Issue	Company Response
Wildlife issues. Elders very concerned about wildlife	Would like an animal sightings log.
Overuse of new airstrip – people using it to come in and hunt caribou	Assured that the airstrip is private and would not be used by any third party, except in emergency situations
Communications breakdown between Westmin and RRDC, and social concerns	Westmin to make effort to spend more time in Ross River
Concern over cooperation in wildlife surveys	RRDC providing Westmin with results of study when completed
Short term activities schedule	Expatriate Resources Ltd. outlined the schedule of activities
Idea of Kaska Nation selecting Finlayson Lands and working under ownership of Kaska	Not recommended due to uncertainties with land title and resources. Expatriate to continue to work with the government on all issues of land title and resources
Concerns regarding consultations prior to staking of mineral claims	Consultation prior to staking mineral claims is not possible for competitive reasons due to need for secrecy when staking claims. Negotiations during development are possible.
Inquiry regarding building houses at or around Wolverine	Expatriate has no legal control on this issue.
Wanted to know what selenium was	Identified as a heavy metal with environmental concerns
Concern that the caribou fence had been located	Has been identified according to the archaeologist and caribou survey team, although information on location needs to be verified. Caribou survey team GPS'd the location.
Concerns over the negative impacts of people	The issue is covered under the environmental assessment, including contracting and the socio-economic agreement.
Use of chemicals at the mine	No chemical reaction will be used to process ore. Flotation reagents, explosives and fuels and lubricants are the primary chemicals.
Reclamation of the area	There should be a requirement for a reclamation bond from the federal government. It is Expatriate's policy to reclaim disturbed areas in a timely manner.
Proposed southern road route	DIAND has indicated that land use permits may be obtained. Long-term use such as a surface lease or License to Operate would require a change in the status of land tenure.
The socio-economic agreement	Expatriate working on an agreement at that time. A negotiating team designated by the Kaska Nation has been involved.
First Nations will not support road development within their territory until the SEPA is finalized	Work on the SEPA will continue throughout environmental review and approval process and should be completed before road construction.
SEPA	The community is in favour of an expedited SEPA process
Water quality testing of ephemeral creeks	Sampling completed at four time periods will capture most creeks and streams with surface flow.

5.3.1 Community Involvement

In 1997, an Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO) was appointed to liaise between the Kaska First Nations and Wolverine Project. The initial ALO position was discontinued in 1998 due to inactivity on the project. The position was reinstated during 2000-1 and again in 2005, and is currently active. The ALO's duties were also to identify opportunities for First Nations socio-economic benefits through involvement in the project's activities. Section 7.12: First Nations and Traditional Knowledge provides an overview of the 2005 agreements including the Socio-economic Participation Agreement (SEPA), as well as the Traditional Knowledge Protocol Agreement.

Along with meetings with Ross River Dena Council, Ross River Dena Development Corporation, and Kaska First Nation, a series of public open houses were held to allow residents of Ross River and the surrounding area to provide comment on the project's progress and proposed activities.

5.4 Public Consultation

In 1995, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2005 community meetings were held in the local communities and Whitehorse to provide an overview of the exploration program, environmental baseline studies, and project developments. These communities surround the project area and will be affected the most by activities associated with advanced exploration and mine development. There is some overlap between this section and Section 5.3 as the majority of the local communities, notably Ross River, are represented by members of the Kaska Nation.

Westmin/Expatriate initiated community consultations in 1995 during its exploration phase and continued these consultations through April 1998. Initially, the purpose of the consultation was to provide information on the type and amount of exploration work that was proposed. The consultation process evolved in response to participants' suggestions, and as people became aware of the project they were able to contribute information to Westmin.

Between 1995 and 2005, YZC and its predecessors met on more than 50 occasions with individuals, groups and communities to share information. In addition to meeting with local people, YZC also encouraged and provided opportunities for local people to participate in the project through employment opportunities. Employing and involving local people in YZC's business helped YZC understand local concerns and values. Advertisements in the Yukon News and Whitehorse Star also helped raise project awareness and invited public comment. Details of all public consultation are summarized in Appendix 5-3.

