



Photo by Nancy McGuire

**RED-HOT RACERS**— The Fourth of July Front Street games in Nome featured a 25-foot dash for folks 80 and over. Left to right are Dick Galleher, Mina Bachelder, Ingeborg Handeland, Senator Ted Stevens and Bob McAdoo. Senator Stevens and his family were able to take part in the Nome Fourth of July celebrations. He said that the parade and festivities are a fitting tribute to the 230th anniversary of our nation's birth. He said the events reminded him of the words of Francis Scott Key, who wrote the National Anthem. In 1831 Key delivered a 4th of July speech in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol building, he told those gathered there: "The spectacle of a happy people, rejoicing in thankfulness before God and the world for the blessing of civil liberty, is no vain pageant." Stevens said the 4th of July is not just a chance for us to gather with family and friends; it is a celebration of the freedoms our forefathers fought and won for us. It is a celebration of those who continue to fight for freedom around the globe. Today our men and women in uniform continue the proud tradition begun on the battlefields of Lexington and Concord, Yorktown and Trenton, the Civil War battlefields. Here in Nome your veterans fought in World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, the Persian Gulf, Iran and Iraq.

# The Nome Nugget

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## Street rehabilitation slated for completion in 2007

By Ted Meyer

At the July 10 Nome Common Council meeting, City Manager Randy Romenesko reported that a request for bids for the Nome City Street Rehabilitation Project has been published by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The project consists of the rehabilitation of portions of Front, Bering, and Seppala Streets. Work will consist of reconstruction of the road sub-grade,

drain system, sidewalks, and replacement of pavement. Project completion is scheduled for October 2007.

Final approval was given to an ordinance authorizing the disposal of municipal property by lease to GCI. The 27,116 square foot parcel is located in the Port Road Industrial Subdivision.

In new business, a resolution adopting the risk management plan

*continued on page 4*

## Cheney: America needs Alaska gas

By Sandra L. Medearis

The Legislature will meet again in special session beginning July 12 to continue to hammer on a gas pipeline contract, with additional hearings slated for July 13 and 14, with attempts to change the governor's revision of oil taxes and further debate on Alaska hire issues on the agenda.

Alaska representatives are laboring on hundreds of pages of a proposed contract with three oil companies under pressure to hurry up

from the Bush administration channeled through Vice President Dick Cheney, Sen. Ted Stevens, and Gov. Frank Murkowski's daughter, Sen. Lisa Murkowski.

The message—and a *de facto* plug for Gov. Frank Murkowski's reelection—from the Bush administration in a letter from Cheney to the Alaska legislature was that America needs Alaska gas—now. Lisa Murkowski underlined the message

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Photo by Peggy Fagerstrom

**WOW, LOOK AT ME** — Miss ANB, Andrea Painter, gracefully pleases the crowd as she does the blanket toss.

## Beach miner rescued

By Nancy McGuire

Early in the afternoon, July 7, Harold Zeke Schetzle, 57, and his beach mining partner, Scott Travos, were operating a floating dredge offshore from the seawall area south of River Street. Schetzle was in a wet suit and diving, using a snorkel breathing system in waist deep, cold water, when he apparently suffered a heart attack.

His partner managed to attract the attention of a woman who was sitting along the seawall, and she ran

to a business to phone 911 for help.

The Nome Fire Department, Search and Rescue and Ambulance Service responded.

Shane Smiththisler was in the port area when he heard the emergency call on his radio and got into the City of Nome skiff. He sped through the busy port, arrived on the scene, pulled Schetzle from the water and transported him to shore.

Access to the area was difficult, but a four-wheel drive truck was on scene. Emergency personnel could

not detect a pulse. He was placed on a backboard and cardiopulmonary resuscitation was initiated while he was transported to Norton Sound Hospital.

Medical personnel got his heart going, stabilized him and medicated him to Anchorage.

According to Nome Fire Chief Wes Perkins, it is thought that about 15 minutes may have passed from the time Schetzle first got in trouble till he was taken to the hospital.



Photo by Nancy McGuire

**FIREFIGHTERS** — NVFD responded to a fire at two abandoned buildings on Trigg Alley Saturday Morning, July 8. The fire was quickly brought under control. The buildings were owned by Wes Perkins.

*See Rock Creek Mining story on page 5.*

## Fire destroys two Nome buildings

Flames were shooting out of the boarded-up residence on Trigg Alley just west of Bering Street at 9:45 Saturday morning when the Nome Volunteer Fire Department was called to the scene. Thick black smoke billowed high into the clear blue sky, and when the firefighters arrived on the scene they discovered

that two structures were fully involved in flames. A house and an adjacent three-unit, two-story apartment building were burning. Both buildings were unoccupied and had been boarded-up for the past two years. The house had been a former WWII KD building.

The cause of the fire is undeter-

mined as of press time. However, Nome police indicated that there have been arrests made at that location for minors consuming alcohol. It seems that the fire may have started in the hallway of the smaller structure and spread to the two-story building. Both buildings are

*continued on page 4*

# Comments on proposed Rock Creek hard rock mine reveal issues

By Diana Haecker

The public comment period for the first wave of permits to be issued by the Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Natural Resources and the Army Corps of Engineers for the proposed NovaGold Rock Creek mining project ended last Thursday.

Nomeites issued their comments – both pro and con – to the permitting agencies after the draft permits and volumes of the project description were available to the public online since June 1.

While a public hearing on June 26 mostly showed pro-mining support from the community, a more detailed look at the planning documents, draft permitting documents and prepared environmental impact documents caused Nome residents and other Alaska environmental groups to put their concerns on paper.

The Environmental Protection Agency requested an extension for public comment on the 404 section of the Clean Water Act, which deals with the proposed disturbance of 415 acres of wetlands due to mining operations. The permitting agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, granted the request, and public comments can be filed until July 20.

ACOE permitting project manager Jim Wolfe said, "We have received a lot of comments, most of them favorable to the development of the Rock Creek mining project. Some citizens have voiced concerns and want to be assured that things are done responsibly, and a few are opposed to the development of the mine."

The comments are part of the public record and are currently held at the ACOE office in Elmendorf. Some comments were made available by commentators to *The Nome Nugget*. While vocal proponents of the mine project urged the permitting agencies to expedite the process and sign the permits, critics brought issues to the forefront that deal with potential acid mine drainage; the danger of cyanide forming other complexes; the potential to poison watersheds; and subsistence issues, dust issues, traffic issues, aesthetic and quality of life issues. To carefully weigh the consequences for Nome, the environment and the economy, more information was requested by those who actually read through the hundreds of pages of project descriptions.

Austin Ahmasuk expressed that very vocal Nome persons believe that the Nome area can sustain mining and the Rock Creek Project. Ahmasuk said, "Not everyone in Nome is of the same attitude and is not connected to mining activities or mining jobs, or wish to see additional gold mining. For some Nome persons, subsistence is a very important aspect of living in Nome, and potential impacts to Nome subsistence uses must not be abridged."

**In short: Rock Creek mine and mill and the Big Hurrah facilities**

According to ACG's project description, "Rock Creek mine and mill complex will consist of an open pit gold mine, two non-acid generating development rock dumps, a gold recovery plant and a paste tailings storage facility. The process plant site area will include a three-stage crushing and screening plant, a crushed ore stockpile, a mill facility, a maintenance shop, an administration and mine dry building, warehouse, explosive storage and fuel storage." Milling includes crushing, screening, gravity separation, flotation and a cyanide carbon leaching process.

According to the planning documents, "the Big Hurrah mine will include an open pit gold mine, a non-acid generating development rock dump, a temporary stockpile of potentially acid generating development rock to be backfilled in the pit, a run-of mine ore stockpile, a truck maintenance shop, a small administration and mine dry

building, explosive storage and diesel fuel storage." While there is no power supply other than diesel generators, the proposal calls for trucking the ore to the Rock Creek mill facility on a year-round basis. Mine operations will likely occur for three to six months out of the year, but could be extended to be year-round. Trucking will likely occur on a year-round basis.

**Jobs, training and the economy**

Comments in support of the project were issued by the Nome Chamber of Commerce and the City of Nome as well as a host of

Nomeites during the public comment meeting on June 26. Verbal as well as written comments

*"The POSITIVE economic effects on the community and the region cannot be underestimated."*  
- Nome Chamber of Commerce

most cited the welcome opportunity of more jobs and increased revenue for local businesses and the City in form of sales tax revenue as well as the considerable consumption of power provided by NJUS to operate the proposed mill. The Nome Chamber of Commerce letter of support says, "The Chamber believes Alaska Gold Company has the qualified professionals on staff to operate the mine in an environmentally responsible manner" and "The POSITIVE economic effects on the community and the region cannot be underestimated." The Chamber maintains that ACG jobs will be high paying jobs with an average salary of \$62,963 per year and that these high paying jobs create more expendable income, which further drives the local construction and retail sector. "In all, the Nome Chamber of Commerce sees the mine as a win-win for the Alaska Gold Company and the Bering Strait Region."

Bering Straits Native Corporation and Sitnasuak Native Corporation did not comment in writing, but expressed to *The Nome Nugget* their support of the mining project. Sitnasuak's Neal Foster said that he anticipates a positive economic impact on Nome, especially increases in sales of fuel, fuel storage and other goods at Bonanza Express. Sitnasuak also leases surface rights to Alaska Gold. According to the project description, land of the proposed Rock Creek mine and mill facility is owned 66 percent by Alaska Gold Company, a fully owned subsidiary of Canadian parent NovaGold, and the remainder of the land lies within BSNL lands holding the subsurface rights, whereas Sitnasuak owns the surface rights.

Melanie Edwards, vice president of Kawerak, and Robert Keith, chairman of the board, have said that the Kawerak board of directors has not taken a formal position regarding the NovaGold plans.

However, Keith commented during the public comment meeting on June 26, that in light of the reduction in federal and state funding of programs and the increase in energy costs, a major mining project like Rock Creek and Big Hurrah is welcome. "The time is ripe for a project of this nature," Keith said. He added that NovaGold had been very transparent with their plans and

engaged the community over the years. He also mentioned that the company has addressed Kawerak's education and training division regarding workforce development. "I am hopeful that NovaGold can spur economic development and minimize any potential impact on the environment," Keith said. Keith added that he did not go through all the planning documents, but said, "Their willingness to be transparent with our region is the right approach and implies the right attitude."

Lew Tobin, Kawerak's regional training specialist said in a written comment that NovaGold is to be commended for their willingness to train and hire within the region. Tobin wrote that as soon as NovaGold had solidified their mining plans, they came and asked for Kawerak's support in creating a local, trained job bank.

Warren Woods, Rock Creek mining manager, has visited a number of villages to hold presentations on employment possibilities. ACG has also worked with Kawerak to create apprenticeship programs for carpenters, plumbers, electricians, heavy equipment mechanics and heavy equipment operators.

ACG vice president Doug Nicholson said during his presentation at the public comment hearing that the project will create 135 jobs and that the company prefers local hire. However, in the planning documents, the company assumes that new housing is needed for people moving into Nome. "A total of 134 new residents are expected in association with the mine workforce," says the demographic aspect in Volume II of the project description. As the mitigation factor, the document says that a local hire preference seeks to minimize the influx of new people and to minimize the changes to the ethnic balance, which was described as 58 percent Alaska Native and 37 percent Caucasian.

The document states that an increase of 130 full-time jobs for four to five years would result in \$8.5 million in direct wages per year. "Total annual economic benefit of wages and services combined of \$13.6 million per year," is the economic equation. ACG estimates new residential development of 27 homes. The project description, Vol. II reads, "Increased personal spending of an estimated \$6 million per year results in an estimated \$158,752 per year net increase in municipal income from sales tax."

**Power needs**

During the public comment period, ACG vice president Doug Nicholson said that the mine and mill's power needs will lie in the five to seven megawatt range. The project descriptions, however, say that the Rock Creek mill facility will require about nine to 11 megawatts of electric power supplied by NJUS. A new powerline must be installed along the Glacier Creek Bypass Road to the mine site. According to NJUS general manager John Handeland, the cost to run the power line out to Rock Creek is

approximately \$2 million, and unless somebody else steps in to pay for it, NovaGold is going to foot the bill. During the public comment and question session, Jim Rowe, Nome business owner and Snake River Valley camp owner, asked about the possibility of burying the power lines. Nicholson responded that it is not an option, and NJUS board member Fred Moody said that it is cost prohibitive.

**Water quality and wetlands**

Trustees for Alaska issued comments on behalf of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, the Alaska Center for the Environment and Nome resident Austin Ahmasuk on the 404 permit and State water quality certification. The Trustees found that the permit issuing agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, has not issued a draft environmental assessment or a draft Finding of No Significant Impact before considering the 404 permit. The Trustees, a non-profit organization specializing in environmental issues, state that an EA or FONSI draft is needed according to the National Environmental Policy Act. In the Rock Creek plan of opera-

tions, environmental impact document, it states that 681 acres of wetlands lie within the project's boundaries.

The project description says that 401 acres of wetland will be "disturbed," and in the section listing major aspects and consequences, it says that 515 acres of wetland will be filled. The Trustees point out that the environmental impact document does not explain exactly what 'disturbed' means and that "the proposed 'disturbance' of 401 acres of wetlands is a significant environmental effect, which requires the preparation of an EIS.

"The damage to these wetlands resources far outweighs any benefits of a four-to-five year mining project that, while it may provide an economic benefit to the applicant, will significantly and detrimentally affect water quality and subsistence resources for the local population," the Trustee's comment says. The proposed disturbance of wetlands, the Trustees say, significantly adversely affects aquatic ecosystem diversity, productivity and stability. "These significant adverse effects will also be felt by the Alaska Native people who use the area for recreation and subsistence; the area has significant economic value to them," concluded Victoria Clark, interim legal director for the

Trustees of Alaska.

Concerns about the water quality and the relatively close proximity of Nome's water source, Moonlight Springs, just a few miles from the proposed Rock Creek mine and mill were also raised.

City manager Randy Romenesko said that Nome's drinking water source, Moonlight Springs, is fed by an aquifer which is enclosed in a marble unit and "not anywhere near the proposed mine." According to a technical memorandum prepared by Bristol Environmental & Engineering for the City of Nome and NJUS, "the aquifer properties at the Moonlight wells are not known" and the recharge areas "are most likely areas where the marble formation outcrops. These outcrops may provide a direct conduit into the aquifer and are areas that are critical to maintaining good water quality and quantity. Precipitation and snowmelt within the recharge area eventually provide the water that supplies the wells."

The memorandum defines the recommended protection zone, assuming that the recharge area is confined to a large marble unit, which ends to the west of Moonlight Springs by the Anvil Creek fault.

The memorandum says, "This fault will restrict any flow of water through the bedrock from one side to the other." The eastern boundary of the proposed protection zone is the pass between Anvil

*"The damage to these wetlands resources far outweighs any benefits of a four-to-five year mining project that, while it may provide an economic benefit to the applicant, will significantly and detrimentally affect water quality and subsistence resources for the local population."*  
- Trustees for Alaska

Mountain and Newton Peak. The northern boundary runs along Specimen Gulch. According to the technical memorandum, Moonlight Springs is not connected to the Snake River watershed.

**Subsistence**

Kawerak Inc. president Loretta Bullard expressed concern regarding subsistence use lifestyles in both Big Hurrah and Rock Creek areas. While Bullard appreciated the proposed mitigation effort to construct fish pools at Big Hurrah, she specifies, "We recommend that the fish ponds are build sufficiently deep enough, be supplied by a year-round spring and have adequate cover to allow for their use by juvenile salmon."

As for the Snake River valley, Bullard wrote, "It is important that this Rock Creek mine development does not threaten the delicate balance of natural resources in this sys-

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## • Rock Creek mine

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tem." Bullard voiced concern about the use of cyanide, the effects of acid mine drainage, the release of arsenic and the threat of sedimentation from the mine. As a remedy, Bullard suggests, "We believe that effective monitoring of the Snake River and Solomon River watersheds will address our concerns and quickly detect any changes in water chemistry, and ensure that those levels are brought under control. We also suggest implementing an extensive monitoring program that tests the pH of the watershed, as well as monitors the level of cyanide and arsenic in the system, to ensure that the natural resources are not inadvertently exposed to high levels of contaminants." Bullard also requested to make the monitoring data available for the public.

Austin Ahmasuk also mentioned in his personal public comment concern about the proposed cyanide use. "The Rock Creek mine complex also maintains the possibility of exposing cyanide in its free form as well as its converted form to all animal life including humans." Ahmasuk went into details about cyanide complexes and how a relatively non-toxic form of ferricyanide can decompose to release the highly toxic free cyanide when exposed to direct ultraviolet light in water solutions, depending on the pH level. Another risk to subsistence resources, according to Ahmasuk, stems from acid generating rock piles. For the layman unable to discern what the consequences are and what tests need to be run to get the full picture of the effects, details are of importance.

Ahmasuk pointed out that no mention is made in the plan regarding the release of arsenic, antimony or molybdenum. "Arsenic and antimony are toxic materials likely to be released at Big Hurrah and the mill site. The DNR and Alaska Gold have not planned for the release of those elements which will affect the chemical water quality and degrade water quality for aquatic, avian and terrestrial life," Ahmasuk wrote. Ahmasuk concluded that the draft permits lack sufficient detail, are riddled with deficiencies in planning and control of pollutants, metals, metalloids and transition metals. "There are deficiencies in how fish habitat will be maintained or enhanced, and there are deficiencies in how reclamation will take place."

### Reindeer

Regarding the DNR permits and the Alaska Coastal management program consistency review, the Kawerak Reindeer Herders Association expressed concern whether or not the project will meet the ACMP consistency requirements to protect special habitat for reindeer. The Association's concerns are that the natural habitat of the wetlands will be negatively impacted and that reindeer herders rely on wetlands. "We are aware that hard rock mining operations release lead, mercury, zinc, copper and heavy metals into the environment," wrote Rose Fosdick, program director for the Reindeer Herders association. "We don't want our environment and reindeer habitat to be negatively affected by releases of toxins by mining operations. Of great concern is the impact of contamination by fugitive dust which affects the vegetation in the transportation corridor, and we do not want to experience similar problems as those produced by Red Dog Mine."

The Reindeer Herders Association identified three points for the company to consider: controlling the dust problem caused by increased traffic and heavy trucks; placing covers over rock and ore being transported; and continually testing for cadmium, heavy metals and other toxins as well as having a plan in place to stop contamination.

### Traffic, dust and road maintenance

Construction of a new access road is nearly finished. The new bypass road is built from the Teller Highway hugging the east side of the Snake River Valley. It was constructed to provide safer road conditions than previously existed with the old Glacier Creek Road winding around Anvil Mountain, crossing Anvil Creek and following the pass along Glacier Creek to the Snake River Valley. The old Glacier Creek Road intersects with the new bypass road at Glacier Creek, south of Rock Creek.

According to Shannon McCarthy, public information officer with DOT, the approximately four-mile long new bypass road was built with \$7.3 million in federal funds under Governor Frank Murkowski's Roads to Resources Initiative. The contractor, Kiewit, used gravel from ACG's Windfall pit to build the road. Construction is slated to be finished this year. Currently, Kiewit crews are putting the top layer of gravel on the road and soon will be able to put up traffic signs.

While the road diverts traffic away from the unstable existing Glacier Creek Road, the new road meanders off and on the so-called Samuelson Trail, used in the past by mushers, snowmachiners and recreational skiers to gain access to the Snake River Valley. This user group now needs to look for an alternative route to access the valley.

ACG's project description addresses traffic from Big Hurrah to the Rock Creek mine and mill complex, saying that "it is anticipated that the satellite operation at Big Hurrah will operate 12 months per year and include two ore trucks hauling loads 24 hours per day, seven days per week, in 90-minute round-trip cycles. For three to four months per year there will be a crew van going to the property and returning each day. The occasional truck will carry supplies to the mine site from town and/or the airport or port. In addition, minimal unscheduled pickup truck traffic will travel back and forth with emergency repair parts, staff, etc. Employee traffic could range from 40 personal vehicle trips."

Nuuk camp owners had commented during the public meeting that they are concerned with dust kicked up by trucks going by their fish camps and fish racks every 90 minutes, and in all likelihood covering their drying fish with a blanket of dust. Loretta Bullard in her comment letter wrote, "Large trucks carrying heavy loads, traveling at high speeds will cause roads to become degraded, increase dust for subsistence campsites and also pose a safety concern in this busy area." Bullard also requested reconsideration of the use of the chemical calcium chloride for dust control, "because of the likelihood that this chemical will settle on berries and greens, which can be picked for subsistence purposes and fish or meats, which are hung on the many subsistence drying racks in this area."

The dust issue was not identified in ACG's environmental impact document and neither was the question who will be responsible for snow removal on both Glacier Creek Road and the Nome-Council Highway. The document states, "Use of the existing Nome-Council Highway is consistent with the purpose and intent of the existing road. No measurable environmental

impact is anticipated along the road corridor from the transport of ore, equipment, and supply trucks between Big Hurrah and the Rock Creek facilities."

The DOT spokesperson Shannon McCarthy said that dust is a problem statewide, but that there is no special mitigation planned for the increased traffic resulting from the haul trucks between Big Hurrah and the Rock Creek mill facility. McCarthy also said that she is not aware of snow removal arrangements. The increased costs to the DOT would have to be approved by the legislature and as of now, no proposals has been made to amend the budget to include extended snow removal to Big Hurrah or Glacier Creek Road exist, according to McCarthy.

### Birding, tourism and quality of life

In his public comment, Peter Bente cautioned that the Nome-Council Road is a favored location for visiting tourists and bird-watchers. "My concern for this road system is highway safety and a high quality visitor experience for Nome tourists, especially bird-watchers," Bente commented. Since bird watchers tend to focus on the unusual North American and Eurasian bird species rather than traffic, Bente suggested that the ore-carrying trucks traveling from Big Hurrah to Rock Creek should be aware of the roadside activity occurring primarily in May and June. "I supposed there won't be any ruffled feathers, if there is cooperation," Bente said. Bente suggests slow speeds and caravaning of big trucks to ensure highway safety, road signs to remind highway travelers and possible designating observation areas. "It will take a cooperative effort to help ensure that Nome maintains its reputation as a first class birding destination and allow this aspect of tourism and its economic benefits to the region," Bente concluded.

NovaGold's environmental impact document does not anticipate safety problems, stating, "Given the infrequency of the truck traffic on the highway, opportunities for viewing away from the road right-of-way, and the availability of the parking area near Safety Sound Inlet, no measurable impacts are anticipated on the tourist industry and bird watching opportunities."

Others commented on the sheer experience of being able to view wildlife, ski, hike or mush dogs in the Snake River Valley and that the open-pit mine, constant traffic and noise will compromise the wilderness experience.

"Daily blasting, dust, noise from trucks and rock crushing will push wildlife away from the valley," wrote musher and Snake River Valley cabin owner Chris Rowe. She reported that the test drilling for the road was audible up and down the valley. She voiced concern about possible water pollution, dust, air pollution and wrote that although it may seem that there is lots of country around Nome, only a few travel routes exist and, if compromised, restrict access to the back country. As an example, she wrote, "There is an open pit mine now between Anvil Mountain and Newton, which has closed the main snowmachine and dog team winter trail from Nome to the direct north. The pit makes traveling in that area dangerous. It is a 200- to 300-foot hole that was never filled back in," Rowe wrote. She continued, "Nova

Gold has come into our community; what are they really offering us? The destruction of a beautiful scenic valley."

"Show some respect for the beauty of the land they are about to blast and dig into and for the life around ground zero that is gradually being changed," commented Rowe. She suggested to limit truck traffic during school bus pick-up and drop-off times; to put restrictions on blasting and trucking noise for weekends and holidays; and that NovaGold should "graciously provide land access across their claims that have been traditionally used in the 32 years I have been here...that is Osborn Road and the snow machine and dog trails in and out of Nome."

### The process

One permit dealing with section 404 of the Clean Water act is up for comment; the Alaska DNR has prepared a draft reclamation plan and six temporary water use permits and a fish habitat permit were up for review. The DNR was also in charge of reviewing the Alaska Coastal Management Programs consistency with the proposed project, inviting public comment. The Alaska Department of

Environmental Conservation drafted a waste management permit dealing with disposal of treated wastewater, tailings and other solid wastes. In addition, AGC's environmental contractor, Bristol Environmental and Engineering, had for the past three years prepared hundreds of pages describing the project and drafting an environmental impact document of 341 pages.

The public was expected to comment on the proposal, the draft permits, the ACMP consistency review and match it up with thousands of pages of Alaska Administrative Code and federal and state laws to insightfully comment on the Rock Creek mining project.

Ahmasuk commented that the lack of an immediate environmental assessment or statement by the ACOE adds a heavy burden to the public. "ACOE may have abridged its responsibility to make the initial assessment or statement and has placed a tremendous burden on the public within a very short time frame to comment upon this very complicated project," Ahmasuk said.

For more information on the project go to [www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/largemine](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/mining/largemine).

## Verbal comments made on June 26

**Jim Rowe:** "Gold companies have a poor track record here. There were a lot of promises made and not followed up. Who says you're different?"

**Doug Nicholson:** "You're comparing apples and oranges. Back then they had different standards. We started to clean up Alaska Gold Company land, we're cleaning up our property and we want to be a responsible mining outfit. We post a reclamation bond of \$4.1 million until the reclamation is done."

**Roseann Timbers:** "We will be here for a long, long time. Once the gold is gone, it's gone, and we are left here with the consequences."

**Leo Rasmussen:** "I am not the least worried about the impact on environment. Their intent is to stay around for long time. I do not fear mining activity coming back to this country."

**Austin Ahmasuk:** "There is only little talk about cyanide. What is being portrayed to public is not the whole truth. Cyanide in this process very easily forms other complexes that can enter the environment, that can disassociate in ultraviolet light, enter the water and be major health hazard."

**Judy Martinson:** "I am very much in support of this mine coming in. If we don't have some economic infusion, we'll see an exodus happening. We have to trust in our state and government people. There are lots of laws that control mining. I place my trust in state regulation that they are a watchdog and overseeing that things are done right."

**Jim Hansen:** "We all appreciate the environment, but these folks are not going to destroy the Seward peninsula. There are challenges with every gold mine, but I bet you all the challenges have been studied, and all answers to all problems are known. Our water is not gonna be polluted. This is a modern gold mine, so we don't have to worry about any disasters out there. I can only see one major problem and that is there are not more of them. We need more private industry. We need more commercial fishermen, we need more gold mines, we need more of everything."

**Josie Stiles:** "I encourage that these mines will be available for tourists to visit. The history of mining is very important to Nome tourism. As the president of the Nome Arts Council, I appreciate the continued corporate donations that the Alaska Gold Company has made."

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