

**Focus Group with the youth of the Cree Nation of Nemaska on the impacts of the Whabouchi Project**

**Presented to the COMEX  
on March 30, 2015**

**by Youth who were present at the  
Focus Group held on March 24, 2015**

The following youth met on March 24, 2015 at the Sports Complex to discuss the potential impacts of the Whabouchi Project on the Cree Nation of Nemaska:

- Savannah Jolly
- Myra Sheshamush
- Jasmine Tanoush
- Brittany Moar – Youth Council Member
- Derius Gilpin-Mark
- Nick Wapachee – Youth Ambassador – Cree Nation Youth Council
- Andrew Nunez (Youth Fusion)
- Simone Sonia Dionne (Youth Fusion)

The meeting was facilitated by Greg Jolly, a member of a work group that was created to prepare the members to the COMEX hearings. Matthew Tanoush (Lands & Environment Administrator, CNN), Tera Diamond (Youth Chief), Simeon Wapachee (Youth Development Coordinator, CNN), Johnny Trapper and Miriam Atkinson were also present to facilitate the discussion groups with the youth and to take notes of the various comments and questions.

For the purpose of this document, the comments and concerns are divided in the following themes:

- Land Use / Culture / Cree Knowledge
- Water / Air Quality / Environment
- Employment / Social / Business Development & Opportunities / Integration
- Closure and Remediation

#### LAND USE / CULTURE / CREE KNOWLEDGE

- Create something similar to the Wesheesh Indounhoun Agreement; The said agreement was made between Nemaska and Hydro Quebec to monitor the fishing and hunting that was being done by non-natives that were working at the nearby camp Nemiscau. We would like the monitoring to be paid for by the proponent.
- Establish a game warden office in Nemaska; If possible or perhaps a similar position to oversee the Agreement previously mentioned.
- The community should seek a second opinion on the ESIA to avoid any oversights or mistakes made by the project proponent. We do not want any negative impacts on our traditional activities (i.e hunting, berry picking, etc.);
- Establish a Cree culture fund; To offset the negative effects this project might have on our social development;
- Create cultural orientation sessions for non-natives; Many times when non-natives experience our culture for the first time, they experience culture shock and are sometimes unintentionally disrespectful to our customs. To ensure a good relationship with our people;

- Why did the proponent change the project design? How many times are they going to be allowed to change it? Does the proponent have to make another impact study on these new changes?

### WATER / AIR QUALITY / ENVIRONMENT

- Is there a clause that they will put back the field like it was? Plant trees? Fill up the hole?
- More trucks mean more dust and more traffic; We would like the trucks that will be travelling on the Route du Nord be monitored to ensure that they obey the speed limit and give the right of way to our people travelling on that road;
- What are the effects on the hydrological system, like the groundwater?
- With all the blasting, there will be more air pollution. How far will the dust go in the air? Did the project proponent do studies on this?
- Is there a risk of getting cancer by breathing the fumes from the lithium? We are worried about the children's summer camp at Mountain Lake);
- What about our elders? They are living nearby Mountain Lake and the fumes will go in the water. Is there a risk of cancer?
- Will the water contamination affect the fish? Animals that eat the fish will be affected and it will have an effect on the food chain.
- If the berries and small fruits and trees get contaminated then more people will get sick and go to the clinic and the costs for health care will go up.
- Will there be smog around the community?
- Will there be more cases of asthma, cancer, lung problems, and skin problems?
- Will there be noise pollution? Will the animals will run away and then we will have to go hunt somewhere else?
- Is there an alternative way of extracting without blasting to reduce air pollution?
- Will there be a water treatment plant?
- Will the water from lakes 1, 2, 23, 24, 27, and 28 be monitored and treated?
- We should create a dome to reduce dust and have an air exchanger inside the dome.
- We need to preserve the fish and the fish spawning grounds.

### EMPLOYMENT / SOCIAL / BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & OPPORTUNITIES/ INTEGRATION

- Availability of time for training programs for onsite employment.
- Training should take place in Nemaska.
- The Cree Health Board should play a leading role in social impacts, and should include non-natives.
- Work schedules should be developed to the convenience of the Cree worker for the families.
- Development of work co-op programs.
- Hire professionals (like therapists) to help families deal with the social impacts.
- Recycle crushed stone for the benefit of the community.

- Promote business opportunities for the community/family members.
- Encourage companies to buy products and goods from Nemaska.
- We want a minimum of 50% Cree employment at the mine.
- Train local police to act as first responders to incidents at the mine for employees.
- Train the fire and security departments to act as first responders at the mine for employees.
- The Cree Health Board and Wellness Centre should act as first responders to mine employees.
- The proponent should pay a flat rate yearly for use of our local services such as the Fire Dept., Police services, and Medical Services.
- Train the Crees to give tours at the mine.
- We should have Cree media access to cover stories at the mine.
- How long will a particular job last (life of a job)?
- We should re-use the facilities when they are abandoned.
- We need to gather information on the type of job to be available and create a training plan from thereon.

#### CLOSURE AND REMEDIATION

- Re-fill the open pit with waste rocks, cover it with soil and plant grass.
- Reforestation in all affected areas;
- Move cabins to better hunting areas; within their trap line; areas to be determined by the owner of each cabin.
- Water treatment plant, to recycle the waste water to be reused by the mine;
- Crush the waste rock to gravel; to benefit the Community of Nemaska
- Continued monitoring after the 28 years of mine operations to ensure the limiting of any possible after effects.
- Replenish the soil for growth, where deforestation is done.

We were unable to present this at the COMEX event held here in Nemaska on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, but most of the youth members that were present at the focus group were in class or had prior engagements. The Nemaska Youth Council will be holding its Youth Annual General Assembly during the month of June 2015; in which many youth attend, making this the best way to convey our concerns and the answers to our questions. If possible we would like the answers to the questions in writing so that we may present this information to our members.

Meegwetch. Thank you. Merci.