

Grant, Drew

From: Patrick-Riley, Kent [DEC/ANCHORAGE/KRILEY]
Sent: Friday, September 04, 1998 12:21 PM
To: Grant, Drew
Cc: Potter, Beth
Subject: FW: Revised paragraphs re RED DEVIL MINE attached

Updated info on Red Devil -- eileen made revisiosn to the email I sent 2 months ago, since then Eileen has received mo info which she incorporated.

Kent

-----Original Message-----

From: Olson, Eileen
Sent: Friday, September 04, 1998 12:15 PM
To: Patrick-Riley, Kent
Cc: Olson, Eileen; Klein, Ron
Subject: Revised paragraphs re RED DEVIL MINE attached

Background:

This information is from a July 2, 1998 Bristol Bay times article, which Eileen Olson, CS, gave to me last week:

The Red Devil mine was one of the largest mercury mines in the country. It operated for more than from 1933- 1971. It yielded 35,000 flasks of mercury (mercury flask weighs 75 pounds), and had more than 51,000 cubic yards of mercury contaminated soil. In contrast, Red Top mine (which I sent you information on) yielded 22 flasks of mercury and had 10 yards of mercury contaminated soil. In 1988-89, BLM (landowner) had a Seatte firm score the site for possible Superfu site listing; it scored 14.95, less than the 25 minimum needed for listing. According to the article, the BLM site manager Mac Wheeler, was surprised it was not listed; as EPA's testing in the early 1970s revealed mercury levels in settling pon to be 12,000 parts per billion, federal WQ standards are 2 parts/billion. The 1988-89 BLM study showed that in times of high water Red Devil Creek eroded toxic tailings into the Kuskokwim River (1/4 mile away), but testing to date has show that the eroded mercury has not dissolved into the water. In 1988, BLM also tested surface waters in the area (the artic was not clear what surface waters were tested (it may have been the settling ponds) and found .2 to 5.5 parts per billion mercury.

BLM also had ongoing water quality testing until the 1990s; and USGS has sampled Red Devil Creek and the Kuskokw River in recent years. **Based on USGS research, mercury at the Red Devil Mine does not present a risk to the Red Dev Creek or Kuskokwim River. This is because the solubility of mercury in either the form of the mercury ore cinnabar or fr mercury is extremely low, as water quality sampling has verified.**

CS has scored the Red Devil Site as 72; anything with a score over 40 is considered a high priority. However, based on the available information, CS does not believe that waters of Red Devil Creek or the Kuskokwim have been adversely impacted by the mine site. CS has recently reviewed a work plan for limited removal of various hazardous substances a the Red Devil Mine site and will request additional characterization of mercury contaminated soils and tailings piles duri summer of 1999.

Waterbody Name	Pollutants	Submitter	Submitter's Comments	Response to Comments	Action
Red Devil Creek			<p>mission there in 1997. It was designated a National Priorities List site in 1994. The Proposed Plan for Cleanup Action at CERCLA Sites on Adak Island states: Much of the downtown area drains into Sweeper Creek and Sweeper Cove. Ecological chemicals of potential concern in sediment include semivolatiles and are distributed throughout the 450 acres of the cove. PCBs and semivolatiles organics are the ecological chemicals of potential concern in Sweeper Creek sediments. Human health chemicals of potential concern in fish and shellfish in Sweeper Cove and Creek include arsenic and PCBs." After evaluating potential risks to environmental and human health, the proposed plan requires institutional controls prohibiting subsistence and commercial fishing in Sweeper Cove and Creek. The contamination has created unsafe conditions for harvest of fish and shellfish after conversion of the base to civilian use.</p> <p>A U.S. Geological Survey report indicates that sites downstream from the Red Devil mercury mine had total mercury concentrations that exceeded the value at which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicates that aquatic life is affected. Dissolved arsenic exceeded the USEPA's drinking water standard. Mercury and antimony concentrations exceeded background levels at sites near the mine. Date source: Bronwen Wang, 1999, Spatial Distribution of Chemical Constituents in the Kuskokwim River, Alaska: U.S. Geological Survey Water-Resources Investigations Report 99-4177, 33 pp.</p>	<p>exceedances of Alaska's water quality standards. As a consequence an open file has been created for both of these waters are they were identified as priority for monitoring. There are also corrective actions by the U.S. Navy in place to try to correct problems.</p>	<p>Coordinate with ADEC Contaminated Site program</p>
				<p>Red Devil Creek was listed as impaired, and not in the 1992 305(b) report or subsequent reports. The water has never been 303(d) listed but was identified a monitoring priority by EPA in the '92 303(d) process.</p> <p>There are reports in the files that the waters in this area run naturally high in arsenic and mercury. Though the files are not explicit, it appears that this water was not listed as impaired because of the on-going CERCLA/hazardous waste</p>	<p>There is an "open" file on this water.</p> <p>The water has been entered into the ADB as "fully supporting" uses.</p> <p>ADEC was not aware of this recent USGS study and will conduct follow-up on the water.</p>

4/6/00

Waterbody Name	Pollutants	Submitter	Submitter's Comments	Response to Comments	Action
Crooked Creek			<p>the U.S. Geological Survey measured mercury levels exceeding background concentrations in June 1997.</p> <p>On the Kuskokwim River upstream from McGrath, uses may be impaired by elevated levels of mercury according to the U.S.G.S. report referenced above. The ADEC contaminated sites database lists a mine located 8 miles north of Medfra that has "possible leachate contamination from tailings mercury and cyanide."</p>	<p>clean-up efforts on the water at the time.</p> <p>Crooked Creek is currently Section 303(d) listed (1998) as an impaired waterbody</p>	
Ester Dome groundwater aquifer			<p>On October 3, 1999 the operators of the Yellow Eagle placer gold mine located approximately 10 miles southwest of Fairbanks penetrated the aquifer as they were drilling. Simultaneously wells in nearby households went dry, wells that had never failed before. Witnesses report seeing the exploration pit at the Yellow Eagle mine rapidly filling with water fed by a gusher of water three feet high. Eight years of hydrological information from the nearby Ryan Lode mine property has documented the groundwater activity in the area. This information, which is part of the ongoing environmental monitoring program, shows a steady decline in the water table since 1996, the year the Yellow Eagle mine came on line.</p> <p>Many households are still without water. Several more households report poor water quality (black color, odor, and metallic tastes) in their drinking water since the October event. These households are buying bottled water at their own expense to replace their dry wells, and decrease their exposure to whatever chemicals may be in the pit water</p>	<p>ADEC is aware of significant ground water concerns in this area.</p>	<p>No "open" file exists on this ground water</p> <p>Not currently entered into the ADB</p>

The Village Motel

marshall Village Motel

2/6/92
Paper

"You're paying to stay there," Barker said. "It's going to take a lot of work to get them up to standard," said Chief Barker. Barker said he and the fire marshal inspected local schools and several businesses last week. The Kuskokwim Inn and the waterfront restaurant were cited for various fire safety violations, but were not closed. "The fire marshal does not want to close people down but when he finds something serious, it's time to act," Barker said.

Several local citizens have wanted the Village Motel closed because of the high amount of inebriates in and around the business. The motel is directly across the street from the Kilbuck Elementary School, and children there have often witnessed drunks staggering onto the playground, cursing, fighting and urinating in front of them.

Bethel police have met with the owners of the motel and suggested they refuse service to intoxicated people, and install "no loitering signs" and lights outside their business to keep drunks away.

visits Bethel voters

Goodnews Bay...the value of the platinum prospect is more important than the subsistence values or use." Oscar said according to testimony by subsistence and commercial fishermen, the area in question "is an important staging area and migration route for all fish species before they migrate to Kuskokwim and coastal waters." Smith said in representing Oscar and Karen Sheardown, owners of Goodnews Resources, he persuaded them to delete certain environmentally sensitive tracts from their application when they could have gone ahead with their prospecting. Smith said when the parties reached an impasse on the issue, he withdrew from the proceedings. Smith says the matter is now before the courts, but when all is said and done, his involvement will be seen as a "major effort to accommodate subsistence values" with

up under current federal proposals would have to be used for projects benefitting Alaska, such as rural water and sewer systems and a buy back of Bristol Bay oil leases, Smith said.

Smith says he is not a professional politician and hopes the country's "anti-incumbent" mood will help him win Senator Frank Murkowski's seat in the Senate. As a Democrat, Smith says he will be in the majority, and that will count more than Murkowski's seniority. "I don't think seniority in Murkowski's hands has done us much good."

But before he can run against Murkowski, Smith has to secure the Democratic nomination. He will be up against a popular opponent in the August primary—Willie Hensley, a NANA Regional Corporation executive who ran for lieutenant governor in 1990.

But by announcing early (nearly a year ago) and vig-

tion for loss of its portion of the association's assets after being expelled as a co-op member in March 1990.

ANICA attorney Leroy Barker told Superior Court Judge Karen Hunt the village corporation was ousted for breaking association bylaws when it purchased goods through a competing company.

But members of the village corporation say they were wrongfully expelled for questioning the

"thousands of dollars." ANICA filed a counterclaim against the village corporation for \$125,000 in unpaid bills.

The cooperative, now with 26 village corporation members, was organized in the 1940s by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to aid in the purchase of goods and services.

Askinuk, which had been a member of the co-op for 10 years, is the first active member removed from ANICA.

FILE COPY

Red Devil Creek plagued with contaminates

by Marc Cowart

Red Devil Creek, a tributary of the Kuskokwim River, has been named as one of Alaska's most polluted waterways by state environmental officials.

The creek, located approximately 160 miles northeast of Bethel, was placed on a list of Alaskan waterbodies with persistent water quality problems because of mercury and arsenic contamination, according to Dave Sturdevant, State Water Quality Standards Coordinator for the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The creek runs near the site of the Red Devil mercury mine which operated from the mid-1930s until 1971. According to DEC the creek contamination "could be attributed to discharges from the mine."

Waterways on the DEC list are "candidates" for water quality assessment to determine whether they may require the establishment of "Total Maximum Daily Load" controls, Sturdevant said.

Placing Red Devil Creek on the DEC list now, "makes it a focus" for further investigation. The current list is the "first cut" to determine which sites will receive further attention and the list will be revised after more data is evaluated Sturdevant said.

However, the Red Devil mine may not be quite the culprit it appears. While

sampling from the creek in 1971, when the mine was still in operation, showed large amounts of mercury and arsenic pollutants, samples taken in 1979 show the creek was actually less polluted below the mine than above it, according to DEC reports.

Mercury and arsenic contamination of the creek may be mostly of natural origin now, but the source of pollutants will have to be confirmed by more testing, Sturdevant said.

It is not surprising that there would be naturally occurring mercury and arsenic in Red Devil creek. The waterway cuts through the same ore body which outcrops at the Red Devil mine, according to Alaska Division of Mines geologist, Tom Bunsen.

The region around the Red Devil mine is "quite a mercury belt, there's mercury all over," Bunsen said. The Red Devil mine itself was "one of the largest mercury mines in the country."

The mine site is currently under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. However, the Kuskokwim and Calista corporations have selected the site as part of their land entitlements under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, according to Bruce Hickok, Subsurface Land Manager for Calista.

Neither corporation will take title to the land until all questions of creek pollution have been cleared up, Hickok said.

STATE OF ALASKA

WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

F A X T R A N S M I T T A L S H E E T

ADEC
Bethel Field Office
Telephone #543-3215

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LOCATION: Juneau Water Quality Section

SENT TO:

FAX #: 465-5274

ATTENTION:

Earl Hubbert
Water Quality

FROM:

Bethel Field Office 3/5/92

REMARKS:

This is the only file info at BFO.

Number of Pages Including Transmittal Sheet:

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