The Voice is a seasonal newsletter for the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB). YESAB conducts assessments on project proposals and makes recommendations to government decision bodies on whether a project should proceed, not proceed, or proceed with specific terms and conditions.
This will be the eighth edition of The Voice and we have lots to talk about. We’re introducing the new sector-specific forms and guides for forestry and land disposition project proposals. We also inform readers about the YESAB Consultants Workshop, the 40th Annual Geoscience Forum, the acid rock drainage and metal leaching course in Smithers, BC and provide updates on all three Executive Committee Screenings. Stay warm and read.

Do you have a topic you would like to see covered in The Voice? Send an e-mail to rob.yeomans@yesab.ca.
Under YESAA, each Designated Office assessment, regardless of the project activities involved, begins with an assessment form known as Form 1. Form 1 was originally created to be a catch-all form for all sectors and activities. While it serves a general purpose, YESAB wanted to find ways to improve proposal submission content and increase efficiencies within the assessment process. This ambition resulted in the development of sector-specific forms for forestry and land dispositions. By developing forms that are specifically tailored to an industry sector, YESAB was able to provide detailed guidance to project proponents and incorporate clear and concise questions within the form. This in turn will reduce the amount of information requests sent by assessors and ensure that we are collecting the type of information required for YESAB to make informed decisions.

After establishing working groups, conducting public information sessions and working with a number of assessment staff, YESAB has now completed sector-specific forms for forestry and land disposition project proposals. These sector-specific forms have replaced the general Form 1 for these sectors.

In addition to sector-specific forms for forestry and land disposition projects, YESAB has also developed a sector-specific proponent’s guide to accompany each form. The guides can be printed by proponents but are also integrated within the digital PDF form to allow for easy access to explanatory information and definitions. These features will allow a proponent to work through a sector-specific form while having all the information from the related guide built directly into the form. So if you need more direction or explanation about a question within the form, you can click a tab within the text and it will take you directly to the related section within the guide.

The new forms and guides provide more detail to assessors, regulators and interested parties at the time of a project’s submission, and will help and minimize requests for additional information. The new forms and guides are currently available on the YOR and at any YESAB office.

WHAT’S NEXT?
Sector-specific forms and guides for forestry and land dispositions are just the beginning. YESAB has already started work on similar forms for placer and quartz mining. Stay tuned for more information on those forms in the next newsletter.
Back by popular demand this November was YESAB’s Annual Consultants Workshop. This informative, one day event is hosted by YESAB to reach out to consultants who are involved in or want to be involved in YESAB assessments. The workshop is a chance for us to inform consultants about some of our recent work, current and future guidance documents, and dig into some current issues related to the assessment process.

The day was packed with information on our heritage, water resources and dam guidance documents and the YESAA process in general. Sector-specific forms were reviewed and YESAB staff were available to discuss the current issues facing consultants, such as traditional land use studies, project-specific baseline information, and the difference between a heritage overview assessment and a heritage site assessment. The workshop will also included the opportunity for consultants to peer into YESAB’s crystal ball to see what type of proponent guidance and policy is being planned for the future. Participants were also given the chance to ask questions and discuss specific aspects of YESAA that were of interest.

This annual workshop has become a popular event and is capped at 40 attendees with a maximum of two attendees from each company. The workshop filled up quickly but fear not, if demand continues to grow it may become a bi-annual event with a second offering in early 2013. Give us a call to get on the guest list (867) 668-6420.

The 40th Annual Yukon Geoscience Forum was held at the High Country Inn from November 17-21, 2012. YESAB attends every year and has watched this event grow in popularity. Some of YESAB’s staff and Board attended the technical talks and a large contingent of YESAB staff and board ran the trade show booth to network with industry and answer questions. Our booth was well stocked with information about YESAA and copies of our guidance documents. We also conducted YESAB Online Registry (YOR) demonstrations on-site and had the latest information on current assessments and other projects we’re working on. Thanks to everyone who visited the YESAB booth this year.

Congratulations!
BEVERLEY BLANCHARD – Deputy Chief
First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun First Nation

She was the lucky winner in our trade show booth draw. A YESAB coffee mug and canvas bag is on its way!
A drainage pond at the Equity Silver Mine in northern British Columbia. One of many site visits undertaken by YESAB staff during their acid rock drainage training course.

Heavy Metal Rock…YESAB Style.

When we speak of heavy metal rock around the office it has less to do with Metallica and more to do with metal leaching (ML) and acid rock drainage (ARD). Strange? Perhaps, but they are big issues in the environmental assessment of mining projects and can cause major problems to the environment if not managed properly.

ARD is water acidified by the oxidation of sulfide minerals, most often pyrite, during the weathering process. The most significant source of ARD from a mine is typically the fragmented pieces of waste rock that are removed from the ground and tailings from the ore processing. Other mine components such as pits, underground workings and surface infrastructure can also trigger ARD by exposing large surface areas of rock to water and oxygen. Metal leaching is related to ARD and is caused by metals leaching from rocks into the water.

To better understand ARD and ML, YESAB sends a few staff down to Smithers, BC annually to attend an intense training course on the subject. The course explores material characterization and assessment, geochemical processes and contributing factors, and drainage monitoring. Participants review current practices in the mining industry and focus on the type and amount of data required to conduct an effective environmental and socio-economic assessment. In addition to the classroom work, there are a number of mine site visits in the region where they dive into ARD management and mitigation strategies.

Over the past few years the knowledge gained through the course has helped YESAB build capacity and resources in this highly technical area and that knowledge base will continue to grow. Currently we are working on a Proponent’s Guide to Acid Rock Drainage and Metal Leaching intended to assist proponents in developing their project proposals. We hope to have that document released within the year.
## Statistics

**Total Number of Project Proposals Submitted to a Designated Office in January–September 2012 = 199 Proposed Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Sectors</th>
<th>Total Projects Submitted to a Designated Office January–September 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Aquaculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy - Petroleum</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy - Power Generation</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy Transmission (Gas, Electricity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining - Other (Coal, Aggregate etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining - Placer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mining - Quartz</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Industrial Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation and Tourism</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Land Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific Research/Wildlife Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation - Rail, Marine, Air</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation - Roads, Access Roads and Trails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities - Telecommunications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities - Water and Wastewater</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste Management - Contaminated Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste Management - Special &amp; Hazardous Waste</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Number of Project Proposals Submitted in 2012 = 199**

**Total Number of Projects Assessed to Date = 1588**

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**Project Proposals submitted to a Designated Office January 2012–September 2012**

- Dawson City: 55
- Haines Junction: 40
- Mayo: 42
- Teslin: 10
- Watson Lake: 26
- Whitehorse: 26

**TOTAL 199 Project Submissions**

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**Timeline Summary:**

- **Proposal Submitted to Recommendation Sent**
  - Total number of days: Median 68 days / Average 86 days

- **Proposal Deemed Adequate to Recommendation Sent**
  - Total number of days: Median 34 days / Average 41 days
Steve Caram has recently been hired as the new Project Assessment Manager at YESAB. His history with YESAB is extensive and the perspective he brings to the position is unique. Steve started with YESAB before YESAA was implemented in 2005 as the Manager of the Dawson City Designated Office. He helped establish that office and contributed to YESAB’s approach to assessment. As the organization grew and project loads started to number in the hundreds there was an organizational need to centrally support all Designated Offices during periods of high workload and complex project submissions. With that in mind YESAB created a Designated Office Support Unit working out of Whitehorse to help out when needed. Steve was a good fit for that position and in this capacity was involved in a number of larger Designated Office evaluations throughout Yukon including Bellekeno, Tom Valley, Minto, Selwyn, Ketza and assisted the Executive Committee on the Eagle Gold Project currently under screening.

Prior to YESAB Steve has worked and played within Yukon in a number of capacities. He has worked for DIAND Forest Resources in Whitehorse and a forestry consulting company in Watson Lake before moving to Dawson City to take a job with the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Lands Department. Steve notes, “working with the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in for five years was a great experience – the First Nation had just signed their final agreement and the organization had a lot of positive momentum. One of my big accomplishments working for the First Nation was developing their first subdivision on settlement land. You can see this as you roll into town on the left, at the mouth of the Klondike River.”

Beyond work Steve has had many adventures in Yukon and around the world. His passion for hiking and paddling has taken him through the majority of South America, New Zealand and Australia. He has also paddled throughout Yukon enjoying trips on the Teslin, Big Salmon, Yukon, Alsek, Snake and Firth rivers. He holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science Degree with Honours from the University of Guelph with a focus on Natural Resource Management.

His approach to the new position is best described in his own words, “After seven years of operations my approach is simply to acknowledge what we’re doing well but also to find out how we can further improve. It’s still early days for YESAB and I want to continue to be progressive and improve our process for everyone involved.”
Executive Committee Screening Update

Victoria Gold – Proposed Eagle Gold Project (2010-0267)
Victoria Gold Corporation is proposing the Eagle Gold Project involving the design, construction, operation, closure, and reclamation of a gold mine in central Yukon. The proposed Project is located in the traditional territory of the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun, approximately 350 km north of Whitehorse, and 45 km (85 km by existing access roads) north-northeast of the Village of Mayo. The majority of the project site lies within the Dublin Gulch watershed and is proposed to be mined over ten years starting in 2014.

UPDATE: The Executive Committee released a Draft Screening Report (DSR) for the Eagle Gold Project in September, 2012. The comment period on the DSR was set to 30 days and ended on October 3, 2012. After reviewing the information provided, the next step for the Executive Committee is to finalize the Screening Report.

Ketza River Holding – Proposed Ketza River Mine Production (2011-0218)
Ketza River Holdings (KRH) is the proponent of the proposed Ketza River Mine, which was submitted to the Executive Committee in September 2011. The proponent proposes to mine approximately 49.5 million tonnes of material over five years at a milling rate of 1,500 tonnes per day. The project includes the extraction of material from nine open pits and two underground operations. The project includes the development and management of waste rock dumps, a tailings storage facility, a 200-person camp, and a three MW diesel generator amongst other mine infrastructure.

UPDATE: KRH has submitted a partial response to an Information Request and have indicated that further information is forthcoming before the end of December 2012.

For more information or to view the documents associated with these proposed projects visit the YESAB Online Registry at www.yesab.ca/registry.
The 6th Annual Ball Hockey Tournament Fundraiser and Charity Barbeque took place in October at the Takhini broom ball arena in Whitehorse. YESAB entered a small team with big hearts and raised a little money for a good cause. The fantastic event was organized by Environment Canada, the Northern Pipeline Agency and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. It was a fast-paced tourney with over six teams registered. Arena-side chili and hot chocolate helped warm up the teams before each frigid game and the sidelines were filled with true Canadian networking opportunities with the people and organizations that we work with on a regular basis. YESAB made the final and played a focused game against the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to become the 6th Annual Golden Cup Tournament Champions! The Golden Cup will be on display at our Head Office in Whitehorse, come on by and have a look through the glass case if you like.

A big thank you to the organizers, the chilli table and most of all the people who donated their money to the cause. All proceeds raised will go to the Yukon United Way.