

Chamber of Mines News Briefs – July 10 - 11, 2013

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NWT NEWS

'Long way to go'

Miltenberger says Bathurst caribou hunt will not return until at least 2016

Yellowknifer – July 10, 2013

Daniel Campbell

The days of being able to drive down the winter road from Yellowknife to bag a caribou from the side of the highway are long gone - and show no sign of returning anytime soon.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) recently announced it's considering a limited harvest of the Bluenose-East, Beverly and Ahiak caribou herds for resident, non-aboriginal hunters in time for 2013-2014 hunting season.

But the herd closest to Yellowknife, the Bathurst herd, isn't being considered as part of the proposal.

Michael Miltenberger, the minister of the department, doesn't see any possibility of a resident hunt returning for that herd until after 2016.

"The Bathurst was clearly the most harvested herd in the Northwest Territories," said Miltenberger.

"There was enormous pressure on that herd because it was located in the most populated area of the Northwest Territories."

Miltenberger said the Bluenose-East, Beverly and Ahiak herds are healthy enough to sustain a one-bull per resident harvest, but the Bathurst herd still has a long way to go before his department considers opening it up to residents and non-residents.

All four herds are open to an aboriginal harvest, the aboriginal hunt of the Bathurst herd being restricted to 300 hunter tags per year.

The department plans on doing a full census of the Bathurst caribou by 2016, but Miltenberger said until then, it won't consider allowing a resident or sport hunt.

For Yellowknife-based big game outfitters, who used to depend on taking visitors on caribou hunts, the latest news is another nail in their coffin.

The Bluenose-East, Beverly, Ahiak and Bathurst herds have been closed to sport hunters since 2009 as part of emergency conservation measures.

But Gary Jaeb, president of True North Safaris, says the government numbers are based on faulty science, mainly, counting the Bathurst herd separately instead of combining it with other herds.

In 2009 the government requested an independent study on its research methods of caribou populations. The Alberta Research Council concluded ENR biologists needed to improve, but their data accurately reflected a decline in herd population.

Barry Taylor, owner of Arctic Safaris, said outfitters and residents had no impact on the population decline of the Bathurst herd, noting they only took three per cent of the total harvest.

"This is pure discrimination," Taylor said, "pure politics."

Jaeb wonders why the government doesn't seem to care about outfitters.

"Even though we brought money into the territory and supplied meat to the communities we're at the bottom of the totem pole," Jaeb said.

Miltenberger confirms non-resident hunters are not on the agenda yet.

"The aboriginal subsistence harvest is first priority, followed by resident, then commercial tags will be considered after those other groups are back in the harvesting business," Miltenberger said.

But for Jaeb and other outfitters, it's already too late. Many big game hunters now look outside of the Northwest Territories for their hunting trips.

A 2012-2013 GNWT tourism plan notes the Northwest Territories is losing its market share to Alaska and Nunavut because of the ban on barren-ground caribou.

Jaeb and other outfitters plan on holding town-hall style meetings to discuss the hunt. No meetings are scheduled yet but with the government's recent proposal, Jaeb says they'll have one soon.

Caribou herds in the NWT

Herd locations:

The Bluenose-East herd is located northwest of Yellowknife, mainly around the Great Bear Lake region.

The Beverly and Ahiak herds are to the east of Great Slave Lake, and into western Nunavut.

The Bathurst herd is mostly to the north and east of Yellowknife and is the most accessible to Yellowknife hunters.

Herd populations:

Bluenose-East: Estimated at 122,000 based on a 2010 survey and trend analysis since then, up from 66,200 in 2006

Ahiak: Estimated at 83,300 in 2013, with no previous population studies

Beverly: Estimated at 124,000 in 2013, last study in 1994 estimated herd at 276,000

Bathurst: Estimated at 32,000 in 2012, down from 186,000 in 2003

Source: Department of Environment and Natural Resources

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENERGY NEWS

N.W.T. board approves water licence for Prairie Creek mine

CBC News – July 9, 2013

The Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board has recommended the federal government approve a critical water licence for Canadian Zinc's Prairie Creek Mine.

The site is surrounded by Nahanni National Park Reserve.

Canadian Zinc is also waiting for Parks Canada to approve a land use permit.

Frank Moretti, band manager for the Nahanni Butte Dene Band, said the community is excited.

"We are a small community. We will definitely benefit through employment and training and so forth over the life of the mine," he said. "Given they're going to operate a mine on our land our community band members will have first pick at any jobs available.

A spokesperson for the company says it still needs about \$200 million to start up.

The company expects to employ up to 220 people over 12 years.

Canadian Aboriginal group will not back down in fight against Rio Tinto's IOC - Buyer beware - Warning to potential purchasers of Rio Tinto's IOC

CanadaNewsWire – July 9, 2013

UASHAT MAK MANI-UTENAM, QC, July 9, 2013 /CNW Telbec/ - The Innu First Nation of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam wishes to remind potential purchasers of Rio Tinto's share of Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) that the Canadian Aboriginal group continues to fiercely oppose IOC's mining, railway and port operations within their traditional territory. One of the measures the Aboriginal group has taken was to file legal proceedings against IOC on March 18, 2013, along with another aboriginal group, the Innu First Nation of Matimekush-Lac John, asking the Court to block IOC's operations in Quebec and Labrador as well as to grant them damages in the amount of CAD\$900 million - see press release of March 20, 2013.

IOC's operations on the traditional territory of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam and their Innu brothers and sisters of Matimekush-Lac John have scarred the land as well as people's lives for more than 60 years now. The Innu are well past their breaking point and in addition to the above legal action, IOC can expect further acts of opposition in the coming months.

Meanwhile, Rio Tinto continues to seek to sell its majority stake in IOC. And while it is clear that Rio Tinto is looking to offload assets, the Innu First Nation of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam cannot help but feel that Rio Tinto is also seeking to offload the "Innu problem".

"We simply wish to make clear that any purchaser of Rio Tinto's stake in IOC will run up against the same fierce opposition that is currently underway against IOC. The conflict will not end until the more than 60 years of injustice we have endured at the hands of IOC comes to an end," stated Mike McKenzie, Chief of the Innu First Nation of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam.

"While Rio Tinto is looking to move on, our people are not going anywhere. We will still be here, occupying our traditional territory like we always have and unfortunately living with all the negative impacts IOC's projects have caused and continue to cause," added Chief McKenzie.

In fact, the Innu First Nation of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam would like to take this opportunity to remind any potential investor looking to do business on their traditional territory (covering much of northeastern Quebec and Labrador) that they will defend to the end the principle that any project on their traditional territory requires their consent.

SOURCE: Innu Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam (ITUM)

Nunavut diamond mine in care of federal clean-up program

CBC News – July 10, 2013

Owners abandoned Jericho mine last year

Nunavut's abandoned Jericho diamond mine is now in the care of the federal government's Contaminated Sites Program.

A June 7 letter to the Nunavut Water Board says the Contaminated Sites Program has taken charge of immediate environmental protection at the site, which includes managing tailings and fuel and hazardous waste.

The goal is to manage "risks to persons, property or the environment until such time as the project's future becomes clearer."

Shear Diamonds abandoned the Jericho mine last September.

The company failed to return and clean it up, even when ordered to do so by a federal inspector.

Under the terms of its water licence, Shear Diamonds should have posted a security bond of \$3.4 million — money held by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to pay for a clean-up in the event the company goes bankrupt. A federal government spokesperson told CBC News in April Shear Diamonds still owes more than \$2 million.

Tahera Diamond opened the Jericho mine project in 2006. Tahera ceased mining operations in 2008 and sold the mine to Shear Diamonds in 2010.

The mine is located 350 kilometres southwest of Cambridge Bay.

Gahcho Kué Joint Venture and North Slave Métis Alliance sign Impact Benefit Agreement

Canada NewsWire- July 10, 2013

YELLOWKNIFE, TORONTO and NEW YORK, July 10, 2013 /CNW/ - De Beers and Mountain Province Diamonds (TSX: MPV, NYSE MKT: MDM) are pleased to announce that De Beers, as Operator of the Gahcho Kué Project, has entered into an Impact Benefit Agreement with the North Slave Métis Alliance for the proposed Gahcho Kué Mine. The agreement sets in place a framework for De Beers and the North Slave Métis Alliance to optimize the participation of the North Slave Métis Alliance in the Gahcho Kué Mine through employment, business opportunities, training and development, and financial benefits.

"This is the first Impact Benefit Agreement to be concluded for the proposed Gahcho Kué Mine," said Glen Koropchuk, Chief Operating Officer. "The two negotiating teams worked hard and efficiently to complete this agreement, which is mutually beneficial and builds on the strong relationship already established. It incorporates the shared learning we have from our experience working together over the years at the Snap Lake Mine, which is also operated by De Beers. The negotiation of further impact benefit agreements is continuing."

"This is a good day for the North Slave Métis Alliance," said Bill Enge, President. "The life of mine Impact Benefit Agreement that we signed with De Beers for the proposed Gahcho Kué diamond mine ensures the North Slave Métis people will benefit from this development. We're looking forward to working with and strengthening our relationship with De Beers. They have a great track record of working with us with respect to their Snap Lake diamond mine and we have every reason to believe their Gahcho Kué mine track record will be matched."

The Gahcho Kué diamond mine will have a mine life of approximately eleven years, will employ up to 700 people during construction and approximately 400 people during operations. It will produce on average 4.5 million carats annually over its mine life.

About De Beers Group

De Beers Group is a member of the Anglo American plc group. Established in 1888, De Beers is the world's leading diamond company with unrivalled expertise in the exploration, mining and marketing of diamonds. Together with its joint venture partners, De Beers employs approximately 16,000 people across the diamond pipeline, and is the world's largest diamond producer by value, with mining operations in Botswana, Canada, Namibia and South Africa. In Canada, De Beers operates the Snap Lake Mine in the Northwest Territories and the Victor Mine in northern Ontario. De Beers is also a joint venture partner in the Gahcho Kué Project in the Northwest Territories. For further information about De Beers visit www.debeersgroup.com.

About Mountain Province Diamonds

Mountain Province Diamonds discovered the first kimberlite at Kennady Lake in 1995 and in 1997 entered into a joint venture agreement with Monopros, a subsidiary of De Beers. Mountain Province is a 49% participant with De Beers Canada in the Gahcho Kué JV located in Canada's Northwest Territories. Gahcho Kué is the world's largest and richest new diamond mine development. A December 2010 feasibility study filed by Mountain Province (available on SEDAR) indicates that the Gahcho Kué project has an IRR of 33.9%. Further information is available at www.mountainprovince.com.