

Tribal Community Participation in Environmental Impact Statements

Case example of the Red Dog Mine EIS

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A collaboration between Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.



Red Dog Mine Area







Kivalina

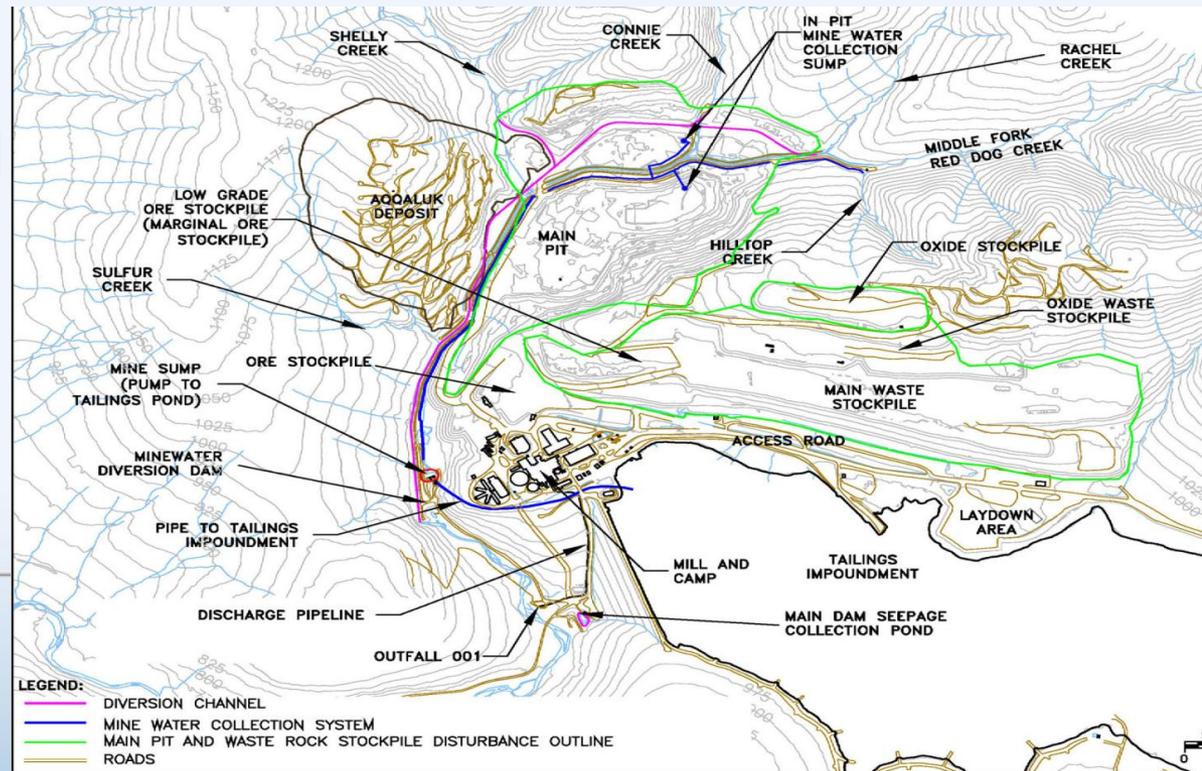


Noatak

Red Dog Mine Extension/Aqqaluk EIS

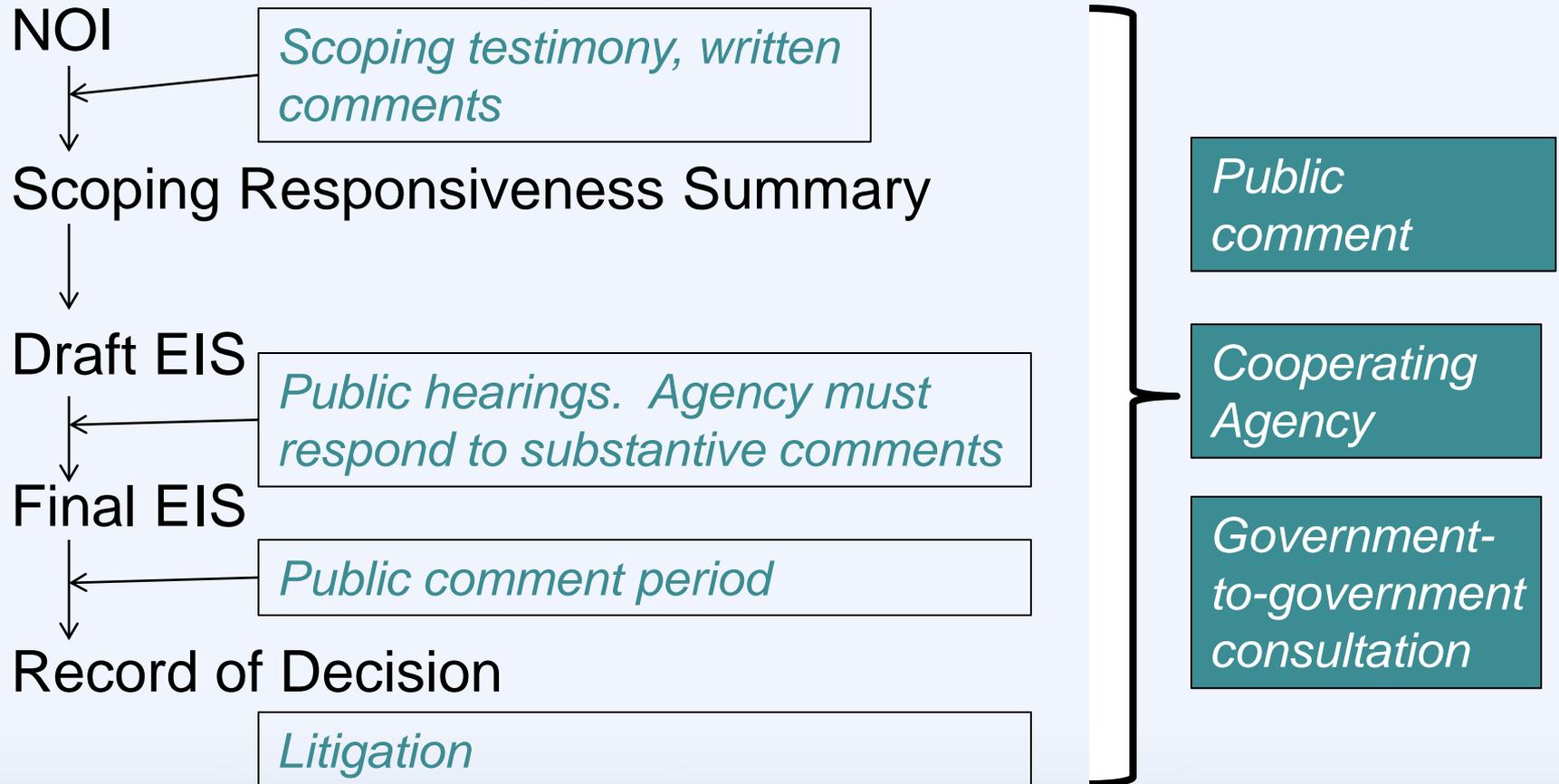
Unique characteristics of this project

- U.S. EPA leading EIS for a proposed expansion of an existing mine pit, so few new impacts
- *Without* the extension, the ore would soon run out, and mining would stop
- In addition to looking at impacts of proposed extension, EPA was interested in looking at impacts of existing mine.



Community Participation in EIA

A Primer



Tribal participation in the SEIS

Kotzebue	pop. 3200
Buckland	pop. 437
Kiana	pop. 325
Kivalina	pop. 386
Kobuk	pop. 150
Noatak	pop. 550
Noorvik	pop. 645
Selawik	pop. 868
Shungnak	pop. 261

M.O.U.

Maniilaq
Association

Cooperating Agency
Agreement

US EPA



*Heather Dingman
North Slope Borough*

Health Impacts Considered

Examples

Health Determinant	Concern
1. Water quality	Discharges of contaminants could affect safety of fish and game harvested downstream.
2. Fugitive dust	Contaminate tundra; accumulate in caribou.
3. Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Displacement of beluga whales by port activity• Displacement of caribou by road traffic• Decreased consumption of caribou, berries because of fear of contaminants
4. Economy	If mine is NOT permitted, loss of employment, corporate dividends, mine revenues which support water and sanitation, education, other services.
5. Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced stress, improved gen'l health• Concerns: prolonged absence of spouse/parent on mine rotations
6. Social	Free alcohol offered to employees on flight out ...



*Copyright:
Bretwood
Higman, Erin
McKittrick,
Ground
Truth
Trekking*

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Important conclusions

- Income from mine is supporting sanitation infrastructure, education. Sudden loss of income if mine is NOT permitted presents major health concern.
- Lots of concern regarding contaminants. Data generally reassuring, but incomplete (no recent lead data in children, and minimal sampling in caribou)
- Biological impacts suggested that current mine has had an adverse impact on caribou and beluga harvest in Kivalina: what is the impact on diet and nutritional health?

Recommendations

Specific mitigation

- Sampling of caribou to address concerns about potential heavy metal contamination.
- Altering operations of the ore trucking, or installing a pipeline to transport ore to minimize wildlife disturbance and reduce fugitive dust
- Health council to manage ongoing concerns
- Industry voluntary measures:
 - tele-behavioral health at mine site
 - stop offering free alcohol
 - financial counseling for employees

Outcomes related to the Red Dog Mine HIA

- Sampling of caribou to address concerns about potential heavy metal contamination.
- Community had opportunity to ensure that their questions were assessed in the EIS—even issues in other parts of the EIS (eg. dam safety, caribou and beluga harvest).
- Robust, ongoing dialogue between health system, industry, EPA, native corporation.
- Parts of community still oppose mining, and are litigating
- Dietary surveys now common and food security/traditional diet is routine part of agency thinking on large projects
- This was ADHSS' first work on an HIA—they have since established an HIA program

Lessons and Questions

- Relationships:
 - cooperating agency status helped establish a very strong working relationship with EPA and state health dept., which helped ensure that many community concerns were were addressed.
 - Many sensible recommendations fell outside authority of any regulatory agency. Good relationships are key. Stronger relationship with industry would be better.
- Representation: who speaks for whom in a small community?