

# Mineral Resources Branch Assessment and Permitting 2010 Annual Statistics



Hays Creek

YG photo

May 2011

### **Mineral Resources Branch Director's Message**

On behalf of Energy Mines and Resources' Mineral Resources Branch, I am pleased to present our 2010 Annual Report detailing mining activities related to the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* over the past year.

The Government of Yukon's Department of Energy, Mines and Resources is committed to ensuring that mining is carried out in a manner that fosters sustainable development and a healthy environment. To meet these objectives, the Mineral Resources Branch participates actively in the assessment process established in the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* and administered by the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board. Additionally, the branch ensures that prospective project proponents fulfill the many obligations necessary to obtain and effectively implement a Mining Land Use Approval or Quartz Mining License. These authorizations, as well as a Water License, where applicable, are required before mining exploration, development and production can occur.

A Quartz Mining License requires that a company provide detailed engineering design plans as well as detailed management plans. These requirements include, but are not limited to, the following designs and plans: mining and processing plant design; quality assurance/quality control plan; emergency response; site development; wildlife management; heritage management; waste management and overall site reclamation and closure (including reclamation bonding).

Many mining projects also require a Water License, pursuant to the *Yukon Waters Act*. Water License applications are addressed by the Water Board, which holds a public hearing if it believes that the project will have significant public interest or concern.

This report outlines some key accomplishments and statistics of the Mineral Resources Branch of Energy, Mines and Resources for the 2010 year with regards to project activity within the YESAA process. Should you require any further information or clarification regarding this report, please do not hesitate to contact the administrative assistant, Mineral Resources Branch at (867) 633-7952.

Sincerely,



Robert Holmes  
Director, Mineral Resources Branch  
Energy, Mines and Resources, Government of Yukon

## **2010: The Year in Review**

2010 marked the fifth anniversary and full reporting period since *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act* (YESAA) came into effect.

The summaries in this report relate to a total of 114 mining project assessments over 2010 that were assigned to EMR–Mineral Resources Branch as the decision body.

	<b>Total Projects</b>	<b>Decision Documents Issued</b>	<b>Projects Still Under Assessment*</b>	<b>Projects still Under Review**</b>	<b>Projects Withdrawn</b>
Placer	74	57	13	1	3
Quartz	40	31	3	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>

This compares to 77 assessments for 2009 of which 51 were placer and 26 were quartz projects.

	<b>Water License</b>	<b>Mining Land Use Permit</b>	<b>Land Use Permit</b>	<b>Total</b>
Placer	36	7	0	
Quartz	0	28	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>72</b>

The detailed breakdown for 2010 can be found in:

Appendix 1 - Placer Activity,  
Appendix 2 - Quartz Activity, and  
Appendix 3 - Mining Statistics.

In 2010, the average assessment of time for a quartz project was approximately 69 days; with a minimum of 42 days and a maximum of 133 days. Average completion timelines for placer projects was 56 days, with a minimum of 35 days and a maximum of 98 days. An overview of 2010 statistics is compiled in Appendix 4 – Placer Overview and Appendix 5 – Quartz Overview.

Most projects run longer than the original recommended Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) timelines and require extensions to be completed. New YESAB Designated Office rules of procedure came into effect August 2010 in an attempt to streamline the process, however the assessment and permitting periods has not significantly changed from 2009.

## Mining Lands Offices

There are four Mining Lands District Offices: Dawson City, Mayo, Watson Lake and Whitehorse. In 2010, the Dawson district had the highest number of mining project submissions at 66.

Project breakdown by district:

District Area	Quartz Projects	Placer Projects	Total Projects
Dawson	16	50	66
Mayo	8	15	23
Watson Lake	4	0	4
Whitehorse (includes Haines Junction)	12	9	21

## Yukon First Nations' Traditional Territories

Each mining project proposal must indicate within which First Nations' traditional territory the project will be located. In 2010, all 114 projects indicated at least one or more affected First Nation. It is important to note that a project can be located in more than one traditional territory (as they overlap) and/or simultaneously affect more than one

Yukon First Nation Traditional Territory	Total Projects	Placer Projects	Quartz Projects
Carcross/ Tagish First Nation (CTFN)	0	0	0
Champagne & Aishihik First Nations (CAFN)	4	3	1
First Nation of Nacho Nyäk Dun (NND)	20	13	7
Kluane First Nation (KFN)	4	3	1
Little Salmon/ Carmacks First Nation (LSCFN)	9	6	3
Selkirk First Nation (SFN)	7	1	6
Ta'an Kwächän Council (TKC)	1	0	1
Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC)	2	0	2
Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in (TH)	69	50	19
Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation	0	0	0
White River First Nations (WRFN)	5	4	1
Liard First Nation (LFN)	4	0	4
Ross River Dena Council (RRDC)	4	0	4
Kwanlin Dün First Nations	2	0	2

First Nation.

The three non-settled Yukon First Nations (White River, Ross River Dena Council and Liard First Nation) also participated in the YESAB process and were represented in 13 mining projects in 2010.

*Please note: the total numbers of projects in the table is higher than the total of 114*

*mining projects for 2010. Again, this is due to projects potentially being located in more than one First Nation's traditional territory.*

## **2011: The Year Ahead**

In 2011 Mineral Resources Branch will be working on several complex mineral development projects. Some of these are:

- the assessment and licensing of the Minto Phase IV expansion project;
- the water licensing for Selwyn-Chihongs advanced exploration project;
- the environmental and socio-economic assessment of Eagle Gold's Victoria Gold heap leach project at the historical Dublin Gulch site;
- Selwyn Chihong underground mine at Howard's Pass;
- permitting of advanced explorations projects such as Kinross' White Gold project; and,
- Eagle Gold's Advanced Exploration at Dublin Gulch.

## **Contact Information**

### **The Management Team**

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Mineral Resources Branch's Website:

<http://www.yukonmining.com>

Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board Website:

<http://www.yesab.ca>

Yukon Water Board Website:

<http://www.yukonwaterboard.ca>

## **BACKGROUND**

### **About Energy Mines and Resources – Mineral Resources Branch**

#### **Vision and Mission**

The Department of Energy Mines and Resources' (EMR) mandate is to responsibly manage and support the sustainable development of Yukon's energy and natural resources.

In carrying out this mandate, EMR is guided by the following vision: to manage and support the development of our natural resource wealth in partnership with Yukon people and industry.

#### **Role**

The Mineral Resources Branch is responsible for the disposition and administration of mineral resources within Yukon; promotion of investment in mineral development while ensuring that resources are managed wisely; and provision of information and advice to the mining industry, communities and governments.

Following the purpose statements contained in the *Quartz Mining Act* and the *Placer Mining Act*, Mineral Resources strives to maintain a sustainable, competitive and healthy mining industry that operates in a manner which upholds the essential environmental and socio-economical values of Yukon.

The Mineral Resources Branch regulates exploration and mining activities through the administration of the *Quartz Mining Act* and *Placer Mining Act*. It also administers the regulatory regime for claim administration including staking, recording and renewals along with production licenses, leases and royalties on producing mines. The branch administers the mining land use regulations, which provide land use control and mitigation for mining activities on claims.

Government of Yukon encourages all companies operating in Yukon to show leadership and innovation in exploration and reclamation by developing and implementing appropriate technologies and best practices as well as ensuring community participation. Mining proponents are required to provide ongoing information on the effectiveness of their project so that changes to operational methods can be adjusted over the mine life.

### **Understanding YESAA**

#### **Background**

In 2003, Canada established the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-Economic Assessment Act* (YESAA), which provides a single assessment process for projects under federal, territorial or First Nation jurisdiction. This process is part of the overall

assessment and approval process that applies to most mining exploration and development activities.

YESAA establishes an assessment process that considers the potential effects a proposed development may have on Yukon's environment, people, communities, and the economy, and recommends mitigation to ensure that these effects are not "significant" and "adverse".

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) was established to conduct independent, arm's-length assessments of proposed development projects. Projects undergo an environmental and socio-economic assessment if they: 1) require an authorization, which may include a Quartz Mining License or Mining Land Use Approval; and 2) are above a YESAA regulatory activity threshold. YESAB administers the assessment processes, which may be carried out either by the Designated Offices (DOs), Executive Committee or panels of the board.

Conducting socio-economic and environmental assessments assists proponents and governments in making decisions that promote long-term sustainability and consider community interests. Reviews conducted through YESAB ensure proposed projects within Yukon do not cause significant adverse environmental or socio-economic effects.

### **Project Assessment Timelines**

Each minerals project undergoes three phases: 1) Assessment Phase; 2) Decision Phase; and 3) Regulatory Phase. The deadlines outlined in the following table reflect the number of days which the decision body and the Designated Office generally work towards in order to complete a given task from the time YESAB posts the project notification or recommendations. These timelines have some flexibility and the actual timelines may vary from these.

Phase	Event Description	Deadlines		
		YESAB District Office (DO)	YESAB Rules	Addition to YESAB Rules Starting August 11, 2010
<b>1 Assessment</b>	Lead notifies Standard Notification List	Day of receipt of project description from Assessor	14 days for submission of comments by Decision Body (option to extend first for 21 days, then 35 days).	+Upon review (up to 3 days), additional Information Requests & Seeking Views can be issued (option to extend first for 28 days with max. up to 1 year, then 35 days).
	Comment on Project Description	11 days		
	Reminder to Lead to Compile	11 days		
	Lead Compiles and sends to Assessor	12 days		
<b>2 Decision</b>	(max 25 days after deadline for submission of comments)	Day upon receipt of recommendations by Lead	30 days for providing Decision Document to YESAB	
	Decision Document 1	9 days (after recommendations posted)		
	Comment deadline	16 days (after recommendations posted)		
	Decision Document 2	19 days (after recommendations posted)		
	Sign off	21 days		
	Lead posts Final Decision Document	23 days		
<b>3 Regulatory</b>	Permits issued			