IN THIS ISSUE

The VOICE looks at the latest developments in the Eagle Gold project proposal submission to the Executive Committee, speaks to the current project load of our Designated Offices and gives you a sneak peak at some of our upcoming guidance and policy documents under development. There is alot going on in Yukon right now; keep those project comments coming and help shape the future of Yukon! Read on…

BOOM TIME!

Our Designated Offices have been working steadily since the sun returned. Since January 2011, YESAB has had over 150 projects submitted for assessment. That number gets bigger by the day and we don’t see things slowing down any time soon. The majority of those projects submitted have been related to the residential, commercial and industrial land development sector, as well as the placer and quartz mining sectors. Transportation, energy transmission and agriculture projects are also significant contributors to our project load. Lucky for us, the majority of our assessment team is well-seasoned. Here’s to another busy summer at YESAB.

New DO location

The Whitehorse Designated Office has moved locations. YESAB found it could offer more convenience to its clients by moving the Designated Office into the Nuvo building at 4th and Strickland Street. Visitors to YESAB will now be able to access the Head Office on one end of the hallway and the Designated Office on the other end. While still separate offices, sharing the 2nd floor of the Nuvo building is proving to be advantageous for our staff, our board and the clients we serve. Stop by anytime!
EAGLE GOLD – SOARING TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee received the Eagle Gold project proposal from Victoria Gold Corporation on December 20, 2010. The proponent is proposing the design, construction, operation, closure, and reclamation of a gold mine. The property is situated in the Dublin Gulch watershed about 85 km northeast of Mayo within the Traditional Territory of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun.

The proposed Project will include an open pit mine, improvements to the Haggart Creek Road, and a 45 km, 69 kV transmission line. Gold extraction will utilize sodium cyanide heap leaching technology. The proposed Project is planned to include a 20-month construction phase, a 7-year active mining phase, and a 10-year closure and reclamation phase, followed by a post-closure monitoring phase.

After reviewing the consultation efforts of the company, in January 2011, the Executive Committee determined that Victoria Gold has met their consultation obligations under YESAA s. 50(3).

The Executive Committee released the Adequacy Review Report for Eagle Gold on March 29, 2011. The report noted that additional information on water (surface water, ground water, water quality and water modelling), as well as additional information on mine planning, design and cyanide management would be required. Since the release of that report Victoria Gold met with YESAB to discuss next steps.

Once the additional information is received and is determined to be adequate, the Executive Committee can begin the assessment. The project proposal and any associated documents are available on the YESAB Online Registry. Stay tuned for your chance to comment during the initial comment period.

YESAB has conducted close to 1300 assessments since implementation in November 2005.
The Teslin Designated Office is hiring a summer student this year to help out around the office. The position will be a great opportunity to gain valuable work experience and develop important skills in the area of environmental and socio-economic assessment. The staff in Teslin have a long list of tasks and are keen to get the new position working in the community. Stop by the Teslin office to meet the new recruit this summer.

Representing at the Dawson City Gold Show

As usual YESAB staff and board attended the 2011 Dawson City Gold Show. This year our booth had some great prizes and attendees got a sneak peak at some of the guidance documents we’re working on. We handed out draft copies of the new sector-specific Form 1 assessment applications for placer and quartz exploration. Sector-specific Form 1 applications have been a priority for the Board and we think they will make the assessment process more efficient and attend to the needs of the placer and quartz sectors. More information on our sector-specific application forms on page 5.

Dinjii Zhuh Water Summit: YESAB BEYOND OUR BORDERS

YESA Board member Dave Keenan, and a staff representative from the Dawson Designated Office gave a presentation at the Dinjii Zhuh Water Summit in Inuvik this past February. The Summit was hosted by the Gwich’in Tribal Council and involved a number of groups and organizations from the Gwich’in Settlement Region including Government of Northwest Territories agencies, local chiefs and elders, as well as members from various wildlife and environmental management boards.

The summit allowed for in-depth discussions about water stewardship concerns, policy and climate change in the Gwich’in Settlement Area and in upstream jurisdictions. The Summit tried to define concrete actions that parties should take to improve water stewardship in the Gwich’in Settlement Area.

The Summit was a great success and highlighted some concerns within Yukon surrounding development along the Peel, Mackenzie and Arctic Red rivers.

TESLIN GETTING A SUMMER STUDENT!

The Teslin Designated Office is hiring a summer student this year to help out around the office. The position will be a great opportunity to gain valuable work experience and develop important skills in the area of environmental and socio-economic assessment. The staff in Teslin have a long list of tasks and are keen to get the new position working in the community. Stop by the Teslin office to meet the new recruit this summer.
In June 2010, YESAB contracted EDI Environmental Dynamics Inc. to conduct a cumulative effects study for the White Gold Area. The study has been a tremendous resource for proponents, assessors and regulators. With activities in the region growing every month YESAB thought it would be helpful to update the study over the winter. Version 2.0, completed in March 2011, contains new linear features and linear disturbance spatial data, identifies new projects in the area, and provides updated moose harvest statistics. High definition maps were also included in version 2.0. YESAB will continue to update the study throughout the summer and into the spring of 2012. Copies of the study can be found on our website, www.yesab.ca/publications/studies_research, or by contacting any YESAB office.

Quick Fact

There have been 108,261 quartz claims and 598 placer claims staked in the last fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

Sector-specific Application Forms: Coming soon to a DO near you.

YESAB is working on a number of sector-specific application forms to replace the standard Form 1. Each assessment, regardless of the project activities involved, begins with an assessment application known as “Form 1”. Form 1 was originally created to be a catch-all form for all sectors and activities. In recent years, our assessment team has been looking for ways to improve the process and increase the efficiency of the application form. Redesigning the application form to allow for sector-specific questions will improve the quality of the project applications received by YESAB by:

1. Providing more detailed guidance to proponents about the information we require.
2. Allowing for clear and concise questions.
3. Providing less duplication of information among assessment and regulatory bodies.
4. Reducing the amount of information requests sent by assessors by collecting as much detailed information as possible in the application.
5. Ensuring that we are collecting the type of information decision bodies need to make their decision.

Public Comment Schedule for Sector-specific Forms

YESAB will be going out to the public to help create these forms. Our schedule is below. To find out how you can participate and submit comments please call our Dawson City Office at 867-993-4040.

- Placer Mining: July 11- August 30
- Quartz Exploration: August 1 - September 9
- Forestry: August 22 - September 30
- Land Disposition: September 12 - October 21
Guidance & Policy

YvesAB has been working on completing two documents over the winter: Water guidance for proponents and a heritage policy. YESAB worked with regulators, First Nations, the public and proponents to help with the content of the documents. The guides will give proponents and other YESAA participants a clear understanding of the information required for an environmental and socio-economic assessment in the areas of heritage resources and water data. Each document will be advertised in the local papers to encourage public input before they are adopted by YESAB.

Water Guidance for Hard Rockers: Understand your baseline.

We’ve got a lot of water in Yukon and in our view, every drop is important. That’s why we have been working with key organizations and regulators to come up with a detailed guidance document for large hard rock mines and other proponents who may have effects on surface and ground water.

YESAB is now in the final stages of this general guidance document that focuses on project effects on water quality, quantity and variability. The document is intended to supplement specific discussions with assessors and regulators regarding the appropriate water data required for an efficient assessment.

The document outlines the surface and ground water information required for assessment and poses a number of questions that will guide proponents and help them understand the effect their project may have on water. YESAB wants to ensure that proponents properly collect and understand baseline water data so that project proposals include the information required and can move through the assessment process efficiently.

For more information on the water guidance document or to get a copy of the current draft please call the YESAB Head Office at 668-6420.

Quick Fact

YESAB has had 27 quartz exploration projects submitted for assessment since January 1st, 2011.
Heritage resources make up part of the socio-economic factors to be considered in an assessment and are therefore an important part of project proposals. Specifically, projects that involve the disposition of land must include sufficient heritage information for the proponent, the assessor and the decision bodies to understand the effects of a proposed project on heritage resources. YESAB is in the process of developing a policy for heritage resource information requirements for land applications and other proposals submitted for assessment.

The draft policy, currently labelled; “Heritage Resource Information Requirements for Proposals that Include Land Dispositions”, is intended to specify the heritage information requirements for project proposals that require a disposition of land in order to be undertaken. Proposals involving land applications for residential and agricultural development are the most common proposals that require a disposition of land and proponents of those project types need to be well informed about the type, level of detail and overall scope of information required in their project proposal submissions.

Readers of the draft policy will find detailed information on the potential effects projects may have on heritage resources, the specific objectives of a heritage assessment, and the level of detail required for an overview assessment versus a site assessment. Significance determination and information sensitivity is discussed and for areas where a project may result in adverse effects to heritage resources, mitigation approaches are explained.

With your input, this policy will help participants and proponents understand the importance of heritage resources and provide clear direction on the information required for a heritage assessment. We thank everyone who contributed comments and suggestions during the public comment period. A final version will be distributed and posted to our web site upon completion.

The objectives of a heritage resource assessment are to:

- Describe the heritage resource potential in a project area.
- Identify and evaluate the heritage resources in a project area.
- Identify and assess project effects on heritage resources.
- Identify appropriate mitigation measures to eliminate, reduce or control project effects on heritage resources.
Mr. Pettersson brings considerable experience to YESAB with nearly 30 years of environmental and resource management in government and the private sector. He has worked in Yukon for 20 years and recently returned from a year in Sweden where he was an environmental manager with a Swedish crown corporation responsible for highways and railways.

Mr. Pettersson is a Certified Environmental Professional and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Protection and Public Health and a Master’s degree in Environment & Management. “I’ve missed Yukon and am excited to be back and working with such an important organization as YESAB. It’s an honour to be part of such a dedicated and knowledgeable team” Pettersson said.

The Executive Director is the link between the YESA Board and 35 staff and ensures that the appropriate systems are in place to maintain an efficient and effective work environment.

YESAB is made up of a seven member board and 35 employees within seven offices located throughout Yukon.

YESAB Appoints New Executive Director

Bengt Pettersson has been appointed to the position of Executive Director of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB). The appointment is effective May 2, 2011.

The Executive Director is the link between the YESA Board and 35 staff and ensures that the appropriate systems are in place to maintain an efficient and effective work environment.

YESAB is made up of a seven member board and 35 employees within seven offices located throughout Yukon.

Quick Fact
Timelines: Since the new Rules were introduced in 2010, the average Designated Office assessment under YESAA has taken 38 days, from the day a project proposal is deemed adequate to when the recommendation is sent.