

# Report on ?Esdilagh First Nation Workshops

## “Overview of the Mineral Resource Development Sector”



by  
Edwin Kolausok  
B.A., M.Sc., M.B.A.  
?Esdilagh First Nation  
and  
Dave Lefebure  
C3 Alliance Corp.

March 22, 2013

Copyright © ?Esdilagh First Nation, not to be reproduced or quoted without permission from EFN

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Workshop Delivery .....	5
First Workshop for ?Esdilagh First Nation .....	6
Second Workshop at Tsilhqot'in National Government .....	9
Third Workshop at Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council .....	11
Outcomes .....	13
Conclusions .....	15

## **Executive Summary**

The ?Esdilagh First Nation, with the help of the Tsilhqot'in National Government and Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council, organized three successful workshops regarding the mineral resource development sector. The workshops were held for First Nations on ?Esdilagh First Nation Indian Reserve #3 and in the Williams Lake area of British Columbia in January and February, 2013. The workshops were funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

The “Overview of the Mineral Resource Development Sector” workshops covered the complete life cycle of the mineral industry, starting with a focus on exploration then continuing to mine development and operation and finishing with mine reclamation and closure. The information was presented to community members with the objective to explain the nature of mineral industry activities with an emphasis on mineral exploration and modern mine closure and reclamation. Key outcomes for the participants included understanding the nature of different phases of an exploration program; appreciating modern mine closure and reclamation along with the related challenges; and understanding how a First Nation can develop agreements related to proposed mineral industry projects.

A private company with expertise in explaining the mineral resource sector to community audiences, C3 Alliance Corp., was contracted to deliver the Workshops. Esdilagh Development Corporation also provided logistical support towards the project. The ?Esdilagh First Nation leadership was pleased with the quality and the respectful nature of the workshops presented by C3 Alliance Corp.

?Esdilagh Chief and Council thanked all those who supported the workshops as it is very important for ?Esdilagh citizens/members and others to understand the mineral resource development sector as it has and continues to have a big impact on ?Esdilagh lands, people, environment and communities. It became clear through the workshops that there is much more work to do to help people understand the full scope of the mineral resource development sector. ?Esdilagh and the workshop participants stated that they learned a lot from the workshops and want more of these type of events to occur in the future to help them understand the industry better.

## Introduction

Given the intense politics and strongly polarized feelings surrounding mineral resource development sector in the Cariboo Region of British Columbia, all sensitivities had to be carefully scrutinized to plan how the best to increase local First Nations understanding of the mineral resource development sector. Recognizing these sensitivities, ʔEsdilagh First Nation (EFN) decided to engage the most experienced instruction team possible and engage EDC in the complete planning and implementation of the workshops. Originally a large Cariboo Mineral Resource Development Conference was planned but had to be cancelled due to local sensitivities. The Cariboo Mineral Resource Development Conference is still required. The workshops have laid the initial ground work to deliver this higher level conference in the Cariboo Region at a later date.

The Workshops were initiated, organized and co-ordinated by the ʔEsdilagh First Nation and with the help of the ʔEsdilagh Development Corporation (EDC). The ʔEsdilagh First Nation contacted the Tsilhqot'in National Government and Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council to inform them of the workshops and to invite them to participate. EDC was then hired to coordinate, facilitate and deliver all administrative, technical, transportation, advertising, bookings and catering tasks. As well, they were responsible to negotiate with and develop a contract with the instructors. An experienced, First Nation led company with extensive expertise in explaining the mineral resource sector to community audiences, C3 Alliance Corp., was contracted to deliver the Workshops.

The EDC organized three workshops regarding the mineral resource sector for a number of First Nations in the Williams Lake area of British Columbia. Held in January and February, 2013, the Workshops were titled "Overview of the Mineral Resource Development Sector". They were funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC).

The objective was to provide information about the nature of mineral industry activities with an emphasis on mineral exploration and mine closure and reclamation. As well the Workshops profiled how Aboriginal communities can benefit economically from mineral exploration, mining and reclamation.

Each workshop was opened up in the custom of the Dene which is to give gratitude to the Creator and seek blessings for the initiative at hand. Elders and participants were offered the opportunity to provide the Opening Prayer which allowed for respect to those who wished to engage in the honour of this ancestral practice.

## Workshop Delivery

The EFN leadership presented AANDC with a proposal seeking funding to improve local first nations understanding of the mineral resource sector. This reflected their interest in creating more awareness of potential local economic opportunities and a more fulsome understanding related to the mineral industry for Aboriginal Peoples. Led by Edwin Kolausok, Senior Socio-Economic Development Advisor and Chief Bernie Mack, the EFN took responsibility for the logistics for the Workshops, including the advertising, the meeting rooms and the coffee breaks and lunches and most importantly meeting with key First Nation leaders to get their input and understanding for the need of these workshops which ultimately led to them agreeing to send participants to the workshops. They also opened and closed the Workshops.

The Workshops delivered by C3 Alliance Corp. (Appendix 1) are designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities. Specifically the schedule is flexible and responds to the interests of the participants. From the start, a welcoming atmosphere is established and questions are encouraged at any time.

The instructors were Jerry Asp and Dave Lefebure who have had lengthy careers related to the mineral industry. Jerry Asp also has extensive experience negotiating and signing agreements on behalf of Aboriginal communities in Canada and internationally. Jerry was very effective in creating an environment of respect which allowed for significant dialogue and input by the participants.

An example of the schedule for the three workshops is included as Appendix 2. The two days for the workshops were spent with a mixture of answering questions, oral discussions led by Jerry Asp, slide presentations by Dave Lefebure and talking circles. Jerry Asp presented numerous examples of how the Tahltan and other First Nations are ensuring that mineral industry company activities on Traditional Territories respect cultural and environmental values and benefit Aboriginal Peoples. While the presentations by Dave Lefebure provided images of a wide variety of industry activities and explained the basic characteristics of this unique sector. Both instructors responded frankly to all questions in everyday language.

Some examples of the types of questions asked by participants are shown in Figure 1. The questions demonstrate the different interests that participants brought to the Workshops.

Often the questions led into extended discussions as the instructors interacted with the participants. At all the Workshops, the review of local mineral exploration, mine development and mine activity was well received. In many cases workshop participants had information to share or specific questions.

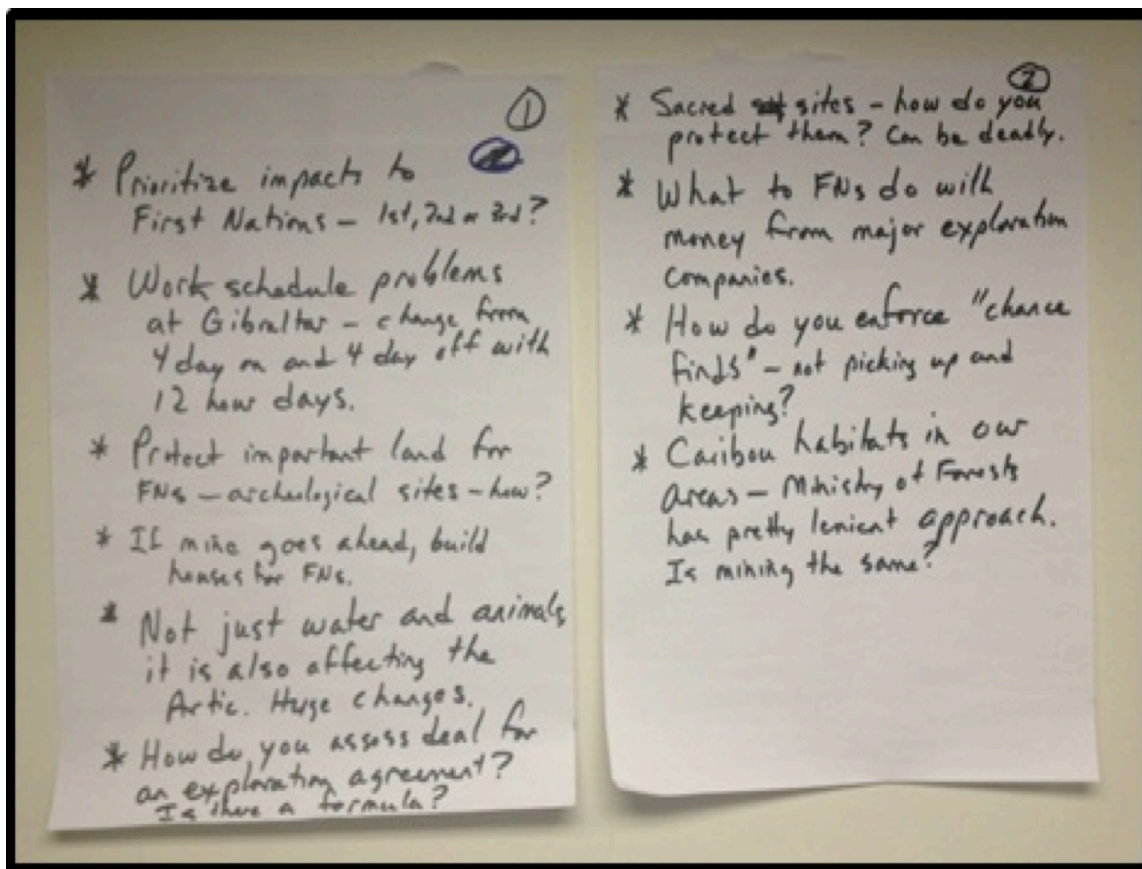


Figure 1. Questions Raised at the Start of Workshop #3.

### ***First Workshop for ?Esdilagh First Nation***

The first Workshop was held on the ?Esdilagh First Nation Indian Reserve #3 on January 23 and 24, 2013. The participants were quite interested in the mineral resource sector. Most of the Workshop participants had no work experience with the mineral resource sector. The EFN leadership has been meeting with Taseko Mines regarding the nearby Gibraltar Mine and two band members work at the mine site but despite being located right next to EFN I.R. #12, no meaningful benefits have been provided to EFN, rather, EFN has experienced negative impacts from the mine to their Aboriginal Rights and there has been a long history of no relationship with Taseko despite EFN trying to engage them to respect EFN interests. This has led to EFN members not trusting the mineral development sector and people being very cautious about engaging them due to past and ongoing experiences.

There were numerous questions throughout the two days. The Gibraltar mine, located to the east of the reserve and on the other side of the Fraser River, was brought up in several questions. The potential for First Nations to benefit economically from the mineral resource sector was the subject of considerable discussion.





Figure 2. EFN Elder Eddie Baptiste, with C3 Workshop Instructors Dave Lefebure and Jerry Asp, in the EFN Band Office taking a break from the Workshop to talk about the importance of youth needs such as training, employment needs and other important things for ?Esdilagh membership.

During the workshop many EFN members came and went due to their availability but a good core of members, councillors and staff participated throughout the two days. Youth also participated as well as elders.

EFN Chief Bernie Mack provided an overview of the reasons for the need for these types of workshops, encouraged people to actively participate, and thanked all who supported the workshop.

Overall, the workshops were very successful in stimulating discussion and in sharing experiences but also to provide extensive understanding of the benefits that can arise from responsible resource development activities.



Figure 3. EFN youth drop in to observe the workshop at EFN Band Office.



Figure 4. EFN Councillor Howard Johnny, 1<sup>st</sup> on Left and Chief Bernie Mack, fourth from Left at the EFN workshop.



## ***Second Workshop at Tsilhqot'in National Government***

The second Workshop was held at the Tsilhqot'in National Government Boardroom in Williams Lake on February 12 and 13, 2013. This Workshop attracted a mixture of participants, including two Elders. Unfortunately, the Workshop was competing with other activities that required some participants to miss parts of it. A couple of the participants had some experience with the mineral resource sector. Many of the questions arose from Jerry Asp's discussions of potential relationships between First Nations and the mineral industry, including how to get involved to protect environmental and cultural aspects of Traditional Territories.



Figure 5. EFN and Tsilhqot'in Elders are highly respected for their knowledge and their participation in the workshops added significant value to the discussions.

During the workshop held in the TNG Boardroom, TNG staff, Tsilhqot'in citizens/members and others were welcome to participate and share during the workshops. The dialogue was very specific and related to many concerns that people have about the mineral resource development sector. Much of the discussion centered on conservation and protection of the

environment from irresponsible development activities. The facilitators once again proved their value by understanding the sensitivities, understanding First Nation culture and providing balanced honest examples to demonstrate how other First Nations have engage the mineral resource development sector.



Figure 6. Facilitator Jerry Asp in the TNG Boardroom explaining and answering questions posed by participants at the workshop. Jerry was well received and many people commented on Jerry's extensive knowledge and experience which helped them to be comfortable in asking questions and pointing out their concerns, but equally important in broadening their understanding of the mineral resource development sector. Given that this was one of the main objectives of the workshops, EFN was very pleased with the outcome of this workshop.



### ***Third Workshop at Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council***

The Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council office in Williams Lake hosted the third Workshop on February 14 and 15, 2013. This Workshop included a mixture of participants, including a couple with significant mineral industry experience. The participants had numerous questions that covered the spectrum of the life cycle of mining. This workshop allowed Carrier Chilcotin members along with Tsilhqot'in members and leaders and a few Shushwap participants to come together in an open environment to learn about the mineral resource development sector and to share their experiences and understanding of the industry. Chief Bernie Mack provided an overview of the workshop and welcomed all participants in the spirit of cooperation and understanding and encouraged participants to feel comfortable in actively participating in the workshop.



Figure 7. Tsilhqot'in and Carrier participants diligently engaged in the workshop held at the Chilcotin Carrier Tribal Council facilities.

The workshop stimulated much good dialogue and led to the EFN leadership meeting with the CCTC leadership at a later date to begin more formal discussions related to their mutual interests.

Phillip Lee of AANDC attended the workshop and provided a very insightful speech. He indicated that AANDC was supportive of the workshops because of EFN's request and the need to promote understanding from all perspectives on the mineral resource development sector. Phil is very respected by the EFN as he brings knowledge, respect and understanding of First Nation's interests and needs. Phil was recognized by EFN and thanked for his and AANDC's support of this much needed workshop initiative.



Figure 8. Phillip Lee, AANDC, and EFN Councillor, William Baptiste arrive early and prepare diligently to engage an enthusiastic group of workshop participants at the CCTC Boardroom.

## Outcomes

The participants gained considerable knowledge about the mineral resource sector in the Workshops, including:

- understanding the major differences between exploration and mining;
- identifying the different phases of an exploration program;
- how a mine development project moves from one phase to the next;
- appreciating modern mine closure and reclamation along with the challenges;
- learning how Aboriginal communities can choose to benefit economically from the mineral industry; and
- understanding how a First Nation can participate in government processes related to proposed mineral industry projects.

EFN Chief and TNG Vice Tribal Chair Bernie Mack spoke at all workshops and participated in all workshops. Chief Mack provided excellent insight into the need for more activities like these workshops and when it came to outcomes, he stated, *“We have lots of concerns as our lands and people have been impacted considerably by resource development activities but it is clear from these workshops that part of the objectives are being met, namely the need to have open and honest dialogue such as has been engaged in these workshops. When people understand First Nations’ interests and when people hear and see more closely what government and industry are doing, there will be better understanding for all and ultimately this can lead to better relationships and better mutual benefits for all if it is done right. We are thankful to have experienced facilitators and to AANDC for supporting these workshops but we are also thankful to all of you for participating because it is you and our communities that will ultimately have to live with the consequences of resource mineral development activities. Therefore, more workshops like these very successful ones will help to move us all along the right path.”*

*“We are very grateful to all participants for joining us in these important workshops as they demonstrate to us that there remains much to learn and that there can be significant positive benefits that come from responsible resource development. These workshops have demonstrated that there are common ground issues that we all share, and that most people, when they understand the complete picture of the mineral resource development sector, find that regulations are made to protect the environment and that those mining companies that truly believe in quality Corporate Social Responsibility are doing the right thing by providing true and meaningful benefits to First Nations on projects they have ongoing in First Nations homelands. We are thankful also to AANDC for supporting these workshops as we have limited resources and we look forward to much more support from them as only by capacitating these types of initiatives will there be better understanding of the full scope of the mineral resource development sector from a responsible mineral development perspective,”* stated Edwin Kolausok, Senior Socio-Economic Development advisor of the EFN.



Workshop participant Jimmy Baptiste of EFN I.R.#3 stated, *"I really learned a lot from this workshop. You need to have more workshops like this so people can see what is happening and then they will understand it better."*

Workshop participant Sheila Williams of the Sugar Cane Shushwap Band stated, *" I learned so much from the workshop. The facilitators were so experienced and really provided a lot of information to help me understand the mining sector better."*

Workshop participant and Shushwap/Tsilhqot'in member Nelson Char stated, *"It was really good that you involved and invited everyone to these workshops. Our elders really enjoyed sharing and being part of these workshops."*

Instructor and well respected former Chief Jerry Asp summed up the workshops this way, *"We were honoured to facilitate these workshops. We know there is great need for more information sharing in the Cariboo Region and that there has been a history of mistrust by First Nations of governments and industry but when you learn more about the industry it will help to inform you to make your own better decisions on how you wish to address your issues related to the mineral resource development sector. Our ancestors have always looked out for the best interests of our lands and resources for our people. They have always told us to do things the right way. They have also encouraged us to learn as much as we can about anything within our homelands so that we can be aware and make the right decisions to preserve and protect our interests. I am thankful to you all for inviting C3Corporation into your homelands and trusting us to deliver these educational workshops. In my opinion from the participation and the very good questions and participation we received, the workshops were a complete success."*

## Conclusions

Three successful and respectful workshops titled “Overview of the Mineral Resource Development Sector” were held on ʔEsdilagh First Nation Reserve #3 and in the Williams Lake area in January and February, 2013. They were delivered under the leadership of the ʔEsdilagh First Nation with funding from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

The ʔEsdilagh First Nation leadership were pleased with the quality and depth of the workshops presented by C3 Alliance Corp and coordinated and managed by EDC. A key element was the presence of two senior instructors with considerable experience in the mineral industry and accustomed to delivering workshops to Aboriginal communities. Another key element was the experienced team at EDC who took care of all the logistical management aspects required to host these successful workshops. Above all, it was the visionary leadership at EFN who saw the gap in understanding of the mineral resource development sector and who conceived, initiated and participated in the workshops.

EFN is grateful to Phillip Lee and the senior managers at AANDC for also understanding the need for these workshops and subsequently sponsoring them.

The workshops were a great success. More workshops and a conference are required to be inclusive of all people and increase local understanding of the full scope of the mineral resource development sector. It is only through unity that we will achieve more complete mutual benefits for all in our communities and country.