



Klondike Placer Miners' Association

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March 01, 2014

Scott Casselman - Chair
Dawson Regional Planning Commission
PO Box 8010,
Dawson City
Yukon Y0B 1G0
dawsonplan@planyukon.ca

Dear Mr. Casselman:

RE: Evaluation of Dawson Regional Land Use Plan

Thank you for inviting the Klondike Placer Miners' Association to comment on the most recent Dawson Regional Land Use Plan entitled "see yourself in the Dawson regional land use plan". We have had to scramble to meet the very tight deadline for submissions and our membership is relying on this submission to express our collective views.

The Klondike Placer Miner's Association represents the more than 100 family based placer mines and dozens of service industries and suppliers to the placer mining industry. For over 130 years, the Yukon placer industry has been the most reliable generator of employment and economic wealth, and it has made countless contributions to the infrastructure, culture and life style of Yukoners. The Yukon's placer industry cumulatively creates over \$50 million of gold every year with at least 2.5 times that in spin-off benefits. Currently the mining industry, both placer and hard rock, are the most important sources of revenue for the territory from non-government sources. It is conceivable that at some time in the future, government sources may or may not be so reliable. With this in mind it would not be prudent to unnecessarily alienate areas from mining.

Most of the area's tourists come to see gold mining and its history. All of the tourism services benefit from expenditures by placer miners before, during and after the tourists have left. Almost all of the Yukon's placer industry is concentrated in the Dawson Regional Planning area, and it is vital to Dawson City. There is no question that this land use planning process will have dramatic impacts on the Dawson City economy and on the existence of our industry.

We appreciate that your staff have attempted to provide a quasi-analytical review of the many diverse opinions and land use options through the Strategic Decision Making Process (SDM). This process, unlike processes used for the Peel and North Yukon plans, has the potential to provide for a fairer, more realistic and balanced approach to land use planning. We also appreciate the work done to prepare the many resource and "value" maps for the analysis but question their accuracy due to the lack of data for their subject matter.

It is particularly difficult to estimate placer and other mineral resource which often remain hidden underground until discovered with extensive exploration. The White Gold District south of Dawson did not exist ten years ago and would have been ignored by a land use plan at that time. Both the placer and hard rock mining industry need to expand their frontiers in the search for new deposits as the older deposits are mined out. It is for this reason that any land use plan must allow the mining of new deposits in new areas and recognize the reclamation of previous mined areas.

Unfortunately the use of unrealistic ranking/performance factors in the SDM modeling exercise has led to the creation of alternative plans which are extremely biased against the mining and natural gas & oil sectors of the economy. For example, it is unrealistic that a zero performance value for environmental, wildlife and First Nation values is allocated to IMA IV zones when it is clear to impartial observers that many of these values are present and often abundant in many reclaimed placer mined areas.

This bias appears to be a result of a lack of understanding by commission staff of resource development, and of the existing regulations and constraints already imposed on placer mining, and the impacts of development on the environment **The goal of a balanced land use plan has not been met with this draft plan and we strongly urge you to rework the plan and the classification of its land management units with more realistic ranking/performance factors using the SDM model after more exposure of your staff to previously mined and reclaimed areas.**

We had hoped to provide constructive criticism for the commissioners but the draft plan and its five map alternatives need a lot of work to provide an accurate balanced perspective for comparison. **The entire “strategic decision making process” needs to be redone with more realistic and rational ranking/performance factors.** This would allow a lot more of the more resource development friendly IMA IV areas and fewer protected areas in the Dawson area. This reworking would also result in higher “performance” for the environmental and First Nation values. **None of the map alternatives in their present form can be supported by the mining industry at this time due to their extreme bias.** Please see the following appended section of this evaluation for more details

It is also difficult to comment on the plan as it is unclear at this time what additional regulations and other limitations to resource development would be imposed on the various Integrated Management Areas (IMA) and other zones. Placer miners have a very short work season, usually ranging from 100 to 120 days per year and generally cannot operate with seasonal or timing limitations during the open water season.

Placer mining is currently a heavily regulated industry requiring compliance with regulations and operating conditions from the Yukon Waters Act, the Yukon Placer Act, Placer Mining Land Use, the Yukon Environment Act, Yukon Heritage Resources Act, the Canada Fisheries Act, the Canada Migratory Birds Act, the Canada Navigable Waters Act and many others. The environmental impacts of our industry are monitored frequently by Yukon Client Services inspectors and also by scientists for fisheries and water quality impacts continuously over the open water season. Our water discharges must meet strict limits from the Fish Habitat Management System for Yukon Placer Mining. All disturbed areas must be reclaimed and in our experience this results in excellent moose and wildlife habitat.

The present plan is to defer the controversial Yukon River corridor to another sub- plan. It is not necessary to have a 6 km wide corridor along the river as the view impacts would extend less than 50 m from the shore. Many of the “pristine” areas that canoeists view were actually cut down for cord wood for the steamers in the Gold Rush days. River transportation and other developments including placer mining along and near the river have been on-going since before the great Klondike Gold Rush and should be encouraged as part of the river’s development and heritage, not discouraged in any land use plan.

Miners report that tourists like using barge landings and old cabin sites along the river as camp sites. Signs of human activity along this river have been present since before the Gold Rush as it was an essential highway for First Nations people. Signs of human habitation such as Fort Selkirk, the old telegraph line, old and new cabin sites, barge landings, fish wheels and other human uses exist on the River and it would be a mistake to think we need to restrict them. It would be like having a railroad line and saying we no longer want trains to pass.

The "Traditional Economy" area proposed in alternatives A, B and C would allow forestry, farming and hydro development but there would be a ("temporary" at least 10 year) ban on placer or quartz staking. This is a very biased area concept as forestry, farming and hydro-electric development have a much larger impact on the land and water than almost any form of mining which typically affects less than 1% of the land base. This appears to be a land management unit from someone with a strong anti-mining bias and should be rejected.

This draft version of a Dawson Land Use Plan appears to involve land selection based upon a strong anti-mining bias and should be rejected and replaced with a Plan that honours and fosters the strong mining and tourism heritage of Dawson City.

We are looking forward to continuing to work with the commission to resolve these issues.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Randy Clarkson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Randy Clarkson
Executive Director – Klondike Placer Miners' Association

Cc KPMA Directors

Appendix - Technical Review of “see yourself in the Dawson regional land use plan”

Introduction:

The report “see yourself in the Dawson regional land use plan” is based on resource maps. The Dawson area has been divided into 30 land management units which correspond generally to drainage basins. Then arbitrary ranking factors and the “strategic decision making process” have been used to determine the amount of the (potential) resources and values available in each planning alternative (A through E). Then “performance measures” based on more highly biased inaccurate allocation factors are then used to evaluate the percent of each resource and value that is available in each of the alternatives. Performance measures for environmental and First Nations values are over represented in comparison to resource development in all of the comparisons.

The Resource Maps:

The resource maps consider economic interests such as placer and quartz mining, forestry and oil and gas development as well as First Nation, wildlife and other environmental “values”. The maps range from the excellent placer potential map to very old and out-dated forestry maps, highly subjective wildlife maps and areas with no mapping. Many of the maps are speculative due to a lack of exploration and evaluation. In many cases, resources such as mineral potential are difficult to assess and subject to change with new discoveries. Rare plants, for example, could be rare right now because no one has looked extensively for them. Rare plants are (not surprising) usually located near access routes as those are the only areas well researched. Some rare plants prefer to grow in disturbed areas.

Strategic Decision Making Process:

The strategic decision making process is a spreadsheet analysis used to attempt to compare options with widely divergent resources and values. It appears to be a reasonable process provided that accurate, fair and reasonable inputs are loaded into the analysis. This has not been the case here.

Arbitrary values (in most cases) for areas of high, moderate and low resources/values are multiplied by the square area covered by these resources/values to come up with a total hectares of resources/values for each alternative map. The product of the area covered by these resources/values and the ranking of the resource values = the total resource value in each of the 30 land management units. Unfortunately, the allocation of factors to high, moderate and low environmental and FN values appear to be arbitrary and not based on some proportional or quantifiable value. For example the ranking of a high value wildlife habitat (3) is not three times as populated or three times as productive as a low value habitat with a ranking of (1).

We do not have access to the actual spreadsheet inputs at this time but provide the following as a hypothetical example of this arbitrary ranking:

- 1) Consider - Sheep key areas
- 2) Assume area of Land Management unit A = 1000 hectares
- 3) Assume area of high value area = 100 hectares x arbitrary factor of 3 = 300
- 4) Area of moderate value area = 100 hectares x arbitrary factor of 2 = 200
- 5) Area of low value sheep area = 100 hectares x arbitrary factor of 1 = 100
- 6) Total Sheep Value= 300 +200+100 = 600 in Area A
- 7) Assume total sheep value in all of Dawson region = 5000
- 8) Arbitrary Sheep value in Area A = 600/5000 = 12%

Note that the factors 1 through 3 are arbitrary and the high value sheep area does not have 3 times as many sheep or sheep habitat as the low value sheep area etc.



Example – this is an example figure from the report

45. Sheep Wildlife Key Areas

Values addressed: Wildlife | Traditional economy

Details: All sheep key areas and predicted high value habitat combined.

How to be reported: % relative to regional total.

Status: In consequence table

Land Use Designation:

Then a zone from the land use designation system table is assigned to each of the thirty land management units.

Land Use Designation System Table

	Integrated Management Area**			Yukon River Corridor	Traditional Economy Area	Conservation Area	Protected Area
	IMA Zone IV	IMA Zone III	IMA Zone II				
Management Intent	Enable Non-Renewable and Renewable Resource Development	Enable Non-Renewable and Renewable Resource Development	Enable Non-Renewable and Renewable Resource Development	Maintain cultural and ecological values within a multi-use river corridor	Enable renewable resource development and enhance the traditional economy	Conserve important wildlife habitat and ecological values	Protect significant ecological and cultural values
Explanation	Enables all activities within acceptable limits that are meant to maintain ecological and cultural values. These limits may encourage innovation and cooperation among land users. This management regime is most restrictive for Zone II and least for Zone IV. Management tools may include adaptive management, a range of cumulative effects indicators and threshold levels, access and seasonal restrictions/allowances, research and monitoring recommendations, and/or the newly created measures for Class 1 mining activities.			Enables transportation, tourism, recreation, renewable resource development and cultural pursuits. Viewscapes, heritage, cultural and ecological values are taken into consideration.	Promotes renewable resource development and enhances the traditional economy, including forestry, non-timber forest products, agriculture, and tourism as well as subsistence harvesting activities.	Allowable activities may include recreation, tourism, traditional subsistence activity, hunting, trapping, guiding. Access corridor to LMUs designated as IMA can be provided. Yes (e.g. Habitat Protection Area in Wildlife Act)	Allowable activities may include recreation, tourism, traditional subsistence activity, hunting, trapping, guiding. Access corridor to LMUs designated as IMA can be provided. Yes (e.g. National Environment Park in Parks and Land-Certainty Act)
Legal Designation	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Withdrawal of Sub-Surface Rights (all current rights grandfathered)	No	No	No	Subject to sub-regional planning	Interim***	No	No
Subsequent Planning	No	No	No	Sub-regional planning	To be determined	Management Plan	Management Plan
Examples	North Yukon and Peel Watershed Land Use Plans IMA's			New Land Use Designation - no examples available		Fishing Branch Habitat Protection Area	Tombstone Territorial Park

COMMUNITY AREA: Area identified to enable potential future expansion of Dawson City municipal boundary and/or additional land for residential development, infrastructure, and recreational purposes.

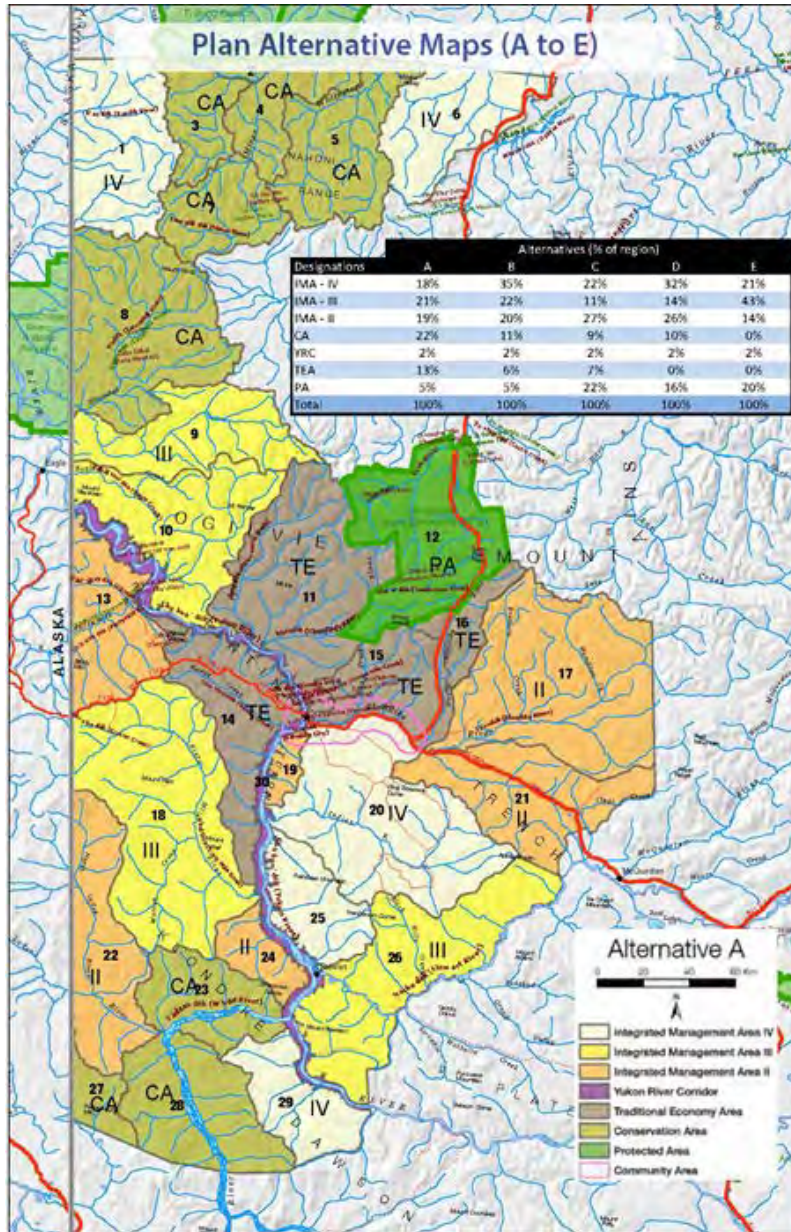
* In legal terms, "grandfathered" means to grant a special exception. It allows certain situations to continue to exist based on an older rule (the "grandfather clause"), even though a new rule is in place. Those with sub-surface mineral or oil and gas rights now would still be able to access and use those areas, even if they are in an LMU that is eventually zoned PA (or another zone where withdrawal of rights is seen as necessary to achieve the management intent). No NEW rights would be granted, and if the old claims lapsed they would no longer be valid.

** There is no IMA Zone 1 because the Yukon River Corridor is a unique regional "substitute", and to ensure consistency with the definitions of IMA-II, III and IV in adjacent planning regions.

*** Interim rights withdrawal would be reviewed at 10 year Plan review, during sub-regional planning or as described in Implementation Plan.

The following map is one of five (A through E) alternatives proposed:

The Integrated Management Areas are supposed to have the most lenient standards with IMA Zone IV as the status quo. It is not known what further restrictions will apply to IMA Zone III and IMA Zone II; **these may be class 1 notification, measures based on cumulative effects or timing window restrictions or other measures which could severely limit operation during the short open water placer mining season.**



almost any form of mining. It appears to come from a view with a strong anti-mining bias.

Conservation Areas and Protected Areas may include recreation, tourism, traditional subsistence activities (for whom?), hunting, trapping, guiding but no mining. Access corridor to Land Management Units designated as IMA Zones can be provided. There appears to be very little difference between Conservation and Protected areas. It is unusual to allow hunting, fishing and trapping in a Protected Area.

The Yukon River - The present plan is to defer the controversial Yukon River corridor to another sub- plan. It is not necessary to have a 6 km wide corridor along the river as the view impacts would only extend 50 m from the shore. Many of the pristine areas that canoeists view were actually cut down for cord wood for the steamers in the Gold Rush days. River transportation and other developments including placer mining along and near the river have been on-going since the Gold Rush and should be encouraged as part of the river's development, not discouraged in any land use plan.

The "Traditional Economy" area proposed in alternatives A, B and C would allow forestry, farming and hydro development but there would be a ("temporary" at least 10 year) ban on placer or quartz staking. **This is a very distorted concept as forestry; farming and hydro-electric development have a much larger impact on the land and water than**

Evaluation Criteria:

The next and most blatant arbitrary factors are called evaluation criteria and show up in the performance measures which compares the five alternatives A through E.

Evaluation Criteria		Designations						
#	Short Name	IV	III	II	YRC	CA	TEA	PA
1	PlacPot	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
2	SUM_CurGIP	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
3	Au	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
4	Cu	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
5	NonAu	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
6	OGB	1	0.5	0	0.15	0	0	0
7	OGBAcc	1	0.5	0	0.15	0	0	0
8	ExplExp13	1	1	1	0.75	0.5	0	0
9	curQC	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
10	pkQC	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
11	curPC	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
12	pkPC	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0	0
13	FRMZ	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0.5	0
14	GdFor	1	0.5	0.25	0.15	0.1	0.5	0
15	Hike	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
16	Rec	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
17	Outfit	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
18	Trap	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
19	NTFP	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
20	TradTr	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
21	HistPt	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
22	HrtgPt	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
23	PIName	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
24	THMerge	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
25	HrtgVS	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1
26	TourVS	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
27	OldFor	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
28	UnglHi	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
29	UnglDolo	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
30	WetInd	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
31	Water	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
32	Plants	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
33	Rare Landscape Features: #	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
34	ELC Rep'n	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
35	Ecoregional Rep'n for Dawson Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
36	Ecoregional Rep'on for NA	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
37	Undisturb	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
38	Fragmentation of Protected	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
39	WS25k	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
40	WS250k	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
41	WS2500k	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
42	SalmHab	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
43	SalmSpn	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
44	WKA	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
45	Sheep	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
46	MooseCC	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
47	MooseAD	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
48	Tintina	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
49	FMCH_hi	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
50	FMCH	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
51	CCCH	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1

52	HRCH	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
53	PCH	0	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1
54	BnchMk	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

More details on the 54 Evaluation Criteria can be found in appendix 3 of the draft plan.

Note: Performance measures for environmental and First Nations interests are over represented in comparison to resource development.

Note: For all of the environmental and First Nations values have a zero (0) factor for all integrated management area IV's. **That would mean there are absolutely no wildlife, environmental, or First Nation values in areas designated IMA IV.** This implies that there are no fisheries values, no sheep, no moose, and no wildlife value whatsoever. No one would ever hike, fish, hunt or find wetlands in an IMA IV. This is the most erroneous assumption imaginable and leads to an unjustifiable poor performance of all environmental and First Nation values in land management units designated at IMA IV. The use of a zero factor introduces a huge negative bias in any land management units that would host mining and/or oil & gas development.

Note that there are very low factors for integrated management areas IMA III and II as well (0.25 and 0.50) thus implying that there is one quarter and one half as many moose, fish and First Nation values in areas designated as IMA III and IMA II.

The low placer potential factor (0.15) in the Yukon River Corridor is also unreasonable as historic and presently mined placer creeks flow into the Yukon River and we would expect these areas to continue to be mined.

Evaluation of Plan Alternatives:

These evaluation criteria are multiplied by the previous area values to determine an erroneous and extremely biased evaluation of alternatives (A through E). The bias against resource development results in plan alternatives with much less IMA IV and IMA III areas than should be justified in a fairly applied Structured Decision Making Process. The following is the performance measures for plan D – pure fantasy.

Performance Measures	Units	A	B	C	D	E
Placer Potential	%	73.87%	86.10%	80.42%	94.16%	83.50%
Mineral Potential	%	31.21%	50.79%	32.19%	46.49%	47.07%
Gold Potential	%	38.41%	61.15%	40.88%	56.11%	56.22%
Oil & Gas basins	%	69.09%	53.49%	64.95%	64.95%	31.22%
Current # Placer Claims	%	35.72%	52.31%	35.76%	46.81%	46.24%
Forest Resource Management Zone with older trees	%	48.60%	78.83%	46.18%	60.85%	59.05%
High value recreation features	%	49.31%	48.42%	63.78%	61.62%	61.40%
Aboriginal trapping concessions	%	50.52%	37.82%	50.37%	44.51%	46.90%
Non-timber forest products (amt. forest <5km from access)	%	40.35%	20.76%	31.79%	21.39%	21.49%
Heritage Routes	%	54.89%	42.70%	55.05%	42.47%	44.02%
Cultural Sites	%	50.77%	36.01%	45.59%	38.88%	34.36%
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in merged heritage value	%	83.91%	79.13%	82.11%	78.75%	75.53%
Viewscapes from cultural routes	%	53.31%	34.01%	51.71%	35.68%	32.31%
Rare Landscape Features: # (of 6 types) with >50% conservation	#	1	1	5	3	3
Ecological Land Classification Representation (0-1, 0 is best)	#	0.51	0.51	0.21	0.47	0.27
Salmon Spawning Habitat	%	45.62%	37.71%	52.30%	43.73%	39.27%
Non-sheep Wildlife Key Areas	%	42.54%	32.85%	50.77%	42.96%	41.27%
Sheep Wildlife Key Areas	%	51.66%	44.70%	67.60%	64.08%	59.07%
Forty Mile Caribou Herd Good Habitat	%	38.38%	23.01%	34.79%	25.48%	28.98%
Ecological Benchmark Index (0-1, 0 is best)	#	0.19	0.19	0.03	0.04	0.05

Key	
 	Selected alternative
 	Performance is significantly worse than the selected alternative
 	Performance is significantly better than the selected alternative
 	Performance is about the same as the selected alternative