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.
In this issue we’ll look at statistics from the past calendar year and highlight the 30th Annual Mineral Exploration Roundup event that took place in Vancouver in January. We also have a feature article on understanding and mitigating noise. This story highlights some recent projects where noise levels emerged in the assessment as a valued component that required mitigation. The Executive Committee will also give a brief update on the projects they are working on. All that and more in this winter’s issue of The Voice!
The Mineral Exploration Roundup conference in Vancouver took place at the end of January. The “Roundup”, hosted by the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia, is considered one of the world’s premier technical mineral exploration conferences. The title of this year’s conference was Resources for Life: Digging Deeper. The conference agenda included updates from various jurisdictions, including a Yukon exploration and mining update that highlighted specific projects and issues within the region and beyond. Over 8000 people attended from over 38 countries.

YESAB has sent attendees to this conference for several years. This year YESAB staff and Board members took part by attending technical sessions, poster presentations and a number of conference presentations. They attended exploration and mining reviews for British Columbia, Alaska and Yukon, a session on building corporate social responsibility; and visited the core shack and map tent.

For the third year, YESAB invited companies in the mineral exploration and mining industry to meet during the conference. There is significant interest in Yukon’s assessment process as more than 20 companies and industry groups met with YESAB for information exchange and project updates. Board and staff members were available to answer questions and explain the YESAA process and the requirements for submitting a potential project to YESAB. These meetings were highly appreciated by both YESAB and industry participants.
Backup beepers, a metallic clang, bang, crash or vibration all have one thing in common; they are commonly described as noise. YESAB has considered this socio-economic value in project assessments in the past and it remains difficult to articulate, predict and mitigate. Acoustic quality is a fancy way of saying what is at the heart of the concern: the reaction to sound.

Noise is usually defined as “unwanted sound”, which indicates it is not just the characteristics of sound that are important to measure, but also the human reaction to the sound that leads to the perception of a sound as noise. What may be considered noise to one individual may not be perceived as noise by another individual. In order to appropriately measure the noise level, the A-weighted scale is assigned to the sound levels emitted. This scale is assigned to reflect the sensitivity of human hearing at moderate levels, and reflects the low sensitivity to very high or very low frequencies. This is how changes in noise levels are usually described and understood. A whisper is generally measured at 20 dBA while a chainsaw is around 100 dBA. Too much noise can lead to well-documented health impacts, including sleep deprivation, hearing loss, and increased stress levels.

How do you measure something that is receptor dependent, and how do you assign mitigation measures that address impacts on a subjective value? This has been the task for the Whitehorse Designated Office on some of their larger projects within the last 12 months. The Whitehorse Copper Tailings Reprocessing and Reclamation Project, the McLean Lake Concrete Batch Plant Project, and the Stevens Quarry Development Project have all recently completed the YESAB process and had potential noise levels scrutinized and mitigated. However, it remains a topic that is challenging given that there are no limits identified for Yukon, and that the sole guiding factor is the City of Whitehorse Maintenance Bylaw which outlines the permissible hours of noise; 7 am to 11 pm. Other Canadian and U.S. jurisdictions have identified standards or thresholds for particular activities and associated noise effects; for example, oil and gas, highway construction, and wind turbine fields. How do you take those values and thresholds and apply them to Yukon where existing levels are generally lower, or to the activities that are proposed?

Given the projects that are currently on the horizon for the Whitehorse district, it doesn’t seem like this topic will be resolved anytime soon. Until there are specific Yukon standards, assessors will continue to use standards and experience from other jurisdictions to determine the impacts and appropriate mitigation measures.
In January 2013, YESAB held a YESAA 101 presentation for media outlets in Whitehorse. It was the second workshop held with local reporters and was attended by CBC, the Yukon News and the Whitehorse Star.

As the environmental and socio-economic assessment body in Yukon, we receive plenty of media attention in print, radio and television. This workshop was an opportunity for us to outline and explain the YESAA process and demonstrate the value of the YESAB Online Registry. It also gave us a chance to explain our communication protocols and highlight our resources to assist reporters in their work.

YESAB embraces a transparent assessment process and encourages public participation in project assessments and in the development of guidance and policy documents. We see the media as an important part of the public participation process and a vehicle to highlight the work we do, the issues we deal with, and the projects that we solicit feedback on. Media coverage can shine a light on issues and generate public interest and comment which helps to inform the assessment process by identifying values and issues important to the public.

Our organization will continue to do its best to accommodate the needs and deadlines of reporters and hope that workshops like this will help the media navigate the YESAA process and find the information they need in time for their deadline.
ASSESSMENT STATISTICS: 2012 IN REVIEW

Total Number of Projects Submitted by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Sector</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Aquaculture</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy - Petroleum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy - Power Generation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Transmission (Gas, Electricity)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining - Placer</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining - Quartz</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Industrial Activities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Tourism</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Land Development</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Research/Wildlife Management</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation - Rail, Marine, Air</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation - Roads, Access Roads and Trails</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities - Telecommunications</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities - Water and Wastewater</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management - Contaminated Sites</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Management - Special and Hazardous Waste</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Projects Submitted in 2012: **234**

Number of projects submitted to the Designated Offices in 2012:

- Dawson City: 68
- Haines Junction: 43
- Mayo: 51
- Teslin: 13
- Watson Lake: 29
- Whitehorse: 30

Total: **234**

TIMELINE SUMMARY FOR DESIGNATED OFFICE PROJECTS ASSESSED IN 2012:

- Median days to complete an assessment, including the adequacy stage: **69 days**
- Average days to complete an assessment, including the adequacy stage: **89 days**
- Median days to complete an assessment, proposal adequate to recommendation sent: **34 days**
- Average days to complete an assessment, proposal adequate to recommendation sent: **42 days**
The YESAB Online Registry Client Support Officer and the Communications and Information Manager attended certificate training offered by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). The IAP2 Certificate Program in Public Participation was developed to educate practitioners on building a foundation for the planning, design and implementation of effective public participation programs. The training focused on planning, communications and techniques for facilitating public participation programs.

YESAB has a strong mandate in the area of public participation. Every assessment conducted by YESAB includes a mandatory stage for public comment. When conducting Designated Office Evaluations, the “Seeking Views and Information” (SV&I) stage is a mandatory two-week period that allows YESAB to gather views and opinions from the public. Executive Committee Screenings include two mandatory public comment periods; one 30-day period to gather views and opinions on the project proposal and one 30-day period for the public to review the Draft Screening Report. Public comment periods in both Designated Office Evaluations and Executive Committee Screenings can be extended when required.

The purpose of facilitating a public participation process under YESAA is to allow people an opportunity to participate by identifying important environmental and socio-economic values to be considered during the assessment.

To assist an interested member of the public to understand how they can participate in an environmental and socio-economic assessment under YESAA, we have developed the “Guide to Interested Persons and the Public to Participate in Assessments”.

The guide describes how your information and views can improve an assessment and how your information will be stored, shared, and considered when developing recommendations for proposed projects. YESAB also has a number of tools to help facilitate public participation in assessments and have dedicated staff available to help you get your voice heard. Go to www.yesab.ca to get a copy of the guide, or click on: http://www.yesab.ca/publications/guides.html

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) Conference 2013: The Next Generation**

**Calgary Stampede BMO Centre**

**Calgary, Alberta**

**May 13-16, 2013**

Conference themes include:

- A New Generation of People and Engagement
- A New Generation of Issues and Solutions
- A New Generation of Extractive Resource Industries

The IAIA considers itself the leading global network on best practice in the use of impact assessment for informed decision making regarding policies, programs, plans and projects. Visit http://www.iaia.org for more.
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee is made up of Stephen Mills (Chair), Ken McKinnon and Dave Keenan. The Executive Committee is currently working on two project screenings and has completed the screening for the proposed Eagle Gold Project. Here is a brief update on these projects and what you can expect to see from the Executive Committee.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SCREENING UPDATES

Victoria Gold – Proposed Eagle Gold Project

Victoria Gold Corp is proposing the Eagle Gold Mine Project involving the design, construction, operation, closure, and reclamation of a gold mine in central Yukon. The proposed Project is located in central Yukon 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 has finalized the Screening Report and Recommendation based on comments submitted on the Draft Screening Report and additional information provided by the Proponent. The Screening Report and Recommendation was submitted to the Decision Bodies on February 19, 2013.

North American Tungsten (NATC) – Proposed Mactung Mine Project

North American Tungsten Corporation Ltd. (NATC) is proposing the construction, operation, decommissioning and closure of an underground tungsten mine in east-central Yukon. The proposed Project is located approximately eight kilometres northwest of Macmillan Pass (on the North Canol Road approximately 250 km from Ross River) in the Mt. Allan area.

UPDATE The Executive Committee released a request for supplementary information to NATC on January 4, 2013 after considering the comments received during the public review period of the Draft Screening Report. NATC must provide a response to the supplementary information request before the Screening Report can be finalized. NATC has announced that they will be removing the proposed new access road from the Project.

Ketza River Holdings (KRH, Yukon-Nevada Gold Corp) – Proposed Ketza River Mine Production

Ketza River Holdings (KRH) is the Proponent of the proposed Ketza River Mine, which was submitted to the Executive Committee in September 2011. KRH proposes to mine approximately 49.5 million tonnes of material over a period of about 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 On February 18, 2013 the Executive Committee received the second part of the KRH response to our Adequacy Review Report issued February 29, 2012. As a result the Executive Committee have begun the adequacy review of the additional proposal information. Under the Screening Rules, the Executive Committee has up to 30 days plus up to an additional 30 days to complete the review of this new information.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Environment Commissioner Scott Vaughan released his final report as auditor of Canadian environmental regulations. The report was tabled in the House of Commons in February 5, 2013. The report can be found here:

The Executive Committee conducts screenings on larger and often complex projects. Project proposals can be submitted to the Executive Committee directly or proposals can be referred to the Executive Committee by a Designated Office. To date, four screenings have been completed. Details about the timelines are below, highlighting the amount of days used to gather public comment on the proposal and the number of days used to obtain project information from the proponent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of days from Proposal Adequate to Recommendation Sent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARMACKS COPPER PROJECT (2006-0050) – 521 days total.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Including 119 days of public comment (two periods) and 208 days waiting for Proponent information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAYO B PROJECT (2009-0040) – 278 days total.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Including 74 days of public comment (two periods) and 42 days waiting for Proponent information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARMACKS-STEWART/MINTO SPUR TRANSMISSION LINE (2006-0286) – 275 days total.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Including 83 days of public comment (two periods) and 40 days waiting for Proponent information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAGLE GOLD PROJECT (2010-0267) - 585 days total as of February 18, 2013.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Including 71 days of public comment (two periods) and 206 days waiting for Proponent information.</td>
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