

Department of Environmental Conservation
Response to Comments
for

Fairbanks Gold Mining, Incorporated
APDES Permit No. AK0053643

Public Noticed July 7, 2012 – August 6, 2012

August 15, 2012



**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501**

1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Facility / Permit

Activity	Fairbanks Gold Mining, Inc. (FGMI) operates the Fort Knox Mine, an open pit gold mine. Dewatering wells around the pit's perimeter produce excess water or wastewater, and FGMI proposes to discharge non-contact, non-process, groundwater onto the surface in the Fish Creek drainage downgradient of the mine.
Discharge	High quality wastewater from select dewatering wells will be combined and discharged. Since discharge is confined to only high quality ground water, water treatment will not be necessary to meet Alaska Water Quality Standards. The discharge rate is expected to be around 400 gallons per minute (gpm) but may reach a maximum of 2,000 gpm.
Outfall	The outfall will discharge into the historic Fish Creek stream channel, Old Fish Creek Channel, which is located below the tailings storage facility dam and north of the constructed wetlands complex's Pond C.
Receiving Water	The Old Fish Creek Channel is an ephemeral stream that flows into the constructed freshwater reservoir.

1.2 Opportunities for Public Participation

The Department of Environmental Conservation proposed to issue an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) wastewater discharge permit to FGMI. To ensure public, agency, and tribal notification and opportunities for participation the Department:

- identified the permit on the annual Permit Issuance Plan posted online at: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wwdp/index.htm>
- notified potentially affected tribes that the Department would be working on this permit via letter, fax and/or email
- formally published public notice of the draft permit on July 7, 2012 in the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* and posted the public notice on the Department's public notice web page
- posted the proposed final permit on-line for a 5-day applicant review
- sent email notifications via the APDES Program List Serve when the preliminary draft, draft, and proposed final permits were available for review

The Department requested comments from the Alaska Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game (ADF&G), National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as part of its solicitation for input on the draft permit.

The Department received comment from one party on the draft permit and supporting documents. This document summarizes the comment submitted and the justification for any action taken or not taken by the Department in response to the comment.

1.3 Final Permit

The final permit was adopted by the Department on August 15, 2012. There were no changes from the public noticed permit.

2 Comment

2.1 Comment Summary

The Department received a comment not directly related to the permit. ADF&G stated that it does not object to permit issuance, but it explained that a road culvert between Pond C and the outfall needs to be removed and the excavation filled with material preventing outfall discharge from entering Pond C.

2.2 Response

The Department agrees with ADF&G's concerns. We spoke to FGMI, the permittee, and they agreed to remove the culvert as requested by ADF&G.