Faro Mine Closure – a community perspective

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Ross River – home to the Ross River Dena Council (RRDC), part of the Kaska Nation
Pelly Crossing – home to the Selkirk First Nation (SFN) and directly downstream of the mine site
Town of Faro – established to service the Faro Mine in 1969, now home to 400 people
Ross River – home to the Ross River Dena Council (RRDC), part of the Kaska Nation

Faro Mine – operational from 1969 to 1998; located in the traditional territory of the Ross River Dena Council, and upstream of the community of Pelly Crossing
Faro Mine - Background

1969  Faro Mine opens & Town of Faro established

1970s  Largest lead/zinc mine in Canada • 15% of world’s Pb/Zn output • population of Faro reaches 2000 by early 1980’s.

1982  First of numerous shutdowns • population of Faro drops to 97 by mid-1980’s.

1998  After 29 years of intermittent operations, last owner placed into receivership.

Faro Mine – Current Conditions

Faro Mine Area

Components
- 70 million MT tailings (3 dams)
- 1 open pit – Faro Pit
- 2 stream diversions
- 250 million MT waste rock

Vangorda Plateau

Components
- No tailings
- 2 open pits: Vangorda & Grum
- 1 stream diversion
- 70 million MT waste rock

Faro Mine Closure
– a community perspective
Faro Mine – Moving towards closure

2004 Federal and territorial governments enter into joint agreement with RRDC & SFN to work together on development of a closure & remediation plan
Establish Oversight Committee with representation from all four governments to provide senior level leadership & strategic direction – 1st meeting in Jan 2004
Community offices in Pelly Crossing & Ross River and liaison officer in Faro to support public engagement in the closure and remediation process

2005 Closure Planning Office established in Whitehorse responsible for actual development of the closure plan

2006 Public consultation period to derive a preferred approach to closure

Faro Mine – Community Input

Selkirk First Nation & Ross River Dena Council
Member of OSC • Community Office • Project Coordinator • Technical Advisor
funded by government to
Coordinate community input into planning process
Acquire technical advice to support informed involvement and input in development of a closure plan
Coordinate community meetings, information sessions etc

Town of Faro
Community Liaison Officer
funded by government to
Coordinate community input into planning process
Seek technical advice from Closure Office and Government departments
Participate in community meetings, workshops etc
Faro Mine – Community Challenges

Ross River Dena Council – Ross River
- **Time** – community and “closure process” often works with a different understanding of time.
- **Complexity of Project** – difficult for many people to understand basics of the project and makes it hard to keep up.
- **Lack of Continuity** – engagement with community comes in flurries; challenging to maintain and build on knowledge in “downtimes”.
- **Levels of knowledge**
  - how to achieve balance between traditional and scientific knowledge
  - how to balance what the community “knows” against what the community is being “told”.

Selkirk First Nation – Pelly Crossing
- Lack of public attendance at planning meetings
- Lack of capacity/training
- **Scheduling issues** - It is always a task to try and get everyone’s schedule together
- Ensuring people of the quality of water in the Pelly River
- People don’t speak up at meetings due to the fact that this **project is very complex** - not sure if everyone fully understands
- If the federal and/or territorial government is in favor of a completely different option than the First Nations, it will be a challenge explaining how the FN decision was measured.
Faro Mine – Community Issues

Important Issues for the Town of Faro

• **Maintenance costs** for the Town’s Infrastructure: created for a community of 2,500+, now funded by population of 400.

• **Quality of well water** supplying Town of Faro, specifically Vangorda Creek.

• **Cleanup** of mine-related contaminated sites in the town.

• **Future use** of the Town for purposes related to Mine Closure, where such use could be tied to closure operation. Examples are:
  - educational opportunities
  - training facilities
  - tourism potential

• **Monitoring and tracking of health issues** for those working at the mine before shut down, during current phase, and during reclamation process