

Dena Cho

Environmental and Remediation Inc.

A Dena Nezziddi Development Corp. Company

MAY – JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Dena Cho Environmental and Remediation Inc. (Dena Cho) is a 100% local Ross River Dena owned and operated environmental management company. Dena Cho provides professional environmental services for all stages of mining projects: exploration, construction, operation, closure, and environmental management. Our team is proud to say that Dena Cho is the only 100% First Nations owned environmental management company in Yukon!

We are committed to consistently communicating with Ross River and gathering feedback and direction on projects. This is our first newsletter, and we plan to send monthly newsletters to the Ross River Lands Office (and wider community) from now on. Feedback on the content of this newsletter is very welcome! In this first newsletter, we focus on updates related to the Faro Mine Remediation Project and the impact assessment for that project. Future newsletters will feature other projects as well.

Over the past three months we have been involved in the following projects:

- The Faro Mine Remediation Project
- The Ketzka Mine Remediation Project
- The Wolverine Mine (water treatment)
- The Progressive Reclamation Working Group (Yukon Government Mining Memorandum Table)
- Kudz Ze Kayah Project Environmental Assessment Review
- Native Plant Nursery Study

Projects in the works include:

- The North Canol Trail Environmental Site Assessment
- The North Canol Trail Wire Cleanup Project
- A Faro Mine Community-Based Revegetation Strategy

Our Team:

- Stu Van Bibber, General Manager
- Jody Inkster, Environmental Scientist and Project Manager
- Billie Maje, Field Technician and Project Manager



Figure 1. Ross River Elders site tour, Faro Mine, June 2019

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- Amber Etzel, Field Technician
- Caitlynn Beckett, Researcher and Project Manager
- Freddy Dick, Field Technician
- Robyn McLeod, Field Technician

FARO MINE REMEDIATION PROJECT

1. FARO YESAB UPDATES

The Faro Remediation Project is currently moving through the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment (YESA) process. As new documents are posted on YESAB's registry, Dena Cho summarizes the content and provides this to Ross River Dena Council. If anyone would like more information on the YESAB process for Faro, feel free to contact us.

2. FARO TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (TRC)

Dena Cho attends bi-weekly TRC meetings for Faro. These meetings include updates on site conditions, care and maintenance activities and remediation design planning. Updates from these meetings are provided to RRDC.

3. TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE FARO PROPOSAL

Dena Cho has completed the final version of a review of the Faro Proposal. This includes a technical review of the Proposal and an overview of Ross River's story of the Faro Mine. This report was submitted to RRDC and the Ross River Lands Office for review.



Figure 2. Faro Mine, North Fork Rose Creek Diversion Channel, June 2019

1. FARO YESAB UPDATES – KEY POINTS

- The Faro Remediation Project Proposal was submitted in August 2019 by CIRNAC and is currently in the Adequacy Stage of the Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment (YESA) process. This means that the YESAB Board (YESAB) is determining whether or not the Proposal is adequate to move forward. So far, YESAB has determined that CIRNAC's Proposal is not yet adequate and that more information will be required from the Faro Project Team.
- Main points of concern identified by First Nations and government regulators include:
 - A lack of a clear governance structure
 - More information needed on air quality monitoring
 - Lack of inclusion of Indigenous knowledge throughout the Proposal – specifically in the wildlife and vegetation sections
 - Unclear water quality thresholds established in the Adaptive Management Plan
 - A lack of specific information included in the socio-economic assessment

2. FARO TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE – KEY POINTS

- The Faro Technical Review Committee (TRC) meets every two weeks and provides technical oversight for the Faro Mine Remediation Project. They review updates on site conditions, care and maintenance and remediation design work. The TRC includes representatives from Ross River First Nation, Liard First Nation, Selkirk First Nation, the Government of Canada and the Yukon Government. Main points identified over the past three months include:
 - There was a large freshet this year, which caused some challenges for water collection and treatment (water treatment and discharge began at the end of April 2020)
 - Some work was delayed due to COVID-19, including work on the Cross Valley Water Treatment Plant and fish overwintering ponds (part of the North Fork Rose Creek Diversion)
 - Borrow pits are being developed to provide different types of rock material for creek liners and waste covers
 - Work on the North Fork Rose Creek Diversion has progressed and the Mine Haul excavation work is almost complete.

3. TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE FARO PROPOSAL – KEY POINTS

- The current Faro Remediation Proposal does not adequately address socio-economic concerns including: a clear governance structure, long-term career and management opportunities, and the broader/historical impacts of the Faro mine on the community of Ross River. There is the potential for socio-economic harm if Ross River continues to see limited benefits from the Faro site – economic opportunities are not always benefits, as suggested in CIRNAC’s Proposal
- Further work needs to be completed on protection of wildlife and the use of Indigenous Knowledge when evaluating impacts on wildlife
- Further work needs to be completed on the inclusion of community objectives in revegetation, cover design/selection and future land use
- The storage of water in the Faro Pit before treatment should be further investigated. Is there any possibility for passive water treatment in some areas rather than relying on a 99-100% water capture approach.
- Cumulative effects/linkages with the Vangorda area of the site should be made more explicit.

4. UPCOMING DENA CHO WORK AT FARO MINE

We are looking forward to future work on the Faro Mine Remediation Project and are working towards ensuring that Ross River Dena community members are more involved in the remediation work.

Revegetation: Currently, we are developing a work proposal for a community-based revegetation strategy for Faro that would include Elder direction on what types of plants to use, the proper Kaska methods for such a task, and the inclusion of youth and other community members in the revegetation process.

Community priorities at Faro: There are several other concerns/issues that Elders and Ross River Kaska member have brought to our attention that we are committed to following up on. These include: 1) further wildlife studies about impacts to wildlife in the area, 2) more information about impacts in the Blind Creek area, 3) more information about tailings dust, 4) the possibility of fencing or other types of wildlife deterrent for from the tailings and waste rock.