



Information Request 40

Information Request 40

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IR 40 – Access to Fish Lake

References:

EIS Guidelines, Section 2.7.5
EIS, Section 2.7.5

Related Comments:

CEAR # 290 (Tsilhqot'in National Government)

Rationale:

In Section 2.7.5 (p. 60), the EIS Guidelines require the Proponent to identify “any effects of alterations to access into the area on Aboriginal groups”.

In the EIS (Section 2.7.5, p. 1278), the Proponent states that “access to Fish Lake will be provided during construction and operations, enabling opportunities for trapping in the immediate area of Fish Lake and the adjacent meadows during all phases of mining”.

In Section 2.7.5 (p. 1291) of the EIS, the Proponent also mentions that “with access to Fish Lake preserved through all phases of mining, opportunities for gathering, teaching can be maintained; while the experience may be altered from the traditional gatherings previously conducted on site, there may be other opportunities provided for teaching and engaging youth in with regards to environmental management and monitoring”.

The Tsilhqot'in National Government (p.48) noted that “the EIS provides only vague and incomplete information of the ‘access’ that the Proponent envisions for Aboriginal groups. For example, the EIS states there would be access for fishing and for ‘small mammal trapping’ but makes no mention of hunting in or around the Project area.” The EIS (Section 2.7, p.1291) also states that “use of the area for recreation, teachings and gatherings will be modified with New Prosperity in light of adjacent mine operation activities and local effects on noise and aesthetic values.”

The Panel believes that additional information on access will be necessary to assess the environmental effects of the Project on Aboriginal people.

Information Requested:

With regards to traditional gatherings previously conducted on site, the Panel requests that Taseko:

- a. Provide a description and an assessment of the degree to which Aboriginal use of lands around Fish Lake and related experiences while doing so may be altered during all phases of the Project.

In order to understand how Taseko plans to provide access to Aboriginal groups and the public, the Panel requests that Taseko:

- b. Describe where and how access would be provided to the public and Aboriginals during each phase of the Project. Specifically, what access

protocols would need to be followed or taken by users? Would overnight stays be permitted, and what safety risks would be assumed for visitors? Would users utilize a check point? How would users be contacted in the event of an emergency at the mine site? Identify any potential for access limitations, interruptions or closures- at all areas outside of the maximum disturbance area and at all times- for all traditional activities, including hunting, plant harvesting, fishing, and cultural gatherings.

- c. Provide a map that illustrates the proposed access route for all users of Fish Lake.

Information Requests #40a

With regards to traditional gatherings previously conducted on site, the Panel requests that Taseko:

Provide a description and an assessment of the degree to which Aboriginal use of lands around Fish Lake and related experiences while doing so may be altered during all phases of the Project.

Response Summary

Individuals who choose to use the Fish Lake site would experience minor impacts due to changes to aesthetic values of the site; operational noise, primarily during the day; and impacts to camping experiences due to light. Access and hunting restrictions in close proximity of mine infrastructure would persist through construction, operations and closure. However, these impacts are minimal when compared to the larger Aboriginal rights area.

Experiences of those using the site would be enhanced by improvements and maintenance of site infrastructure making the site better suited for gathering purposes. The close proximity of the mine also provides learning opportunities with respect to industry, mining and environment. Improved road access and winter access plowing will provide new opportunities for site use that do not currently exist

Discussion*Aesthetic Values*

The mine site would be visible from Fish Lake and portions of the surrounding area. This would impact aesthetic values and the experience of using the lake. However, the mine would not affect views of mountain ranges to the south and southwest and the view from the relocated recreation site would offer a similar experience in comparison to current conditions.

Acoustic Environment

During the construction phase of the project, construction noise would be limited to daylight hours. During this phase, noise levels are expected to be slightly higher than during operations due to elevated use of equipment and construction activities.

During operations the Fish Lake area will be in proximity to haul roads and mine infrastructure and operational noise would be heard by individuals using the site. However, noise associated with processing activities would be minimized by mitigation measures such as enclosing conveyors and the mill facilities. Haul trucks may pass by infrequently and would be travelling at a slow speed. As the mine would be a 24 hour operation, noise would be present during both day and night; however higher noise levels would be expected during the day due to higher occurrences of equipment use and traffic, as well as blasts.

Hunting activities in the vicinity of the mine site may be impacted by site noise. For example blast noise may temporarily disturb local wildlife and therefore hunting opportunities.

During the closure phase, noise associated with the operation would be restricted primarily to daylight hours and is expected to be less than noise experienced during the operational phase.

During all phases of the operation, the highest noise levels are expected at the northern end of Fish Lake. The newly located recreation area would be located close to the southern end of the lake, farther from the operation. Individuals who choose to recreate near the northern end of the lake would expect to experience higher noise levels than those individuals who choose to use areas on the southern side of the lake. In general, most site users would not be using the area in which the highest noise levels are expected and sound levels would decrease with distance from the mine site.

As industrial noise is foreign to the area, the atmosphere in the area immediately surrounding the mine would be altered for users accustomed to the relative quiet and exclusively natural sounds (wind noise, vegetation rustling, bird calls etc.) that existed at the site prior to development. However, it is not anticipated that operational noise would be excessively loud such that use of the Fish Lake area could not continue.

Noise associated with blasting activities is more unwelcome if the noise and vibration effects (air and ground) arrive suddenly without any expectation. To minimize impacts, advance notice of blast events will be provided to individuals using the Fish Lake Area when they are escorted through the mine site.

Atmospheric Environment

Through the implementation of standard mining practices including revegetation of exposed areas subject to wind erosion; watering of haul roads; covering of conveyors and transfer points leading to the mill; and dust collection systems in the primary and secondary crushers, dust will not limit the use of the Fish Lake area for recreational or traditional use purposes.

Light

Individuals who choose to use the site at night may be able to see lights from the mine site depending on where they choose to locate their camp site. Light from haul roads, the mill complex and office buildings may have an impact on the camping experience and may interfere with views of the night sky. Light impacts would be primarily associated with the operational phase.

Access

To ensure the safety of Fish Lake users, fencing and signage would be erected to restrict access to mine infrastructure. During all phases of the operation, Fish Lake visitors would no longer be

able to come and go from the site freely. In order to access the Fish Lake area users would be required to:

- sign in at the mine gate; and,
- be escorted across the property by mine personnel.

Site users must comply with safety protocols pertaining to access restrictions at the north end of Fish Lake. Safety protocols would be explained by security upon checking in and would be posted at the recreation site. Recreational use of Fish Lake and the immediate surroundings would continue with the exception of at the north end of the lake where access would be limited by fencing due to the close proximity of the pit, blasting and other mine activities. Access to these areas would be restricted during the operational phase to ensure the safety of site users.

Site Use

Upon having crossed the property, normal regulatory restrictions such as the BC hunting regulations, BC fishing limits, and bag limits for hunting and trapping would apply.

To ensure the safety of mine employees, a No Shooting Zone would be established in proximity of the mine site. This area may extend 1,000 m from all mine areas where employees may be working and may also consider heights of land and existing features such as road infrastructure. As the safety of site personnel is of importance during all phases of the Project, the No Shooting Zone would persist throughout all phases of the project. The No Shooting Zone will be delineated using signage and would restrict the use of firearms; however use of bow and arrow may be permitted in these areas.

Trapping by aboriginal peoples will be allowed outside of the mine site area, where public access will be restricted.

As there will be no impact to Fish Lake, fishing and lily pad harvesting activities on the lake would continue undisturbed. In addition, camping opportunities and use of the island in Fish Lake for traditional purposes would be uninterrupted by the Project. Fishing activities along portions of Upper Fish Creek would be impacted due to the construction of the Tailings Storage Facility.

Although the presence of mine infrastructure, No Shooting restrictions, and local noise impacts may limit hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering activities in the immediate vicinity of the mine site, this impact is minimal when compared to the larger rights area. During post closure, access and hunting restrictions would be removed and unrestricted use of the site would be available.

To improve fishing and other recreational experiences at Fish Lake, Taseko proposes to install a boat launch, out houses, picnic tables and a shelter at the relocated recreation site. In addition,

the close proximity to the mine will mean access to medical aid which was not previously available, in the event of an emergency.

Recreational site features would be discussed and planned in consultation with First Nations and the public. Improvements mentioned above in addition to maintenance of site infrastructure would improve the site's suitability for recreational use and gatherings. The close proximity of the mine also provides learning opportunities with respect to industry, mining and environment. Improved access to the site and winter access plowing will provide new opportunities for site use that do not currently exist.

Information Request #40b

In order to understand how Taseko plans to provide access to Aboriginal groups and the public, the Panel requests that Taseko:

Describe where and how access would be provided to the public and Aboriginals during each phase of the Project. Specifically, what access protocols would need to be followed or taken by users? Would overnight stays be permitted, and what safety risks would be assumed for visitors? Would users utilize a check point? How would users be contacted in the event of an emergency at the mine site? Identify any potential for access limitations, interruptions or closures- at all areas outside of the maximum disturbance area and at all times- for all traditional activities, including hunting, plant harvesting, fishing, and cultural gatherings.

Response Summary

Access to/from the Fish Lake site would be controlled by the mine site, with site visitors signing in and being escorted across the mine property. Overnight use at the site would be permitted; however, Taseko takes no responsibility of any risks to personal safety or property of individuals using the site, other than responsibilities for public safety associated with regular blasting activities or mine emergency situations which have the potential to affect the safety of site users.

Discussion*Access Protocols*

Access to the Fish Lake area will be granted to all members of the public, including First Nations, with the exception that access may be restricted on any day by the General Manager or his designate due to safety concerns.

As per the *Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia* requirements for public access to a mine site are as follows:

- 1.3.1 Other than an inspector, only persons authorized by the manager shall enter or be permitted to enter a mine site.
- 1.3.2 Notice to this effect shall be posted at all road entrances to the mine by the manager and, for non-operating mines, the contact information of a qualified person shall be included in the notice.
- 1.3.3 Unless authorized by the manager, no persons shall enter or leave a mine except by a recognized means of entry or exit.

Consequently, during the construction, operations and closure phases of the Project all visitors must check-in and out with security upon their arrival and departure of the site. Safety protocols would be reviewed with each individual upon signing-in and information about blasting, such as

the blast schedule would be provided. Upon having checked in, visitors would be escorted across the mine property by mine personnel.

Maps of the area open for recreational use, including areas of restricted access and areas where hunting activities would be restricted, would be provided to site users upon signing in. Larger site maps and site information would also be installed at the new recreation site to ensure site users are aware of access and use restrictions and safety concerns. A blasting schedule would be posted at this site to ensure site users were aware of blasting activities.

During most days there would be one blast during daylight hours. To ensure public safety, access at the northern end of Fish Lake will be restricted. In the event that the Fish Lake area would be within the blast safety radius, prior to the blast operational staff would clear the area in order to ensure the safety of site users.

In order to leave the site, site users would be required to call the main gate via a radio or telephone located at the Fish Lake site. Upon notification that the individual wishes to leave the recreation area, mine personnel would escort the individual across the mine property to the main gate. This phone would also provide access to first aid in the event of an emergency.

Overnight Stays

Overnight use of the Fish Lake area will be permitted. If overnighting, the party would be apprised of the blasting schedule for the duration of their stay. The blast schedule would also be posted in the recreation area.

Risks Assumed by Site users

Individuals using the Fish Lake area would be on Crown Land and would therefore assume the same personal safety and property risks that they would normally assume at any other site. In the event of a first aid emergency, mine first aid personnel would be able to provide assistance.

In terms of blasting, Taseko is responsible for the area within the blast zone and will conduct clearance of areas within the blast radius as well as provide notification of blast schedules to all site users. To ensure public safety, access to the northern end of Fish Lake will be restricted during blasting operations.

Utilization of Check-Point

As described above in the *Access Protocols* site users would utilize the check point at the main gate when arriving and departing from the site.

Emergency Contact

Protocols for alerting site users in the event that an emergency occurs on the mine site that could affect the safety of individuals using the Fish Lake recreational area, will be specified in the

Emergency Response Plan and could include the use of audible alarms and/or clearance of the recreational site by mining personnel.

Impacts on Access and Traditional Use

The impacts to access and traditional use activities at the Fish Lake site for all phases of the Project are discussed above in part a).

Information Request #40c

In order to understand how Taseko plans to provide access to Aboriginal groups and the public, the Panel requests that Taseko:

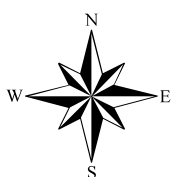
Provide a map that illustrates the proposed access route for all users of Fish Lake.

Response Summary

See Figure 40C-1 which depicts the conceptual site access route, retracted access areas and No Shooting areas.







Figure 40C-1 Conceptual Use Areas for the Fish Lake Site



1:45,000

Map Prepared by
Taseko Mines Ltd.
Date: 2013-02-22
Data Sources:
Province of British Columbia, Knight Piesold Consulting
Taseko Mines Ltd.
Projection: UTM Zone 10, NAD 83

-  Proposed Fish Lake Recreation Site
-  Pros No Access Area 2013-02-21
-  No Shooting Zone
-  Fish Lake Access Road

NOTE: Bow hunting is permitted in the No Shooting Zone.

