

Appendix D

Summary/Analysis of Public Comments On the Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park Draft Master Plan

To ensure that the development of the master plan for Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park identified and addressed the needs of the general public, a public involvement process was included as part of the overall planning process. This process is an extension of the earlier public review of the master plan for Strathcona Provincial Park. In that process, almost 600 people attended ten public meetings and some 900 written responses were received. This report is a summary of the comments on the key issues of the draft plan for Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park and includes comments on the management on Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park that were made during the Strathcona Provincial Park planning process.

The Public Involvement Process

The public involvement process consisted of an open house of displays explaining the main elements of the draft plan immediately followed by a meeting chaired by several members of the Strathcona Park Advisory Committee. The meetings took place in Black Creek and Duncan in February, 1995. The meetings consisted of a brief slide presentation and explanation of the role of the steering committee. The draft plan was presented followed by a question and answer period.

At the Black Creek meeting, seven people attended despite a severe snow storm. The following day in Duncan, six people attended. At each meeting, members of the public had the opportunity to discuss their concerns individually as well as in the public forum. Written submissions were encouraged and 15 were received.

As with the Strathcona Provincial Park Master Plan, certain issues dominate the planning process. After review of the public comments for Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park, the following issues were identified; bonding, name of the park, reclamation/decommissioning, BC Parks' presence, and surface disturbance. There were other issues and suggested changes mentioned; however, these main issues were repeatedly identified in the submissions and during the meetings.

ISSUE - USE OF "WESTMIN" AND "PARK" IN PARK NAME

Park Comment

The use of the term "park" and the company name "Westmin" was not appropriate. The area is dedicated to mining and should be named accordingly. Some preferred the old

name Strathcona-Myra Falls Provincial Park to reflect the Myra Falls Operation name of Westmin, while others suggested the area be called Strathcona-Westmin Temporary Non-

conforming Use Area. It was suggested that the *Park Act* be revised to define the mine operation as a Non-Conforming Industrial Zone to eliminate a mine site being designated park land.

Analysis

With such a unique entity as Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park, it would be difficult to come up with an appropriate name that would have wide appeal.

The two issues with the name are: the use of the designation “Park” and the company name “Westmin”. As Strathcona-Westmin Provincial Park is a Class “B” Provincial Park designated under the *Park Act*, the use of the title park must be used. The name “Westmin” was used to reflect the non-conforming use of the Park. The name is synonymous with mining, whereas the name Myra is also used in reference to the falls and creek and not necessarily the mine.

Plan Recommendation

No change to the name of the park or its designation as a park is recommended.

ISSUE – BONDING

Public Comments

In keeping with the comments made during the Strathcona Provincial Park public review, there were a number of comments on the bonding requirements for the mine. Most people felt that it was too low and should be raised given the long term it would take for environmental clean up. Most of the questions were answered during the meetings. It was suggested that a levy on tonnage of concentrate be used to fund reclamation.

Analysis

Adequate bonding is critical to ensuring the land is restored to a natural state. As restoration could take a long period of time, the bond must be secure from any eventuality.

Plan Recommendation

The plan recommends that the amount of the bond be reviewed and renegotiated to reflect the anticipated full cost of long term reclamation.

ISSUE – RECLAMATION/DECOMMISSIONING

Public Comment

There were many requests that the open pit mine and unused adits be reclaimed. It was stressed

that only native species be used in revegetation of any disturbed areas.

A time table schedule for decommissioning was suggested, including a fixed time frame of no more than 24 months. The plan needs to specify who oversees monitoring and review of reclamation and what public involvement there may be in the review of Westmin's management and the reclamation plan.

Analysis

A number of these comments have already been addressed in the plan and answered during the meeting. The other comments are items specific to the Reclamation Permit M-26.

Plan Recommendation

Encourage Westmin to prepare a detailed recovery plan for the open pit.

Review reclamation implementation to ensure that native plants are used to establish vegetation cover on disturbed areas.

The Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee will be continued in its advisory capacity to bring forward public concerns.

ISSUE – BC PARKS' PRESENCE

Public Comments

Several felt that BC Parks should be more assertive stewards of the remaining park values by taking precedence over other Ministries.

Analysis

With multiple jurisdictions, it is most effective to take a cooperative and coordinated approach to management. When you have all parties working together to achieve their respective goals, the results are long lasting.

Plan Recommendation

Establish a field level management coordinating group chaired by BC Parks to ensure that there is a unified voice for government direction to Westmin Resources Ltd.

ISSUE – SURFACE DISTURBANCE

Public Comments

There was concern that surface disturbance should not be allowed to expand beyond current commitments or beyond the park boundaries so that the area remains in as natural state as possible.

Analysis

Currently, the company has agreed to restrict disturbance of the surface in the Phillips Ridge area of the Park except for possible ventilation portals. Any surface disturbance is restricted to the operational needs of the company and by the values of the Park. Generally, surface disturbance should be absolutely minimized and not detrimental to the recreation values of the Park.

Plan Recommendation

Surface disturbance for mining exceeding that authorized by existing permits shall be referred to the Vancouver Island Mine Development Review Committee for review.

New permit applications or requests for changes in existing permits which involve the use of Park lands will be reviewed in a public forum. The Strathcona Park Public Advisory Committee will review these requests and provide advice on the most appropriate form of public consultation process to be used.