

URANIUM MORATORIUM NOW

The deadline for the public to comment on the Peel Watershed Planning Commission draft plan is coming up on June 30th.

The Yukon Conservation Society would like to point out that over 8,000 of the claims staked in the region since the planning process began are intent on finding uranium.

Uranium mining is not a healthy or wise thing to do, because it adds radioactivity to the other environmental impacts of mining.

Should a uranium mine be developed in the Peel Watershed or anywhere else in the Yukon, over 85% of the radioactivity will be left behind in the tailings and must be managed safely for hundreds of thousands of years.

Admittedly the Yukon is getting quite experienced in planning for long-term cleanups thanks to the Faro mine, but it is not something one would care to repeat.

Uranium mining and milling removes hazardous ore from its relatively safe underground location and converts it to a fine sand and then sludge in the tailings pond.

The hazardous material then becomes more susceptible to dispersion.

This dispersion includes the contamination of ground water with dissolved metals and radioactive materials, dispersal of radioactive dust, and releases of radioactive gas into the air.

In addition, the tailings are continually generating radon gas.

British Columbia recognized the dangers of uranium mining and banned it in 1980.

The Yukon must follow this lead and place a moratorium on uranium mining in the Peel Watershed, and for the entire Yukon.

Lewis Rifkind, Mining Coordinator, Yukon Conservation Society.