

**Community Scoping Workshop for the
Gahcho Kue Environmental Assessment
Lutsel K'e – April 19th, 2006**

What We Heard

Presentation to the MVEIRB

April 28th, 2006

ATTENDANCE

- 43 community members attended at various times throughout the afternoon and evening, plus 5 LKDFN staff (non-Band members)
- All age groups represented, from early 20's to early 80's

CARIBOU

- Healthy caribou means the survival of Dene people and culture
- Already seen changes in migration patterns and health since other mines opened
 - Don't come as close to Lutsel K'e anymore because they're avoiding disturbances (loud noises, road & air traffic, etc.)
 - More skinny & unhealthy now, some meat is inedible; have seen pus, sores, leg injuries, etc. never seen before mining started



CARIBOU

- Caribou are getting sick because they're eating contaminated lichens & tailings, drinking contaminated water (e.g. runoff from waste rock piles), and being disturbed so they have less time to feed & rest
- Food chain effects: lichens to caribou to people
- Main migration route through Gahcho Kue, lots of caribou in area



CARIBOU QUOTES

- *“You people don’t live on caribou and don’t care what happens to them. You just see them and that’s it. We care here. It’s very bad for us when the caribou are not healthy like they used to be...”*
- *“We know the damages done from the other mines already. The caribou are not coming around, and they’re very sick and unhealthy. Scientists are saying it’s because of the bugs, but it was never like that in the past. We know the caribou and we know why they’re sick.”*

WATER

- Kennady Lake is a headwater lake in Lower Lockhart River watershed, which flows into Great Slave Lake
- Potential contaminants and pollution of pristine watershed (e.g. nitrates from explosives, runoff from waste rock piles, etc.)
- Dams, dikes, and water diversions: what will be the impacts on the downstream flow?



WATER

- Ts'ankui Theda: Our Lady of the Falls on the Lockhart River is the most sacred site for the Dene people of Lutsel K'e
- *“My main concern is contaminants in the water. How will my grandchildren survive in the future?”*
- *“My most imminent concern is the water and the Lockhart River drainage. The Lady of the Falls is our spiritual site... That's our tradition, our knowledge, our roots... we pray there, she's our protector.”*



FISH

- Any impacts to water quality will affect fish and the food they eat
- Impacts of dams, dikes, and water diversions on migration and spawning locations
- Impacts from contaminants (e.g. nitrates, ammonia, dust, etc.)
- Fish is one of major food sources in community
- *“Are we willing to sacrifice fresh water so we can have a bit of money in the community? One of our biggest consumptions is fish.”*



SOCIO-ECONOMIC & CULTURAL

- Caribou as food source – economic impacts
- Employment opportunities – very few Lutsel K'e people working at other mines, & all labour positions
- Business & training opportunities not fulfilled
- Increasing social problems – rise in family breakups, drug & alcohol abuse



SOCIO-EC/CULTURAL QUOTES

- *“You say good things and make promises but never do it. Money is key for you, but it’s the other way around for us.”*
- *“You’re seeking our support, but what’s the benefits for us? Other companies promised jobs, training, businesses – this many years after Ekati was established, what are the benefits?”*
- *“Lots of drugs and bootlegging, because people have money to spend and the fines are just pocket money. There’s lots of negative things happening.”*
- *“If caribou health is impacted by the ingestion of chemicals at the mine site or their migration routes change, it impacts the health of Lutsel K’e people...more store-bought foods leads to more diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.”*

THAYDENE NENE NATIONAL PARK

- Potential impacts to watershed and pristine environment we're trying to protect
- Tourism potential: lose value of area if pristineness is lost
- Final park boundary still to be negotiated, but plans to include all of Lockhart River watershed
- *“The land is clear and clean, and we'd like to keep it that way, for everybody's children.”*
- *“There's thousands of dollars in tourism, but we can't do it if we lose the pristineness of the water. That is the biggest attraction for the East Arm and Great Slave Lake.”*
- *“People come here to get away from the big city. What will they think if they hear choppers going overhead? You lose the value.”*

RECLAMATION & CLOSURE

- Negative legacy of mining industry in NWT
- Our home and “backyard” won’t be the same
- Little confidence that reclamation plans will be satisfactory to the community
- Need to ensure proper closure plans are in place prior to issuance of licenses/permits, and that community is properly consulted on those plans



CLOSURE QUOTES

- *“We are working backwards. We need concrete designs for monitoring and closure before the project proceeds, not after.”*
- *“We don’t want someone to come into our house, make a big mess, and then just leave.”*
- *“The caribou and the land they live on – you can’t just cover up all your tracks and leave stuff underground that shouldn’t be there.”*
- *“We’re the ones who will live here all our lives, after the mine is closed and you guys are gone.”*

PROCESS & CONSULTATION

- Meaningful consultation is required through whole process, from planning to post-closure monitoring
- LKDFN are rightful owners of land in traditional territory, therefore must give their consent if project is to go ahead
- Akaitcho Agreement not finalized, unsure about future land use plans
- Concerns that elders don't understand EA process
- Akaitcho doesn't recognize authority of MVEIRB to make decisions, and have no representative
- Intervener funding issues

PROCESS/CONSULTATION QUOTES

- *“This project could compromise existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights and titles, as well as future rights and titles.”*
- *“There is no land use plan in this area, no agreed upon regulatory regime, no conservation regime – it is very hard for De Beers to move ahead and ensure their plans are in line with the dreams and aspirations of Lutsel K’e people a generation from now.”*
- *“This is our traditional territory, our land, and it belongs to no one else.”*
- *“Lutsel K’e doesn’t acknowledge the MVRMA and has no representative on the MVEIRB. People making decisions on our lands is not taken lightly.”*
- *“We as landowners should be the ones who give consent and make the final decision, not just be lumped in with all the other stakeholders. These fundamental rights issues make it very difficult to participate in this process.”*

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- Unclear how De Beers and MVEIRB will address this
- Lots of research still needed (e.g. permafrost)
- Not predicting impacts anymore, already have 3 mines and can see the impacts



OTHER CONCERNS

- Fossil fuel emissions, greenhouse gases, global warming: what are effects on air? wildlife?
- Alternative energy sources (e.g. hydro) should be considered
- Winter road monitoring, including spur road to Gahcho Kue
- Impacts on migratory birds, waterfowl, moose, muskox, bears, wolverines, small mammals, etc.



GENERAL COMMENTS

- Lots of traditional and current land use in area

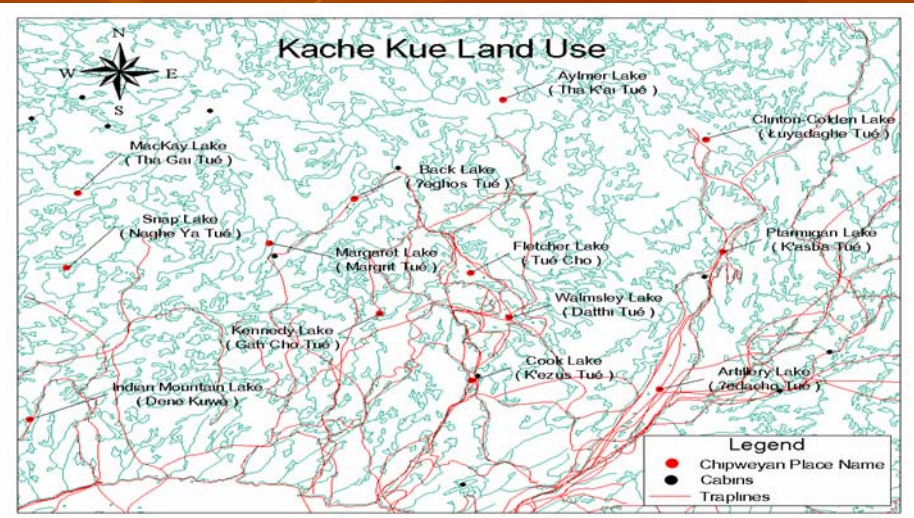
- Gahcho Kue “in our backyard”

“My heart is really heavy now...I’ve worked in that area for many years. I’ve walked on that land, cried there, and prayed there. The future is bright for you, but not for me.”

“The other mines were at the boundary line, but this one is within the fence.”

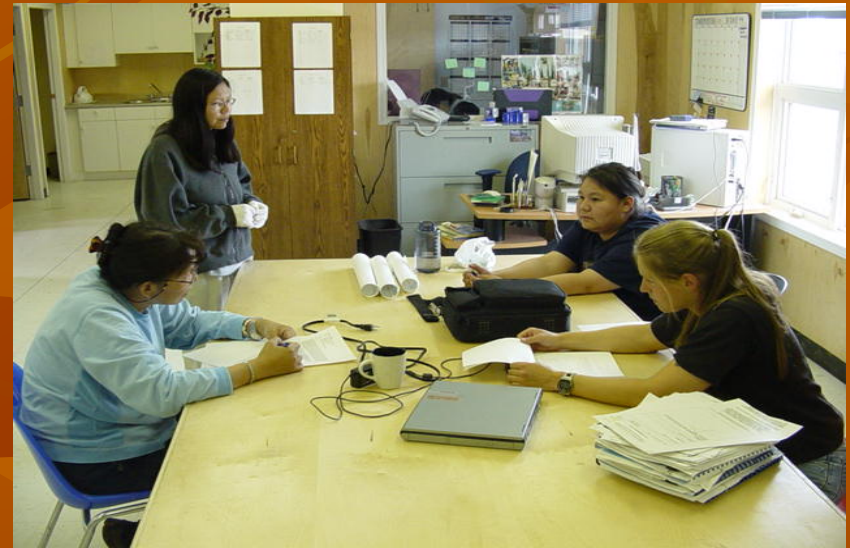
“You’re losing the richness of that area, losing what makes us people of Lutsel K’e.”

“I’ve travelled on that land, went hunting lots. It’s the back of my house, where the mine is going to be built. I know the names of those lakes in Chipewyan. I don’t go out there anymore, but my children still do.”



GENERAL COMMENTS

- Adequacy of baseline data, and is it already affected by other activities?
- Capacity issues (human and financial) to deal with all these land use pressures
- Our land is our home, and we don't believe you will keep your promises...
- *"My land is my home. I eat, live, and sleep on it."*
- *"It sounds nice and clean, but I don't believe it will be."*



"I'm having difficulty with this. The caribou are our food source, and the Lockhart River is a sacred site. We've been using that area for a long time."

CONCLUSION

“If it’s good for you and good for us, then we’ll say OK. If it’s only good for you, why should we agree to it?”

- Over the coming year, the Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation will decide whether they will give their consent to the De Beers Gahcho Kue project.
- LKDFN is the closest impacted community to the proposed Gahcho Kue project. We have major concerns, and need to be meaningfully consulted and meaningfully involved in this process. For this to happen, we require substantial intervener funding.
- LKDFN hereby directs the MVEIRB to call for an Environmental Impact Review.

MARSI CHO!



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Wildlife, Lands and Environment