

Scotian Materials: CLC Meeting #5 (Annual Environmental Monitoring Report)

Tuesday, March 20, 2018 6:30–8:30 PM

Attendance

Anna McCarron
Martin Zwicker
Greg Hughes
Rob MacPherson
Bud Baker
Aaron Carson (M&NP)
Cameron Winger
Keri Irwin
Mimi MacCain
Angela Dicker
Mark Webb
Casey Spears

Absent:

Bill Horne

Dean Bouchard

Meeting

Rob MacPherson indicated that as a follow up to a previous meeting request that a representative from Nova Scotia Environment agreed to come in to discuss wetland habitat, impact of habitat loss on animals and enforcement procedures for lost habitat. She was unable to attend this meeting but hopefully be able to come to CLC meeting #6

Mimi would like Natural Resources to come in as well. Rob to contact Mark Elderkin of DNR per Anna's recommendation.

Mimi feels it isn't just about the wetlands all the wetlands expert is going to be able to talk about is the wetlands. She indicated it is her belief that the game sanctuary is going to be affected and the animals will be moving out of their habitat.

A biologist from the DNR is who Mimi would like to have speak to the CLC.

Mimi asked how close they are to the game sanctuary. Rob says the sanctuary is south of the site and estimates about a kilometer away.

Annual Report presentation given by Mark Webb.

- Annual Report is done every year (it was submitted in February)
 - Mark says this is an overview of what the environmental monitoring results are for the year. He won't be giving a technical presentation but instead giving an overview of the results.

- The overview Mark is providing is an executive summary. If this doesn't suffice, Rob says a technical analysis with our consultant can be scheduled at another time to review with the CLC.
- The report is available for review at Scotian's office, but copies will not be handed out. The report has been submitted to NSE and can be obtained via freedom of information.
- Rob indicated that the presentation will be posted with the minutes from tonight's meeting on the website

Groundwater

- Groundwater levels are monitored weekly March–November (when quarry is active) and monthly December–February (when quarry is inactive).
- Results have been consistent with the baseline (collected before quarry activity). There are natural variations seasonally because of the weather.
- Groundwater quality is also monitored. The samples collected are compared to the baseline. Results have been consistent to the baseline.

Streams

- Stream flows are measured and compared to baseline collected prior to the start of construction. The results of monitoring show that there hasn't been any change over baseline.

Discharge Sampling

- Results from discharge sampling met guidelines for TSS and pH. Tests for metal chemistry indicated elevated metal concentrations exceeding CCME FWAL guidelines. Golder Associated provided specifications for a filter bag that was added to the process which captures additional suspended solids and reduces the metal concentrations.
- Keri asked about the filter bag and the metal concentrations and when will it be known if it works. Rob indicated that the next test will show if it has been successful.

Wetlands

- There are three wetlands surrounding the site that are monitored quarterly. There are also electronic recorders, which record the water level on an hourly basis.
- A specialist comes in once a year to determine any changes to shape or functions. It's normal to see slight changes to the wetland boundaries as it is an active environment and is constantly changing. There have been no significant changes recorded in the last year.

Acid Generating Potential

- Rock is tested annually for acid generating potential. Rock was collected from the blast area and brought to a lab for testing. The tests indicated that the rock showed no potential for acid generation.

Environmental Impact

- Scotian is confident in saying there were no adverse environmental impacts during the 2017 year. Monitoring will continue into 2018.

Questions from the Group

- Rob clarified that additional treatments for the run off in the quarry are due to elevated metal concentrations from sediment. There are different filter bags that are available to treat this. Based on Golder's findings/recommendations, they specified a specific mesh size on the filter bags. Next time the water needs to be pumped out, they will redo the test and anticipate it will meet the guidelines. Any discharge that exceeds is reported to NSE. The result is that there were no adverse effects as the discharge was not permitted to enter a watercourse but absorbed back in the ground.
- Martin: Was the exceedance in the metals a result of groundwater? Rob says no, it's a result of the disruption on the land. They're digging a hole for the engineered pond that treats the sediment and the rain rushes in all the sediment. The hole doesn't have the capacity to treat the sediment, so they have to pump it out and run it through a filter bag until the pond can be completed.
- Mimi: Who were the specialists that checked the wetlands. Rob indicated that it was a company called Overdale.
- Anna: Are there guidelines to when the water can be discharged? During wet weather there is less absorption in the ground and the discharge can travel further. Rob says they can't have an adverse impact on a watercourse and if they do, they have to report it. They don't pump if there's a chance of anything having an impact. They've taken samples more often than they are required by the permit. They're going above and beyond to be cautious.

Planned Activity for 2018 Presentation given by Mark Webb

Quarry Production

- Anticipate site preparation next month
 - There could be a blast in May
 - 4–5 blasts, but could change on market demand
 - Plan to crush in June
- Scotian plans on hiring, as required, as operations scale up and equipment arrives on the site
- Site office construction is being planned. Construction to start May/June and completed by September.
- Asphalt and concrete plants tentatively planned sometime mid-season.

Rob discussed Environmental Impact Assessment

- There's been a lot of talk about an EIA throughout the process. Scotian has done a number of studies through the approval process. These are almost all complete and are currently being reviewed for completeness and EIA requirements. The study area is the site property boundaries.
- Rob says wetlands, water courses, groundwater, habitats, and archeological studies are complete
 - These have a shelf-life and were done for the IA. After about a year they have to be re-done. Rob plans to proceed with moving forward and having the EIA registered. This will lead to the expansion on the property. They're evaluating these reports and seeing what kind of expansion makes sense based on the report findings.

- Rob points out on the map the property boundary and what is approved today/where they're working on the sedimentation pond. The entire site has been studied and they're looking at what makes sense for an expansion. Scotian has given itself a hardline that it will not be within 800 meters of a residential property in Miller Lake West. Scotian is looking at other required separation boundaries with the pipeline, highway and airport.
- Rob: Next steps are to engage with the public and stakeholders. The CLC is the first to be engaged and Scotian would like its feedback. How would the CLC like to be involved in the engagement process? What should be done public engagement? What questions should we be addressing before we go to the public?
- Mimi, Keri and Angela expressed concerns with expansion and timing. They didn't think it would happen this soon or at all and that it had been conveyed at the open house that the quarry would operate for a 3 to 5 years to test operations and the market before expansion would be considered. Want to know the size and limits of expansion.
- Anna: EIA recommendations is good news and also, following some of the recommendations as to what SWEPS gave is something we'd want to see the results of. This information should be available at public information meetings. This quarry is happening, so this is an opportunity that it is the best it can be with the least impact to animals, environment, and residents. This is what EIAs are for. There are a lot of EIA that are not refused. EIAs are to highlight all the risks so that they can be addressed and those are brought forward to the government and mitigated.
- Martin suggests that it would be beneficial if there was more time operating to demonstrate a good track record before commencing the EIA. Rob responded that he agrees it would be good but the timing will not work.
- Angela indicated one resident has had a muddy well since the blast.
 - Martin: Did the residents contact Scotian when the wells went muddy?
 - Angela: They contacted NS Environment and had experts come in and look at it.
 - Martin indicated that was a plan to respond to these kinds of incidents by Scotian.
 - Angela indicated that there's a trust issue why they didn't contact Scotian. A well person came in and looked at the well and reviewed the pump.
 - Martin had this happen at his house because there was a crack in the well casing.
 - Anna: A hydro-expert would need to determine if it was from the blast. Angela says someone has been talking to the house owner.
 - Rob says he didn't receive any complaints.
 - Bud: What does Environment do? Rob says they would do their own investigation. They get a complaint, go out and investigate the complaint, if there's something that shows the incident is related to the quarry, Scotian is called in and they go through mitigations.
 - Martin: I'm not sure I'm clear on the reason for the homeowner wouldn't contact Scotian?

- Angela: It's a personal thing. Our group has been fighting this, there are individuals that don't want to talk to Scotian.
- Greg suggested that if there is a trust issue and ongoing litigation that the membership of the CLC may need to be looked at.
- Bud indicated that the CLC needs to be able to work together and communicate back to the community.
- Martin indicated that he sees integrity in the process so far.

Next Steps

- Bud suggests there should be a meeting with the CLC on the EIA before Scotian goes to the community.
- Rob indicates he can have a meeting where the consultants can review the reports that have been done for the EIA and illustrate the proposed extraction limits.
- Martin asked if the CLC could ask NSE for a two-year extension on the reports for the EIA? Rob says it would be nice to think we can all just agree to a process but there's been so much litigation on this file that Environment is by the book.