

## **Chuitna Coal Project Status Update for May and June 2008**

### **Summer informational meeting**

The summer informational meeting to be held in Beluga is tentatively scheduled for the middle part of July (July 18<sup>th</sup> or July 25<sup>th</sup>). When dates are finalized, we will work on sending out a rough agenda in the next couple of weeks.

### **Status of the Chuitna Coal Project**

There are two major changes in the Chuitna Project as they relate to project staff and consultants. The first major change relates to the retirement of Bob Stiles: as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, Bob will no longer be a part of the Chuitna Coal Project. The second concerns the lead engineering firm: as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, Mine Engineers Inc left the project for undisclosed reasons. As an interim measure, PacRim has brought in Joe Lucas from Petro-Hunt L.L.C. to be the primary contact until a replacement for Bob is hired. PacRim is still reviewing potential engineering firms to step into Mine Engineers' role as the lead engineering firm.

At this time a complete permit application package for the Chuitna Coal Project has not been submitted to the Division and no formal review under AS 27.21 and 11 AAC 90 has been initiated. Once the entire permit application package has been submitted an evaluation of the completeness of the application and of the cumulative impacts of the project can be undertaken.

During the month of June, PacRim submitted Parts D1 through D19 of the Project Infrastructure Permit Application. This application covers the road and conveyor system from the mine to Ladd Landing and the associated infrastructure, housing and airstrip.

### **Other State and Federal Permits**

In addition to ASCMCRA permitting requirements, the Chuitna Coal Project must address the concerns of other state and federal agencies. As part of the Department of Natural Resources statutory role as lead agency in matters relating to exploration, development and management of mining activities, the DNR Office of Project Management and Permitting has developed a document describing some of the permits and approvals to help the public understand the permitting of mines in Alaska. This document and other useful information are available on the web at:

<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/largemine/index.htm>

## **Petition to Designate the Chuitna River Watershed Unsuitable for Surface Coal Mining Operations**

On February 14, 2008 the Commissioner for the Department of Natural Resources issued a decision in response to the request from Trustees for Alaska on behalf of the Petitioners to reconsider his prior decision. In his letter, the commissioner decided to affirm his July 16 2007 decision. In the original decision the commissioner found that, 1. LMU-1 lands are ineligible from the petition process, on the grounds that they had previously been reviewed, underwent a comment period, and a decision to issue the permit was made, 2. the petition regarding the remainder of the “Chuitna River watershed” is incomplete, because the petitioners do not adequately describe how their interests are adversely impacted within the Chuitna Watershed, 3. the petition is frivolous because it covers too sweeping and arbitrary an area unsupported by evidence that reclamation of wetlands cannot be accomplished, and 4. assumes that applicable standards and regulations for surface coal mining operations cannot prevent the harms claimed in the allegations.

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, Trustees for Alaska appealed the Commissioner for the Department of Natural Resources final decision to the Superior Court of the State of Alaska.

### **Chuitna Project SEIS**

As part of the federal NEPA process the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) would be prepared for the Chuitna Coal Project. Scoping for the SEIS was completed in August of 2006. Currently agencies are reviewing the available baseline data in preparation to write the Draft SEIS. During March, EPA, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and AK Dept of Natural Resources met with the company to discuss the status and timeline for the SEIS. Included in these discussions were updates to the companies proposed action and alternatives to be considered in the SEIS.

Information concerning the SEIS process can be found at:

<http://www.chuitnaseis.com/>