

EPA Region 10 Alaska Tribal Mining Education Plan February 2008

Purpose of the Plan:

The purpose of the Alaska Tribal Mining Education Plan is to respond to requests from tribes to improve the dialogue and information-sharing on mining issues, particularly in Alaska. This supplements and provides support to the Region's existing tribal program and implements the tribal capacity building strategic action in the Region 10 Mining Strategy.

Goals of the Plan:

This is what we are hearing from Alaska tribes and are the goals for the Plan.

- Tribal governments could benefit from information regarding: types of mining processes, environmental and health impacts of mining and mining waste products, regulations that pertain to mining, and EPA's role in regulation of mining activities.
- Tribes would like to share their concerns regarding mining in general and concerns with specific mining projects.
- Tribes would like information early on regarding potential mining projects and impacts.
- Tribes would like information on opportunities to influence these projects.

How we will respond:

We plan to provide information to Alaska tribes through education sessions scheduled during existing forums and events. In addition, as part of the education sessions or in separate meetings, we can schedule availability sessions where EPA mining team members meet with tribes to hear and discuss their concerns. Through both the education sessions and the availability sessions, we can discuss with the tribes opportunities for involvement in mining projects. These sessions may be coordinated to include the participation of other agencies.

We will also update the tribal and mining webpages to include information pertaining to mining education, resources, and EPA mining contacts.

Following is the proposed structure for accomplishing the goals:

Education sessions: EPA will conduct education sessions at the following existing forums for up to the next three years. Mining sessions may include: information on different types of mining and processing activities, impacts of these activities and wastes produced, overview of federal environmental statutes and programs that regulate mining activities, and information on how tribes can be involved.

AK Forum on the Environment: EPA OSW and Region 10 provided mining training at the 2007 AK Forum in Anchorage. EPA is participating in the State's mining information session at the 2008 Forum. EPA will continue to offer mining information sessions at the Forum as interest persists.

RTOC and/or Tribal Leaders Summit: EPA plans to facilitate a session regarding lessons learned from historic mining activities and tribal involvement in mining reclamation planning at the 2008 Tribal Leaders Summit. If requested, mining information sessions can be provided at or before/after the RTOC meetings and future Tribal Leader Summits.

Other events: EPA Region 10 provided a mining information session on November 26, 2007 in Anchorage. The session was timed to coincide with the BIA Providers Conference. EPA will look for opportunities to conduct future sessions adjacent to the time that tribes gather for other events.

Coordination with training provided by other agencies: The state and other federal agencies have provided mining training. We will seek opportunities to coordinate our training with those of other agencies to illustrate the different roles of the agencies, how agencies work together, and the sequencing of environmental review and permitting actions.

Availability Sessions: EPA will provide availability sessions at the same forums as above (AK Forum, RTOC, Tribal Leaders Summit, etc.) as requested. EPA mining team staff will be available at the sessions to listen to and discuss general and, to the extent possible, site-specific mining concerns.

EPA Tribal Webpage Update: The EPA tribal and mining webpages will be updated to include EPA mining training materials, links to other EPA documents pertaining to mining, and a list of EPA contacts for mining sites.

Project-specific Consultation: We will continue to coordinate and consult with affected tribes on specific projects where we have a regulatory role. The extent of consultation and consultation activities will be worked out with the tribes and EPA project manager and tribal coordinator. Information and materials developed under this Tribal Mining Education Plan can support project-specific consultation.

For more information:

Patty McGrath
Region 10 Mining Coordinator
EPA Region 10
1200 Sixth Ave., OWW-135
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 553-0979
mcgrath.patricia@epa.gov

Tami Fordham
AK Tribal Resource Extraction Specialist
EPA Region 10, Anchorage Office
222 W. 7th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99513
(907) 271-1484
fordham.tami@epa.gov

Model for How AK Tribal Mining Education Plan Fits Into EPA Programs and Regional Mining Strategy

