

## **How is Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation involved in the Historic Keno Hill Property.**

The First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun (FNNND) has used this area for millennia way before mining started in the Keno Hill area. FNNND share a unique relationship with the land based on their history and rich experience.

Keno Hill Mine Property is one of the seven Type II mines sites which were identified at the time of devolution with the potential for unfunded environmental liabilities at the time of closure. This mine site is located on Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation's traditional Territory.

The need for clean-up and reclamation at the Keno Hill property has been recognized by the Federal and Yukon Governments along with the need for participation of FNNND in planning and carrying out the clean-up and reclamation. Canada and Yukon agreed to work with Elsa Reclamation and Development Corporation (ERDC) to get the clean-up done.

A closure plan for the Keno Hill mine property near Elsa is being prepared by ERDC and FNNND. The expectations of FNNND will be heard and addressed. Some important considerations for the closure plan are the expectations, hopes, views and interests of FNNND government and citizens regarding clean-up, which will be addressed by the mine closure project and be communicated to the Federal and Yukon governments and ERDC.

For example, some of these expectations include protection of land and water. Because decisions made today will affect our children's future, necessary steps are being taken to ensure proper consultation is in place for the successful reclamation and closure of the Keno Hill Mine site.

The first step towards the involvement of FNNND in Closure planning at Keno Hill Property was a meeting between the citizens on April 3, 2008 to discuss their expectations and hopes for the clean-up and reclamation of the Keno Hill mine property.

The discussions during the workshop were focused by identifying several key areas for consideration. These included environmental protection; environmental clean-up; human health; human safety; existing, past and future land uses in the area; access to the area; benefits for NNDFN people; and, long-term site activities. For each of these main considerations, people identified important values in the area and discussed their concerns, hopes and expectations for the mine clean-up

Our second step towards the involvement of NNDFN in Closure Planning was a student tour.

On Monday April 21, 2008, we coordinated a tour of Keno Hill Property with our local grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 students from J V Clark School. We had 14 students joining us for that tour along with teachers Mike McGinnis and Blake Rogers.

We met with the Alexco folks at the Elsa administration building. We had a safety orientation session with Jennifer who is Alexco's safety officer.

We had an overview of the property programs as for care-and-maintenance and closure working process. Then, we went through a geology basis talk at the core shack with Melanie Robert and Al Mconie who are Alexco's Senior Head Geologists. It was mainly a review of the basics of exploration and view of the Keno rocks. We went for a site visit to Galkeno 300 treatment site with Sam Wallingham. We had a basic orientation about the water treatment plant of Galkeno. We looked at the sludge holding ponds and had a talk about water quality monitoring and care-and-maintenance operations.

At the end of the day, we had a talk with Sam and the students about the possibility of future training, employment and career choices. It was a great opportunity to get the students involved about the Keno Hill Property.

Big thanks to Bruce and Linda MacGregor for letting us borrow 14 students, two teachers and one car for that tour.

Thanks to Steven Buyck and Mike McGinnis for driving the students that day. Thanks to ERDC and Alexco.

Our third step was a meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup> to provide FNNND citizens and the community with the results of the new studies done as part of the closure planning activities at the Keno Hill property.

The June meeting was a follow up from the April meeting regarding the identifications of community objectives and community input regarding clean-up and reclamation of the Keno Hill property.

Your voice was greatly appreciated at the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting at the curling lounge which was followed by a community dinner. During this meeting, we shared the outcomes of the discussions from April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

It is indeed very important in the creation of this plan to know what does FNNND and the community want from the clean-up and reclamation.

On June 19, we followed up with FNNND at the Elders complex to speak about the current and future studies that need to be done on the site. We spoke about the objectives set out from the previous meeting and concluded that we are going to test some of the important traditional/medicinal plants to find out if or how they have been impacted by past mining activities. As well, we addressed some important issues regarding heritage and history. With July coming up, we are going to take one NND student along with us to do some water sampling and monitoring at the Water Quality Stations around the site. Plants will be collected near Mayo and around the Keno Hill Property and will be sent to the lab for contaminant testing and comparative analysis. As well we are looking forward to a site tour with the Elders to elaborate and evaluate important issues and find guidance in order to make the right choices for the future of the FNNND people and their Land.

Stay tuned for more information and more articles.

Thank you/ Mahsi Cho!

If you have any questions about the closure and reclamation plan at Keno Hill Property or if you have any knowledge you wish to share with us, please feel free to contact Josée Lemieux-Tremblay, Mining Liaison Coordinator for Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation, who can direct you to the appropriate program person.

Submitted by Josée Lemieux-Tremblay, Josée can be reached at 996-2415, or [miningliaison@nndfn.com](mailto:miningliaison@nndfn.com)



**Blake Rogers and the Mayo students observing the Galkeno 300 treatment plant and sludge holding pond which falls under the care and maintenance program of Keno Hill Property.**



**Mayo students getting an update from Sam Wallingham about the care and maintenance program at the Keno Hill property.**