

**Notes from the  
Inter-Agency Coordinating Team  
February 25, 2000 Meeting**

**Participants:**

Scott Williams	BHP
John Witteman	BHP
Greg Cook	DIAND Environment & Conservation
Darren Unrau	DIAND Operations
Roxanne Beavers	DIAND Water Resources
Tasha Stephenson	Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Alex Thomson	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency
John Holman	Independent Environmental Monitoring Agency
Anne Wilson	Environment Canada

**1. Round Table Updates:**

**John Witteman** explained BHP's proposed Fox pit amendment to Water License N7L2-1616. BHP is seeking approval from the NWT Water Board to pursue land treatment in principle, at which time the design and management plans would be developed for approval. BHP plans to begin dewatering late this year and discharge downstream from Fox Lake (SW) until the water quality is about to exceed the discharge guidelines. A dam will be built to block off most of Fox Lake in order to allow for the storage of one year's worth of mine water, three million cubic metres, until discharge. Three weeks after freshet, the water will be diverted to an area northeast of One Hump Lake, consisting of 2.5 square kilometres, and 9 tiny treatment ponds if needed. Ongoing discharge will occur for approximately 60 days during warm weather at a rate of up to 3,000 cubic metres per day. It is expected that the sprayed flow will settle solids, including aluminium, and plants and bacteria will mitigate the effects of ammonia in the environment. A rare earth filtering system will be brought in if the ground becomes saturated and land treatment becomes unfeasible. BHP feels that the land treatment could be better for the environment.

**Darren Unrau** reported that BHP submitted the 1999 Waste Rock Seepage Survey and asked the NWT Water Board if the regulated pH range could be lowered. Compliance issues have arisen in the Beartooth drainage due to low pH levels contravening the Water Licence. Wolverine and Zack were drilled, and the exploration camp is at Cougar. DIAND is waiting on BHP's Operating Environmental Management Plan Update, but the security deposit and water fees are paid.

**Alex Thomson** reported the findings of Dr. Kevin Morin's geochemical technical review of BHP's 1999 seepage survey. Morin attributes the low pH and sulphates to acid rock drainage, especially at the toe of the coarse reject

area. The Agency has recommended to the NWT Water Board that the pH range remain the same.

**John Witteman** said that BHP plans to respond to the report; the pH levels were in the range of 5. The snowmelt has a pH of 4.8, therefore the pH is consistently low on site, similar to the Diavik and natural tundra water.

**Roxanne Beavers** reported that screening the Fox pit amendment will take a few days or a week, and will be completed after March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

**Tasha Stephenson** asked what the discharge sites would be and if there are any other discharges to compare this to.

**John Witteman** replied that it is not a discharge issue in terms of volume, but in terms of land space required to mitigate the effluent. He estimated daily discharge rates from the pit at 3,000 cubic metres a day for two months; spread over the 2.5 square kilometre area, and integrating the evaporation rate, that results in a mine water treatment depth of 35 cm.

**Tasha Stephenson** asked if there are any vegetation maps or photos available for the area.

**John Witteman** said that air photographs will be sent to the Agency for the regulators to review.

**Anne Wilson** asked about the baseline data collected for Nero Lake, e.g. concerned with nutrient input.

**John Witteman** replied that no previous baseline data is collected; if BHP can get the amendment under the NWT Water Board the company will gather baseline data in the area this spring and summer, including vegetation mapping and surveys. If it does not get through screening first, (or get the license amendment), it will opt to install the water treatment plant anyway rather than spend an enormous amount of money and time to push this amendment through the Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board (MVEIRB).

The *Impact 2000 Report* reads at a Grade 9 level. It will be issued April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The Environmental Assessment Report for the proposed development of the three new pipes has been delayed to March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The water license and Environmental Agreement Annual Reports have been combined into one, and due at the end of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2000. OEMP update will be submitted in early March.

**Scott Williams** reported that the Misery road is 2 km. past the Paul Lake Bridge. Nuna Logistics has been hired to conduct the pre-stripping at Misery Lake, complete the road, complete the pad, and install the 110 person temporary camp. Sewage will be trucked to the main BHP treatment plant. Pre-stripping is scheduled for autumn if the King Pond issue is resolved. Dewatering of Misery begins in March 2000. The amended Waste Rock Management Plan for Misery is in the OEMP.

**John Witteman** said that the King Pond no-net-loss plan for DFO is almost complete. BHP is awaiting the legal letter from DFO to give to their legal department, regarding whether King Pond is considered fish habitat or not. The waste rock management plan is being developed, building waste rock away from the shores of Lac de Gras, and building dams in the cells as a mitigation measure. [Waste rock plan changes have been submitted to the NWT Water Board and Misery land leases are now in for an amendment with DIAND]. Koala has been dewatered; seven grayling were found in a survey hole. The recommendations from the AEMP workshops were signed off and should be in the mail. Wildlife (WEMP) recommendations are still to come.

Greg Cook noted that the new MVLWB is due to assume responsibilities on April 1, 2000. As such, it will no longer be Water Resources Division, DIAND, coordinating reviews and approvals, etc. under the license. He suggested that the MVLWB be approached to attend, or have a member on IACT. No objections were raised. Greg will follow-up.

**Roxanne Beavers** reported that she is wrapping up TAC comments on the as-built construction report for Dyke B.

**Anne Wilson** reported that she visited the site on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000. The camp has the best industrial solid waste management system she's seen in the Territories. The 1999 Waste Rock Seepage Survey results are being reviewed, but there is nothing to report so far.

**Scott Williams** said that any site reports would be appreciated from inspectors or other agency representatives who have visited the site. The reports from DOE Inspector Neil Scott, for example, were helpful to BHP.

**Tasha Stephenson** said that Julie Dahl has asked headquarters for an official response on the King Pond issue. This is Julie's last day of work. DFO faces a personnel crisis in terms of its habitat staff.

**Alex Thomson** has issued a RFP for an evaluation of this agency. The idea is to get an idea from society members and others on how the Agency is fulfilling its role. She asked the IACT members of whether they would agree to be interviewed. The Agency has begun drafting its annual report, which will be issued by the end of June 2000. The next Board meeting is March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2000, perhaps in conjunction with BHP's Traditional Knowledge Working Group.

**Next meeting will be on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000 at 1:15pm at the BHP boardroom.**