

Project CLEANS
Meeting Record for Athabasca Community Meetings
January 8-11, 2013



Locations: Black Lake Denesuline First Nation, Northern Hamlet of Stony Rapids, Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation, Northern Hamlet of Uranium City and Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation

Agenda:

- Introduction of new members of the Project CLEANS team
- Update on Gunnar Mine and Mill Site Remediation
 - Update on status of work
 - Environmental Assessment and Licensing
 - Procurement
- Update on Lorado Mill Site Remediation
 - Environmental Assessment
 - Remediation Planning
 - Procurement
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) Presentation
- Update on Satellite Sites Remediation
- Videos and Website Launch
- Questions and Answer Period

January 8, 2013 - Black Lake Denesuline First Nation Community Meeting

Attendance at meeting - 40 people

The community provided translators for the meeting.

Meeting Discussion

Q. Members of the community want to work. When is the work for Gunnar going to start next year?

A. SRC where possible is looking at provisioning the facilitation of training and employment opportunities for Athabasca region residents. Remediation work at Gunnar is anticipated to start in 2014 based on approval of the environmental assessment.

Q. Who is getting hired for cleanup? Is it the same people as before? Lots of local area people have experience to do cleanup work.

Comment: Community member raised point that there might be good opportunities for Black Lake residents in the future and that the community must make a good plan to be ready.

Q. How are rocks at Gunnar going to be dug out?

Q. Will local community members be able to work on projects such as the water treatment plant?

Q. What is the size of Nero Lake and what are the contamination levels in that lake?

A. Nero Lake is approximately 2.5 km long and 1 km wide. The lake is very acidic with metals dissolved in the water. The proposed project is to reduce the acidity so that the contaminants drop out before flowing into Beaverlodge Lake.

Comment: Concern was brought forward about animals and waterfowl being affected and resulting health-related problems in the community.

SRC response: the purpose of the cleanup is to remove or cover contaminants.

Comment: Concerns about unrelated projects, such as diamond drilling holes and fuel spills, were raised and discussed, as well as the Nisto Lake mine site on reserve land.

SRC response: SRC has not been asked to clean up the Nisto Lake mine site because it is not on provincial land.

Comment: Members of Black Lake community mentioned they want to host an Athabasca Sector meeting in July or August with Athabasca communities, industry, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment formerly known as SERM and EQC (Environmental Quality Committee). SRC would also be invited.

January 8, 2013 - Northern Hamlet of Stony Rapids Community Meeting

Attendance at meeting – 4 people

Meeting Discussion

Q. Were Stony Rapids companies used in the demolition at Gunnar?

A. Yes, some Stony Rapids companies were used.

Q. After the license is received, is the site material going to be removed by local companies (e.g., by barge)?

A. Moving material using the ice road is preferred for environmental safety reasons over removing the material by boat.

Q. Who will be responsible for the site in the future?

A. The Government of Saskatchewan will eventually be the stewards of the site and the monitoring of it as part of the Institutional Control Program for abandoned mines.

Q. Will the re-vegetation work be similar to Rabbit Lake?

A. Re-vegetation will be done.

Q. How much water will be treated at Nero Lake? How long will it take? Where will the water treatment plant be located?

A. Based on the current remedial option calculations, approximately 2,100,000 m³ of water in Nero Lake will require treatment. Based on calculations in the Lorado Environmental Impact Statement, the duration of water treatment will be two open water seasons. The location of the treatment plant has not yet been decided.

Comment: There might be a shortage of labour capacity in the local area when these projects get started.

Q. Are there any other remediation projects underway in the Lake Athabasca area?

A. Project CLEANs includes the remediation of Gunnar, Lorado and 36 satellite mine sites. All but two of the satellite sites are north of Lake Athabasca in the Uranium City area. Work on these may continue to 2020.

Q. What kind of construction equipment will be needed?

A. Excavator, dump trucks and a dozer.

January 9, 2013 - Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation Community Meeting

Attendance at meeting – 20 people

Meeting Discussion

Q. How much testing was done for other animals, such as moose, rabbit and other species and for plants such as berries, at the cleanup sites?

A. A Country Food Study was conducted by Cameco for the area. These food sources are being monitored for contaminants.

Q. How are you going to ship waste out? The community needs to be consulted before waste is shipped past them.

A. The Chief of Fond du Lac Denesuline First Nation was communicated with regularly on the matter of waste being shipped past the community via the ice road last year. The chief was in agreement with the process of shipping the waste.

Q. How do you monitor the water in the pits?

Q. What other sites and remediation projects have been studied to see best practices?

A. The project consultants and SRC based proposed remediation plans on work done at other sites.

Q. Why don't you throw all the rocks and other material into the pit at Gunnar and cover it? Will liners be used in the pit before the material is added?

A. These options are being considered.

Q. What about the site water flowing into other water bodies, spreading contamination or picking it up?

Q. What is the timeline for the Gunnar EIS to be signed off, for RFPs and for procurement?

Q. Will there be training available on monitoring?

Q. Why not train school students in area to do some of the work? That way environment jobs will be available for people in the area.

A. SRC is considering how it might facilitate training on environmental monitoring.

Q. Is there a plan to re-seed the trees? Summer students would be available.

A. The sites will be re-vegetated. The idea of hiring summer students is a good one and will be considered.

Q. Is there a board that allows for local input?

A. A Project Review Committee, made up of the leadership of the Athabasca communities, has met several times to provide input. It has not met since the last leadership elections.

Q. At the Lorado site with no camp, will there be clean/shop room for those commuting?

A. It is anticipated that accommodations will be available in Uranium City during the Lorado remediation. There will be facilities at the camp for cleaning up after work.

Q. The chiefs and communities have pushed for partnering and tendering opportunities. We need to look into ways to have this communicated. Is SRC in charge of procurement? Can the community have input into contractor selection?

A. SRC is in charge of procurement for the projects. SRC's procurement approach is to look for contractors with a commitment to hire and/or train Athabasca residents.

Q. What waste is located around these sites? Is the waste going into a pit?

A. At the Gunnar Site, it is anticipated that non-hazardous waste will be deposited into an engineered landfill on site.

Comment: There was a discussion about previous contractors. Their inability to find workers that had skills needed for work at that time, even though there are lots of equipment operators in Fond du Lac. The community members of Fond du Lac asked for more time to know and prepare for future work opportunities. They want jobs as process operators, not just laborers.

Comment: The work at Nero Lake should be done properly initially. Homework needs to be done so this isn't a patch job that in few years needs fixing again. There was a good discussion and debate on the best system for reducing water contamination at Nero Lake and the cover system that is being suggested. SRC committed to listen and consider any ideas regarding the Lorado remediation and forward the ideas to the engineering consultants during the design process.

Concerns about unrelated projects, such as diamond drilling holes, oil spills and garbage were brought up. People wondered what they could do with this type of complaint.

SRC response: SRC encouraged them to contact the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment formerly known as SERM.

Comment: A community member raised a point about the desire to have First Nations involved in selecting contractors in the future.

Comment: A community member raised a point about the community's desire to bid on work as it becomes available.

SRC asked if translation would be required at future meetings.

January 10, 2013 - Northern Hamlet of Uranium City Community Meeting

Attendance at meeting – 6 people

Meeting Discussion

Comment: There is probably a lot of garbage, equipment and debris buried in the waste rock piles at Gunnar.

Q. What is the cause of water contamination at Gunnar?

A. Waste rock is one of the main contaminants of the water at Gunnar.

Q. What about covering the waste rock, is that an option?

Q. How are the tailings area water quality compared to Zeemel Bay?

Q. What about treating the water and putting the rocks into the pit?

A. The treating of the water and putting the waste rock into the pit is one option that is being considered.

Comment: It doesn't seem necessary to reduce the slope of the waste rock at Gunnar since it has appeared to be stable for 50 years.

Comment: A request was made for a one to two page summary of the water monitoring reports for Gunnar, and for a summary of the EIS.

Q. How much sand will you require for the Lorado tailings cap?

A. For the sand capillary cap, calculations from the EIS anticipate approximately 210,000 m³.

Q. Would the tailings move outward with the adding of the cover and till?

A. Part of the cap design process will be to study the movement of tailings with loading and incorporate this into the final design.

Q. Could you add the lime to Nero Lake by spreading it on the ice?

A. This may be a procedure that the design engineer will look at.

Comment: There are local people who could be guides for when engineers need to access the sites.

SRC Response: SRC will consider arranging for local people to meet with the design engineers at the Lorado site so that they can provide local input. SRC does employ a local resident on a term basis as a guide and assistant.

Comment: Local people should be hired more. For example the dust control at Lorado. Training has not turned into that many jobs for local people. This was especially the case in year two at Gunnar.

Q. Why are Saskatchewan companies not getting the work? Why an Alberta company?

A. The Government of Saskatchewan has entered into an agreement with other western provinces (the New West Partnership Trade Agreement) such that provincial contracts over a certain amount cannot be restricted to Saskatchewan-based companies.

SRC asked if some local residents would be willing to tour the satellites sites that are near completion so that they can witness that the work has been done. Some residents volunteered.

January 11, 2013 - Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation Community Meeting

Meeting time was shortened due to band office constraints. A brief update was provided by SRC.

Attendance at meeting – 5 people

Meeting Discussion

Comment: A councilor had been involved in previous mine cleanups. He is concerned about contaminants at mine sites and abandoned houses.

Comment: Band members are keeping a close eye on the Gunnar and Lorado projects.

Q. How can birds be protected from getting contaminated? They are a source of food for area residents.

A. At areas like Nero Lake, waterfowl don't actually spend much time there because it is not a good habitat.

Comment: It would be good to have translation at the next meetings. It would be good to have videos and other materials that are translated to help the community understand projects better.

SRC Response: Videos that have been translated into Dene were brought to share with community; however time constraints did not allow this today. The videos will be shown and a full project update provided at the next meeting. In the meantime, the videos are available on SRC's website for those who have access to the Internet. SRC expressed appreciation for the input on making its updates more useful.