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Email:

Klondike Sun ~ June 2, 2010

By Admin

YESAB Approves Dawson Wastewater Treatment Plant

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The Klondike Spirit was on the street on the evening of May 26 as owner Brad Whitelaw prepared to launch the boat for third season. At a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting, the owner of the Triple J Hotel said he was looking forward to strong season for the boat. Photo by Dan Davidson

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

The Dawson Designated Office of the Environmental and Socioeconomic Assessment Board has completed its review of the Dawson Wastewater Treatment Plant project and has recommended, subject to certain specified conditions, that the project should go ahead.

Appendix 1 of the 56 pages report contains a summary list of 67 mitigations that the office has recommended be followed in the construction and subsequent operation of this sewage treatment facility.

The plant is being constructed by the Yukon government on behalf of the City of Dawson to comply with a court order originally issued in March 2003. Since that time there have been several extensions of the deadline for meeting the court order. There was also an abortive attempt to solve the problem by building a sewage lagoon at the junction of the Dome Road and the Klondike Highway. A citizenraised petition stopped the City of Dawson from allowing the zoning amendment which would have allowed that to happen.

The current project might almost be seen as a combination lagoon and mechanical treatment plant. The lagoon portion is a 100 m shaft which is essentially an aerated lagoon stood on end (two of them, actually, since there is backup redundancy on all parts of this project) using a proprietary technology known as VERTREAT.

The plant will be built by Corix Water Systems on 5th Avenue near the corner of Turner Street on part of the site of the former Dept. of Highways' Grader Station. The initial contract was for \$24.8 million though this has since be raised to \$34.3 million and includes the construction of a biomass (wood chips) heating plant which will heat the SST plant as well as the existing reservoir pump house and the potable water system.

The water from Dawson's wells is so cold that it has to be heated before it is piped into the system. It also has to be kept flowing constantly, which is one of the main reasons why Dawson's water use per capita is so high.

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ALEXARANK

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The YESAB ruling covers both the construction and operation of the plant and concludes that there is the potential for the project to have an impact in the areas of public health and safety and aquatic resources.

"It was determined that the project will have significant adverse effects to public health and safety as well as aquatic resources without the inclusion of additional mitigations."

While the 67 recommendations go into a lot of detail about what ought to be done, they are essentially summed up in the nine terms and conditions included in the report's summary.

The treatment shafts are close to the town's wells and so there are concerns about contamination of the aquifer. The first several recommendations deal with that issue.

1. Additional groundwater quality monitoring wells shall be installed up and down gradient of the DWWTP and up gradient of community wells PW-1, 2 and 3.

2. Monitoring well locations identified on figure 7.3-1 of the project proposal shall also be used for monitoring groundwater quality.

3. Total and fecal coliform shall be mandatory parameters to be monitored for groundwater quality.

4. Groundwater monitoring shall occur bi-weekly to ensure detection prior to well contamination.

5. Groundwater monitoring results shall be included in the Annual Report for review. There are concerns about the impact of the construction in a residential neighbourhood and the next few recommendations address those concerns.

6. Notice to neighbouring residents and users of the surrounding area shall be provided describing planned activities including expected noise levels during those times throughout every stage of construction.

7. Operation of concrete batch plant, drilling activities and prolonged use (running) of heavy equipment shall not occur before 9:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m. during weekdays; 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on weekends.

Screened solid waste will continue to be disposed of at the Quigley Landfill but the sludge left over from the treatment process will also go there. As there have been water quality issues stemming from the landfill in the past, this area will also be monitored.

8. Groundwater monitoring wells shall be installed west of the disposal site (in addition to the proposed).

The final point is a table specifying what levels will be acceptable in the results from the monitoring in point #8. Monitoring should include Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Oil and Grease, pH levels, Fecal Coliforms, Toxicity (LC50 96-Hour Bioassay test), and Total Residual Chlorine.

The report was released on April 28, 2010.

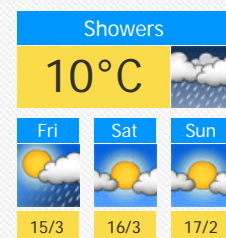
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