

Community Meeting to Provide Marathon Gold Valentine Lake Project Update and Seek Feedback on
Draft Socio-Economic Agreement with Qalipu First Nation
September 17, 2020

Clarification on what is included in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS)

Question: The two big pits are Leprechaun and Marathon with new possibilities at Sprite and Berry. If those sites become viable, will the Environmental Impact Assessment incorporate them?

Answer: Sprite and Berry are prospects at this point. They are not included in the EIS. It can take 7-10 years to “prove up” an open pit and identification of another open pit would mean a full new round of environmental assessment and permitting.

Status of Draft Socio-Economic Agreement

Question: The document has been marked draft and has to go to Council. What is the path forward for this agreement?

Answer: there is a working group in place made up of senior staff, Ward Councilor’s and Band Manager. Aspects of the draft agreement have been worked through step by step. This Community Engagement session is a chance for membership to weigh in and make recommendations on the draft, and a request for input will be shared through all our communications channels before the draft document is returned to Council with commentary. It will be up to Council to consider the document and the membership feedback and determine next steps.

Feedback will be brought to Council at their next meeting on September 26, 2020.

Returning the Land to its Natural State

Question: Will the site be returned to the condition in which it was found?

Answer: Rehab and closure for this project. For instance, surface layer scraped off and maintained to return to the surface. Open areas will be revegetated. This is one of the area’s where Qalipu First Nation will play an important role. There is a revegetation strategy.

Timeline for Signing

Question: Marathon Gold shared that they expect to file the Environmental Impact Assessment by the end of the month (September). This is going to be a huge document. Shouldn’t Qalipu wait to sign off on the SEA until after they have had a chance to review the Impact Assessment?

Answer: That will be a decision of Council. We feel confident in the work that has gone into this project by Marathon Gold in not only meeting but exceeding expectations on environmental stewardship, risk mitigation and care. There should be no surprises for anyone in the Impact Assessment. Also, the government has a serious process in place for reviewing the plans, if they come back with the go ahead, it is reasonable to trust that the plan is sound.

Legal Review of SEA

Question: Has Qalipu had a legal review of the draft SEA? Are we bound to the agreement, what if we want to get out of it?

Answer: Yes, the document has been reviewed by legal counsel and there is a clause in the agreement which allows for one or both parties to exit the agreement if it is no longer satisfactory.

Federal Government Involvement

Question: is the Federal Government financially involved in supporting this project as it is with other First Nations projects like the Dakota mine in Ontario?

Answer: no, aside from sharing information with Indigenous Services Canada, we are not involved with the Federal Government. Often you see this happen when there is jurisdictional overlap with the Federal Government. For example, the Maritime Link crossing open waters between provinces might be a case like that. The Federal Government sets the regulations for Environmental Assessment but, we are not involved with federal government financing.

Public Opinion in Central Newfoundland (in and around project development)

Comment: "Around town in central, and in meetings where Marathon Gold has presented project information, people seem to be 100% in support of this project. People are excited about it. We're no strangers to mining here. The way Marathon Gold presents information and plans for care of the land with the Environmental Impact Assessment, it is in line with our way of thinking. Marathon Gold is consulting and its much appreciated."

Virtual Engagement not Good for Everyone

Comment: Zoom, computers etc. is not the way to go for many people. Qalipu needs to consider doing an engagement session in Burgeo, in person.

Water Concerns

Question: why is the mine being constructed so near the water shed? What's the backup plan if the water shed is corrupted?

Answer: Marathon Gold agrees the location is not ideal, but it is where the gold was found. Considerable work has gone into a design that minimizes risk, and there are plans to mitigate potential issues. Worst case scenarios although unlikely have all been considered.

Concerns for the Caribou

Question: What measures are being taken to consider the caribou. Development is on their migration path and breeding grounds.

Answer: Considerable work has been done in terms of the wellbeing of the caribou population. For instance, the part of the site that touches in on breeding grounds will be shut down during mating season. We have reviewed all available data, have scientists focusing on this and we will engage the Qalipu membership in monitoring the situation closely. We can't say there will be no impact, there will be an impact. But every effort will be made to minimize that impact. We will take all possible action as outlined in the Environmental Assessment.