

## Yukon Prospector's Association

**Date:** July 6, 2021

### **Attendees:**

#### YPA:

- Grant Allan, President
- Carl Schultz, Vice President
- Shawn Ryan
- Josee Bonhomme
- Lucas Hawkes

#### DRPC:

- Tim Sellars
- Charlotte Luscombe

(This is based on general notes and mostly consists of a brief summary of some ideas and concerns prospectors have)

## Notes:

Comments and questions from YPA members:

- Mining is the most affected by this proposed plan, the Commission are seeking everyone's views but it is miners and prospectors who are being shut out of the land. Their business prospects that are being affected – tourism operators and outfitters will still be able to use the land.
- Access to the land is a real concern – The plan needs to not block off access routes. As it stands, longer roads would have to be put in to get to some existing properties.
- Based on the current proposals, there will not be any interest in spending money to prospect and look for mineral deposits. You might as well shut it down. Prospectors will go somewhere else.
- SMA2s currently propose no new access routes – while they are not described as a park, they might as well be.
- Access is also already restricted along the Yukon River – Most low-lying areas along the river are First Nation settlement land.
- The Commission need to comprehend the lag times between a deposit discovery and it going into production. Example: finding a deposit in the early 1990s that is now only just coming into production
- An option is that YG “sit on the deposits” but still allow mineral exploration. Don't remove them in perpetuity.
- Prospectors need access to look for deposits as the minerals they're looking for are important for the future:

- Green energy requires huge amount of input: copper, iron, cobalt; green energy needs geologists to find these components
- YPA sees aspects of land use planning as constraining/stranding resources – these prospective mines are wealth creators and tax generators. Land use planning shouldn't disrupt ability to do this
- Does the Plan truly encourage responsible mining and development? – argued that despite less than 1% of the area is mineable and now they can't even go look for the minerals in over half of the Yukon.
- Prohibitions for entry to prospect feels like a 'bomb shell' to the industry – no warning before 15<sup>th</sup> June. The OICS caught the miners off guard. Understand that this was to deter nuisance staking. But, they have blocked off several viable targets that were being explored.
- Questioned what the socio-economic impact of this Plan will be to the region in 10-15 years? Should consider implications.
- Access is very important to prospectors – they typically have a fairly good idea of where minerals may be.
- Asked what happens if economic deposits are found in wetlands. Should be allowed to responsibly mine, mitigate and reclaim the land so wilderness and biodiversity can continue.
- YPA understands that balance is needed and wanted
- Frozen bogs provide little value for biodiversity compared to shallow water wetlands.
- The Northern Access Route will make many potential developments economic – e.g. White Gold
- A land base is needed for mineral exploration
- Feels there is little respect for miners and prospectors; 17-18 govt employees per miners. Appears also that the people sitting on the boards are anti-mining
- The Mineral Development Strategy also shows bias against mining by government
- Corridors are needed for mining. Placer miners are also affected by blocking off corridors.
- Prospectors need to be able to go where the minerals are and explore new areas, not the same areas that have already been developed.
- This plan is a "land grab" and goes too far. This represents thousands of miles of prospecting opportunities lost.
- Is the plan part of the 25 by 25 and 30 by 30 protected areas initiative?
- The Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) is a concern
- It is a matter of government jobs vs. the private sector

- The designation methodology is something YPA are very interested in, they want to understand why some areas were protected over others. One example: why is the Yukon River off limits but the Klondike and Stewart aren't? These are home to king salmon spawning grounds.
- The Commission has offered more development in ISA 4s but from YPA perspective, not thinking about it correctly. Need to think about what a new mineral deposit might look like, it's unlikely to be in the areas that have already seen the most activity. Example is Antimony and Upper Brewery Creek. New deposits are unlikely to be found in existing mined areas.
- Also important: the prospecting techniques have hugely advanced and much of it is now very low impact. E.g. LIDAR techniques and doing surveys with drones – this will help in the future. Building up huge amounts of data.
- There is an interest mining in a responsible manner.
- ISA 1s will be extremely difficult to get even Class 1 permits. Concern that YESAB will say that exploration will be off limits, and only large corporations with the money to fund exploration will be left.
- The perception is that YESAB and government will turn ISA 1 and 2 into “no go” zones. They would be de facto off limits.
- It is actually more profitable to mine with the least disturbance – there is a gap between people miners and the public, one that needs to be bridged
- Wants an open forum to discuss these issues with other stakeholders, and to also create a more level playing field. At the moment it's just miners who are shut out.
- Proposed option that government take ownership of minerals and that miners would lease the mineral resources from government.
- Concerns about opening up the legislation and ending free entry, under the Mineral Development Strategy.
- How does one miner have the same impact as say 50 hunters when it comes to Caribou?
- Mining is overly regulated already. Class 1 permits are being declined as it is.
- Mining techniques vary from Class 1 vs. 2 & 3.
- science of geology is missing from the plan. Remedial geology – the concerns about acid leaching for example are not relevant to all parts of the region because of the rock chemistry. The science geologists work with should be captured and reflected in the Commission's decision making.
- Curious about why regional planning is so fragmented, why protection levels aren't set for an overall % of the Territory
- What is the cumulative effect to mining and exploration if land is 'locked up' – the socio-economic impact needs to be assessed? Establishment of protected areas creates conservation “shadows”.

- Flexibility is important. Need to be able to at least explore for minerals.
- Don't cut off future opportunity for society.
- It would be good to have more consultations that are focused on some of the issues raised, and also to enter into dialogue with other stakeholders. Need to be able to evaluate the data.
- Request that all the meeting notes are taken eventually be made public so that everyone can see what's been raised and the process be as transparent as possible