

The VOICE

YUKON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT BOARD NEWSLETTER - issue #01
SUMMER 2010

The Rush Is On in Dawson City

pg. 2

YESAB Reaches 1000!

What do the numbers say?

pg. 6

New Rules for Evaluations Conducted by Designated Offices

A sneak peak at the changes made and
the rationale behind them pg. 3

Photo: Robert Postma

CONTENTS

- White Gold: Where Three Rivers Meet - pg. 5
- Executive Committee Updates - pg. 7
- The Basics: Assessment 101 - pg. 5
- New Board Appointments - pg. 8

Not Another Newsletter!

Another newsletter! Yes, I'm afraid so, but I can assure all readers that we will do our best to make this one interesting, current and even provocative at times. We plan to highlight projects and subject matter that Yukoners are concerned about. We'll tackle the issues and dive into projects and activities that are shaping our land, water, wildlife and socio-economic values. We'll expand on issues that matter to Yukoners and keep our readers informed about how we are conducting our business. YESAA is a very transparent,

neutral and publicly driven process and our quarterly newsletter will reflect those same principles.

So put your feet up, give it a read and let us know what you think. This is just as much your newsletter as it is ours.

Comments, suggestions and story ideas can be sent to YESAB Communications: rob.yeomans@yesab.ca



The Rush is on in Dawson City

Dawson is a hot bed of activity right now and our busiest district this quarter. Here are a few things happening at the Dawson Designated Office.

The Dome Conundrum

In March 2010 the Dawson Designated Office received two projects located within the same area of land on the infamous Dome Road. One project was a placer mine expansion; the other a residential subdivision. The public engaged the YESAA process quickly and the amount of comments and the quality of the comments received was significant and helpful in making a recommendation. The public clearly identified potential effects and suggested some possible mitigations.

In the end it was clear to the assessment team that the effects of operating a placer mine within a residential area could

not be mitigated and therefore YESAB recommended to the Decision Body that the project not proceed.

For the full report and the final decision go to the YESAB Online Registry and search project number: **2009-0125**.

Dawson City Hospital

The Dawson Office received a project proposal for the local hospital. A YESAB public meeting was held in Dawson on May 10, 2010 to inform the public of the project details and gather peoples views and opinions. The meeting was standing room only and the participation and comments submitted into the process was very helpful. Thanks to all who attended.

The evaluation is now complete and a recommendation to proceed with terms and conditions has been sent to the Decision Body. Search project number: **2010-0047**.

New Rules For Evaluations Conducted by Designated Offices

YESAB has recently completed the new Rules for Evaluations Conducted by Designated Offices. What does that mean for you?

Each level of assessment has a set of Rules that help guide the process. Specifically, the Rules provide direction related to preparing and submitting project proposals, scoping projects, participating in assessments, timelines for evaluations, the handling of confidential information, and considering traditional and scientific knowledge.

The Rules directly affect proponents of projects, First Nations and those who participate in the assessment process. YESAB went through an extensive review process and as a result we have made a few changes that will allow for more effective, efficient and practical assessments. The new rules are being published in the Canada Gazette in July and will come into full effect on August 11, 2010.

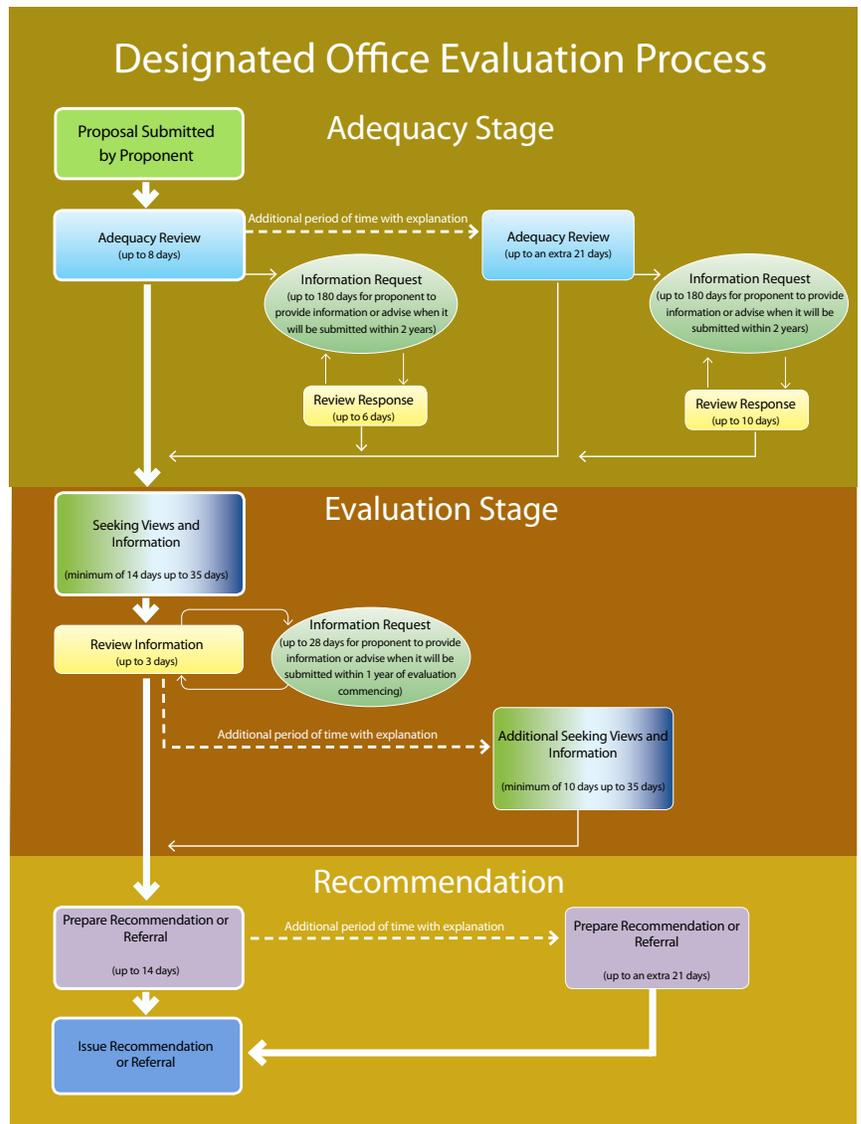
During the review comments and feedback from participants were gathered through public meetings, focus groups, written submissions and face-to-face meetings. First Nations and other governments, industry, interest groups, and the public at large participated in the review. Each issue was carefully considered in the preparation of the new Rules. Below is a broad overview of the feedback we received:

- Timelines should be flexible to accommodate both small-scale and large-scale projects.
- YESAB should develop additional guidance about information requirements for project proposals.
- Large-scale projects should have more opportunity for participation during the adequacy review.
- More opportunity for public review when new information is submitted to the project proposal.

- There should be more time to consider comments received during an assessment.

YESAB would like to thank everyone who participated in the review. Your comments, concerns, and suggestions have helped improve the Yukon's assessment process.

Have a look on the YESAB website (www.yesab.ca) for the complete set of Rules, the flow chart and a question and answer sheet. If you would like us to present or explain them in detail, please call our head office at 867-668-6420.



Flow chart for the new rules which come into effect August 11, 2010.

Improving Project Assessments in Yukon

A sneak peak at the changes made to the Rules and the rationale behind them.

The comments and suggestions given to us during the review has helped make the rules more practical and better suited to the needs of YESAA participants. The new Rules will allow assessors to conduct assessments within timelines that are appropriate for the specific project they are assessing. Larger or more complex projects can now be granted longer timelines if needed while straight forward and well prepared projects will move through the process with little delay.

The following describes the key changes made and provides rationale as to why the changes were made.

1. Form 1 has been removed from the Rules.

This will allow us to create sector-specific forms. These forms will clearly identify what information should be included in project proposals for specific development sectors (e.g. mining, forestry) and provide increased certainty. Further work will be required to prepare these forms.

2. Location review, completeness review, and the preparation of a public notice and notification list have been merged into one adequacy review period.

This simplifies the process and allows well-prepared and small-scale project proposals to be expedited through the adequacy review period.

3. The period of time for determining if a proposal is adequate may be extended up to an additional 21 days.

This will allow additional time to review project proposals when needed and provide better opportunities for creating working groups or seeking technical advice. The determination to extend this period is based on criteria provided in the Rules.

4. The timeline for reviewing responses to questions during adequacy has been increased.

During the initial 8 day adequacy review period the assessor may issue an information request. The assessor will have up to 6 days to review responses. In the existing rules only 3 days are allotted. Experience has proven that this timeline is too short.

The initial 8 day adequacy review period may now be extended when needed to allow for an information request and an opportunity to review the information or involve a working group.

5. Seeking Views and Information (SVI) has been restructured.

The SVI period continues to require a minimum of 14 days, up to a maximum of 70 days. The overall timeline has not increased, however SVI has been restructured into two separate periods of time. This will ensure adequate time for all participants to submit and review all information.

The first period of SVI is a minimum of 14 days and can be extended up to 35 days. At the end of this period the assessor will have up to 3 days to determine if: they will prepare the recommendation or referral; further information is needed or; an extra period of SVI is required. This will allow comments received late in SVI to be reasonably considered and allow the assessor time to consider the best direction for the assessment.

If the assessor decides further information is required, an information request may be issued. This will initiate a maximum 28 day period of time for the proponent to respond or advise when they will be responding within 1 year of the evaluation commencing. This will reduce the number of projects being deemed withdrawn when the proponent simply needed additional time to provide information.

The second period of SVI is a minimum of 10 days and can be extended up to 35 days. It is available in consideration of: material changes to the project proposal; supplementary information submitted that interested persons need time to consider and; issues identified that interested persons should have time to consider. This will help ensure that those participating in assessments have adequate time to review any changes to the proposal and/or new information, and further examine key issues.

6. The period of time for preparing the recommendation or referral may be extended up to an additional 21 days.

This extension is available to allow adequate time for preparing a recommendation or referral for projects.

QUICK FACT

The Dawson City Designated Office received 57 project proposals during the last fiscal year. The highest number of proposal submissions in any YESAB office.



White Gold: Where Three Rivers Meet

There is a place in the Dawson district where three great rivers flow; the White, the Stewart and the mighty Yukon. It is in this area that a local miner discovered a significant gold deposit which has sparked a flurry of activity this spring. Helicopters are flying in and out daily, exploration is way up, stakes are being claimed, camps are being established, and the mining community is excited about the prospects in the area.

For YESAB this burst of activity is keeping all of our Designated Offices busy. The sudden increase in mining

exploration and activity will have an effect on the land, water, and wildlife. For example; how does the high frequency of helicopter flights affect the sheep populations? Will there be effects on the winter range of the 40 Mile Caribou Herd? Will easier access into the area result in increased hunting pressure?

These are some of the key questions we are interested in and are currently studying. By gathering this important baseline information our assessors will have the tools they need to conduct thorough assessments now and in the future.

The Basics: Assessment 101

Environmental and socio-economic assessment is a process that identifies the environmental and socio-economic effects of proposed activities before they are carried out. Once significant adverse effects are identified, assessors recommend measures to limit or eliminate those effects.

Why Conduct Assessments?

Assessments are conducted to ensure that projects are undertaken in a way that results in development that does not undermine the environment and social systems of individuals and communities. This is done by minimizing or avoiding adverse environmental and socio-economic effects before they occur.

The Benefits of Assessment

Environmental and socio-economic assessment offers a number of benefits to Yukoners. It provides opportunities for the public to become involved in the development of the territory, allows for increased protection of human health, and minimizes environmental risk. Yukon's assessment process ensures that assessments are done independently by an impartial body and increases the accountability of decision-makers by ensuring all information relating to an assessment is available to the public. The process also reduces uncertainty by having set timelines at every stage.

YESAB Reaches 1000!

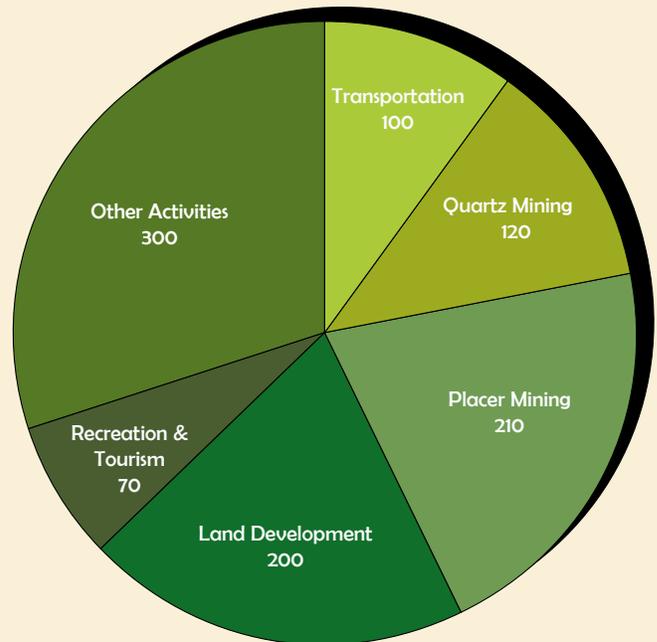
In May 2010 YESAB completed its 1000th assessment, a big accomplishment for the organization. In its short lifetime, YESAB has successfully conducted environmental and socio-economic assessments on everything from solid waste disposal sites to multi-million dollar mining projects.

A placer miner received the distinction of becoming the 1000th assessment. To commemorate the occasion an infamous YESAB canvas bag was sent out to the proponent. Below are some other statistics you might be interested in.

Statistics on the past 1010 assessments:

DESIGNATED OFFICE DISTRICT	TOTAL ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED OUT OF 1010
Dawson City	240
Haines Junction	180
Mayo	180
Teslin	90
Watson Lake	120
Whitehorse	200

Leading Sectors



Number of project assessments out of 1000

QUICK FACT

What's the most unique project assessment conducted to date?

Staff recall a Pet Crematorium project in the Whitehorse district as being quite unique.





Executive Committee Updates

The Executive Committee (EC) of the Board assesses larger projects that are submitted to it directly, or are referred by a Designated Office. In most cases the projects assessed under a screening are larger and more complex.

Yukon Energy Corporation - Mayo Hydro Enhancement Project (Mayo B)

The Draft Screening Report went out for public comment for 30 days from March 12 - April 13th. Comments were reviewed by the assessment team and the Screening Report was completed on May 12, 2010. On June 1, 2010 the Decision Bodies released the joint Decision Document and accepted the Executive Committee's recommendation in its entirety.

North American Tungsten (NATC) - Mactung Mine Project

The Executive Committee issued a supplementary information request related to: fish and fish habitat, project

compliance with the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations, hydrology and water balance information, project related water management (surface and sub-surface), mine site ARD/ML predictions and mine site infrastructure design and performance.

CMC Metals Ltd - Silver Hart

The Executive Committee began the adequacy review of the project proposal on February 10 to determine if the proponents consultation obligations have been met as per YESAA s.50(3).

On June 3rd 2010 it was determined that CMC Metals Ltd. met its obligation to consult with the Liard First Nation, the Ross River Dena Council and the Teslin Tlingit Council. Additionally, the adequacy review of the Silverhart Mine proposal concluded that supplementary information would be required before the proposal could be considered adequate for the screening to commence.

New Board Appointments, June 2010

The appointments for five of our seven board members came due in June 2010. On June 8th, the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians announced an appointment and three re-appointments to YESAB.

Stephen Mills has been appointed Chair of the Board. Ken McKinnon has been re-appointed as an Executive Committee member and Tara Christie and Dave Keenan have been re-appointed as members of the Board.

Minister Strahl announced that, “Stephen Mills has been an Executive Committee member for six years. He is a member of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, a community leader and brings considerable experience in the development and implementation of land claims to his new position as Chair”.

The Minister went on to thank Ken McKinnon for his past work as Chair and was grateful for the continuity of service. He also welcomed Tara Christie and Dave Keenan as returning members of the Board.

Ross Leef and Carl Sidney continue on the board with their current terms ending in 2011.

How appointments to YESAB are determined

There are seven members of the Board appointed under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA). The Board is comprised of a three-person Executive Committee, one of whom is the Chair of YESAB, and four other Board members.

Nominations to the Board are determined by the legislation. One member of the Executive Committee is nominated by the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and one member is appointed by the federal government after consultation with the territorial government. The third member of the Executive Committee, the Chair, is appointed after the federal minister consults with the other two Executive Committee members.

Of the four remaining Board members, two are nominated by CYFN, one is nominated by the territorial government and the fourth is a direct appointment by the federal minister.

All Board members are appointed by the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for a three-year term.

