

March 27, 2007

Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board  
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Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a descendant of Chief Drygeese who made Treaty for our people of 1900, and have lived in Dettah all my life. When you come to a certain age in your life, you take a good look at yourself and say to yourself what is important to you and how do you want to live the rest of your precious life. Obviously family and the land is very important, compare to work and financial gain.

Our elders have taught us over the years since we were children to look after the land and respect it, because it is your pillow and your blanket your very survival tool. When I first saw the advertisement for this public hearing, I was not surprised of this development, I was wondering when they will get to this area, because they have staked the land all over the place, but I was hoping and praying that they will not touch that area. A part of me automatically felt like I lost something so dear to me, that was my immediate thought.

This area we are talking about Zigzag Lake or (*Campbell Lake*) is an area my great-grandfathers trapped and harvested for many years, not only my family but many others and they still use this area like I do with my family. I cannot tell you I am a trapper and hunter, because women in our culture have their place. But I have trappers and hunters in my family to take care of that job and I have my part which is a teacher to teach what I have been taught by my grandmothers and mother. I am very proud to pass this skill on to my children, grandchildren and great-grand children if the creator allows me to live that long.

I feel like I am being closed in and pushed out of my traditional lands, just the thought of someone out on the land digging into the land that you respect and take care of makes me angry. What will our great-grand children have to enjoy or live on if developers keep tearing up this land that we survived on for many years. As dene people of this area we have a Treaty right to use this land and I have three daughters and a son who also have a treaty right to harvest the land. What will they have once they start developing the land?

We built a cabin on Campbell Lake in 1988 with a very good friend of ours who is no longer with us today, we all had the same idea about taking our children back on the land and teaching them the skills our ancestors taught us and to continue a lifestyle that is

slowly dying away. This lake and cabin means a lot to our family and we use it every chance we get approximate 15-20 times a year from November to April by skidoo and by plane during the summer. We are always the first one to make trail into the lakes and the last one to close the trail. There will definitely be a big impact on our lives and livelihood, if development starts. There is one spot over the long portage just before Zigzag Lake I call that area heaven because it's so beautiful with tall trees and sandy area and grass, it's as if the area is being maintained by someone, but in fact it's nature that is renewing it self and taking care of it self. We use this area not only for hunting, trapping and harvesting but, its also historic and sacred sites around in that area.

The last time developers staked that area, we offered to rent our cabin to them, but they no and the next thing we knew, they moved right in our cabin without our permission and left a mess, such as half gallon of oil on the beach across the lake. We also cleaned up after others who use the area like garbage on the land and literally shit on the ice.

The area they staked states it is Zigzag Lake, but in fact the map shows the portage leading into Campbell Lake, which is it Zigzag Lake or Campbell Lake? Are they trying to deceive us to say it's Zigzag Lake? Who are the original stakers? And who gave them permission to work on this land? We absolutely disagree with any further development, because, Campbell Lake is our drinking water and a little creek flows from Lauder Lake into Campbell Lake, sometimes this creek overflows and it's hard to get into the lake.

If DIAND was doing their job to deter people from building cabins on the land, such as squatters, they would not be leaving messes, disturbing traps and polluting ice water. I also hear they will be building an ice road, is this true? How come DIAND is allowing these permits to get by without proper consultation with community members?

Have any of you been out there? Do you know how beautiful the land is and maybe you would have noticed people do live out there. Or do you (*developer*) think no one goes out on the land anymore?

When you (*developers*) retire, I am sure you will select sunny British Columbia, but for my family and I, we will go back to the land. I call it semi-tirement because as an interpreter by trade, I always say "as long as I have my voice" I will be interpreting, so I call this area my semi-retirement place. Right now I have a million dollar view that cannot be replaced if damaged or contaminated, and I also don't want to see a billion dollar view of the mine from my cabin. Masi-cho.

Mary Rose Sundberg