

# TRIP REPORT

## *Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board*

**Subject:** EA99-004

**Date:** September 21, 1999

**Prepared by:** Louie Azzolini

**RE:** Trip to Fort Resolution

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Development: BHP Mine Extension  
Departure Date: September 17, 1999, Heidi Klein and Louie Azzolini  
Return Date: September 17, 1999  
Mode of Travel: First Air to Hay River then drove to Fort Resolution  
Reason: Meet with the Fort Resolution Land and Environment Committee  
Public Notification: No notification provided  
Meetings: No meetings attended  
Cost: Approximately \$900

Heidi Klein and Louie Azzolini contacted Maurice Boucher, Environmental Coordinator for the Fort Resolution Environment Working Committee (FREWC). The Committee is composed of the following members.

### Maurice Boucher Environmental Coordinator

<u>Name</u>	<u>Represent</u>
Don Balsille	Deninu Ku'e First Nation (DKFN)
Philip Beaulieu	Metis
Violet Mandeville	Metis
Ronald Mckay	Metis
Fred Mandeville	Resources Wildlife and Economic Development, GNWT
Lloyd Norn	Wood Buffalo National Park, Park User Group and the Deninoo Community Council (DCC)
Patrick Simon	DKFN and DCC
Dwight Norn	DKFN
Elizabeth Stirret	Deninu Community Health and Social Services Board
Ronald Beaulieu	Member at large

The meeting began at about 10:30 with general introductions. Maurice introduced Louie and Heidi and members of the FREWC and provided an overview of the FREWC and its objectives, activities and areas of interest.

From.....

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Louie and Heidi provided an overview of the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* (Act) and work of the Review Board and its staff. They also provided an overview of the three levels of environmental impact assessment in the Act (preliminary screening, environmental assessment and environmental impact review).

There was general discussion regarding past and present developments (i.e., Pine Point, BHP, Taltson Hydroelectric Dam) and their historical and current importance to environmental impacts on the land and the people. There was also a discussion of how the Act could be used by local governments and First Nations to address environmental objectives related to community solid and hazardous waste management and sustainability.

The FREWC provided a summary of their views regarding the proposed three pipe BHP extension. The following is a summary of the comments recorded.

Hydrocarbons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the air and ground-level ozone impacts caused by fuel consumption.</li> <li>• Global warming and consideration of alternative forms of energy production such as wind power, hydroelectric power and other alternatives to diesel generated electrical power.</li> </ul>
Caribou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality and the quantity of the caribou that migrate through the area and direct and indirect impacts of more mines, on migration patterns.</li> <li>• Caribou migration in relation to vegetation and quality of food sources respecting impacts on the food sources and the vegetation from all possible sources.</li> <li>• The FREWC indicated they had data that could be shared and that they would be willing to provide.</li> </ul>
Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about the use of all weather roads and their impacts.</li> </ul>
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality changes and possible impacts on caribou and the impact on the Exeter water shed.</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impacts to human health (i.e., increase in incidences of diseases) resulting from changed or changing nutritional patterns.</li> <li>• Lifestyle and nutrition and the importance of being aware of how nutrition can impact health and well being</li> </ul>

Contaminants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional information needed on contaminants. Need baseline data with good spatial and temporal boundaries.</li> <li>• Contaminants from mine waste by-products.</li> </ul>
Risk and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seems there is little benefit to communities from the development while communities and their residents take on the environmental and social and cultural risks that go with mining. The Mitigation associated with a development need to consider worse case scenarios.</li> <li>• If there are increased risks to sustainability from additional mining or new mines, there should be increased benefits for those affected.</li> </ul>
Type of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment and employment benefits should accrue to northerners in advance of those benefits being retained by southern locations/residents.</li> <li>• Importance of considering employment beyond labour jobs and considering professional and administrative opportunities.</li> <li>• Employment benefits should include having workers (employees) contributing effectively to their communities and helping to build stronger communities.</li> </ul>
Environmental Assessment Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be concerned if the Review Board were held "ransom" because of the existing BHP investments in the mine. Would not like to see the Review Board adjust its decision making to accommodate existing investors. Do not want to see a repeat of the Giant mine scenario.</li> </ul>
Mine Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incremental improvements in equipment, policies and procedures need to be made and reported by the company. Need certainties that the mine will provide long term benefits and that the impacts associated with closure and after the closure are thought through very carefully.</li> <li>• Should not extract more resources then needed because although that increases financial returns it can have negative human consequences.</li> <li>• BHP should be held responsible for returning the site to the environment in good condition.</li> </ul>

Economy and the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FREWC conveyed that the environment be given priority over jobs, and that short term employment gains at the expense of unacceptable environmental impacts to future generations was not acceptable.</li> <li>• A post closure time span should be given serious consideration and cover a longer time span - at least seven generations. What is left behind after the mine closes is important to all of us - but especially for future generations.</li> <li>• Native people consider the longer term implications of change and development and those views do not always fit with company views as they value profits above all else - respecting that without profit there is no business.</li> </ul>
Layoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need information on how layoffs would be addressed by BHP including information on the selection process for layoffs and the criteria to be used. Often layoff processes do not take into account the relative need of families and employees and that is a consideration that should be factored in besides seniority.</li> </ul>
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline data is a requirement and need to start considering and looking at variables and indicators of environmental change on a larger scale a cumulative scale.</li> <li>• Should publicize what information will be used in the environmental assessment and if the information to be used is new or old data.</li> <li>• The public should know if they are undertaking new studies and what studies are underway or completed.</li> <li>• Heritage and archeological baseline data especially</li> </ul>
Geology/minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dangerous minerals or dangerous substances that could also be mined or extracted by BHP.</li> </ul>
Meteorology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts on air and wildlife such as snow cover, amounts of precipitation and temperature.</li> <li>• Cold climate effects on pollutants.</li> </ul>

At the conclusion of the meeting the FREWC indicated it wanted to be involved in the environmental assessment of the BHP mine extension and that the work plan was helpful its scheduling of resources and timing for when they may want to become more actively involved.

Heidi and Louie indicated that regular fax out updates were planned and that regular newspaper advertisements were planned as the environmental assessment progressed. They also indicated that the FREWC could be directly involved by calling the Review Board at any time. The FREWC indicated that they would likely attend technical sessions and/ or technical committees as the environmental assessment progressed.