

Giant Mine: Communicating with Future Generations Meeting

Monday, April 20, 2015

4-5pm

ENR Boardroom, Basement of Scotia Center

Draft Minutes

Shin Shiga, NSMA <i>regrets received</i>	John Sandlos, Memorial University – <i>on phone</i>	France Benoit, Filmmaker
Erika Nyssonen, GNWT	Ryan Silke, NWT Mine Heritage Society - <i>regrets received</i>	Mary Rose Sundberg, YKDFN – <i>regrets received</i>
Kevin O’Reilly, Alternatives North <i>regrets received</i>	Arn Keeling, Memorial University – <i>regrets received</i>	Randy Freeman, YKDFN – <i>regrets received</i>
Rosanna Nicol, Toxic Legacies Project Yellowknife Coordinator	Natalie Plato, AANDC – <i>regrets received</i>	Jeff Humble, City of Yellowknife - <i>regrets received</i>
Johanne Black, YKDFN	Adrian Paradis, AANDC	JD – YK Artist

4:00-5:00pm

1. Check-in/Approval of agenda

2. Brief overview of minutes from previous meeting/action items updates

- Rather than “Danger,” signs should also say “Stewardship” or “Maintenance Required”
- Multi-level messaging is needed: “Care for the Land, Care for the People.” Comic strips with dead fish.
- Messaging needs to maintain the relationship between the people and the place.

3. Discussion of Level 3 messaging: Images and Text: These are more complex messages, often a combination of images and text that provide information on the precise danger at the site, the location of underground workings, the size of the site, and where to avoid disturbing the ground. They also may convey when the waste was buried and how long it should remain undisturbed.

- Reference to Joe Sacco, who interviewed Johanne, and may be doing a graphic novel on this topic
- Discussion that oral tradition and paper last the longest. For example, the Yamoga story in Denendeh is over 10,000 years old. It probably wasn’t consciously created in the sense of “let’s create a story that will last;” rather it was created to give voice to an experience that

has resonated over time. What is Giant for us right now? What stories are we telling? Also, how do we create a new legend. Some discussion of the “Monster Underground” from Maro in France’s film.

- The film, etc., can come up with signs, symbols and stories to transmit knowledge, but unless people keep telling them and translating them, they get lost. We should use our current media to disseminate the stories, understanding that the means (floppy disk, Utube, etc.) will change over time. The sharing of the information in a diversity of ways is what’s important.
- Make clear that every 10 years, this information needs to be translated, disseminated in the currently relevant and understandable form.
- Diversity in everything is essential. Diversity mimics Nature, which is our most resilient guide in all things.
- Scrolls and paper shouldn’t be undervalued. Also, there are the caribou hides with pictures painted on them in Tulita. Perhaps we should ask archivists (Ian Moore) to be part of our conversations to share thoughts on record keeping and storage.

4. Special Guest: JD, a Yellowknife artist shared thoughts on the role of art and culture in communicating across time and developing cultures of stewardship.

- Discussion about cultural generation, or building a sub-culture. How do you build a culture of stewardship? What does it look like? What do people wear? How do they sound? How is momentum carried through time? For example, thinking of the Snowcastle Crew, who have patches with the white arch. The general public know what this means and ask those with patches for information. Perhaps a green patch for the Stewards of Giant Mine. Currently, perhaps the technical remediation staff have that role, but that will not be the case for ever and that responsibility has to shift to the public, or perhaps, in addition to shared public responsibility, there needs to a single person whose role/job it is to maintain momentum about communicating with future generations. Perhaps like a Poet Laureate of Yellowknife – a public service job to watch out for the “Monster Underground” and make sure it is adequately fed and cooled and to make sure the people never forget about it and its maintenance needs. The other example discussed was the Water Keepers, a humble role of stewardships, that is commended by the public, but not a lionized, glorified role.
- Thinking of religious examples in Buddhism and Christianity. There is the clergy and the lay people, each have roles in generating culture, and passing on information, but the clergy have a specific sub-culture. To this day there are people attracted to monastic life – there will be people interested in taking on the role of stewardship, “priesthood” relating to Giant.
- In Dene culture, the Elders pass on knowledge to the youth through stories.

- It's important that there be regular use of Giant for a purpose other than monitoring, but that will ensure it is noticed if something is not working properly. For example, a running loop around the thermosyphons.
- Rather than a closed site, we need a way to welcome and inform people of the stewardship and maintenance required. Perhaps this builds off of the Healing the Land ceremony on Aboriginal Day and builds into a regular, ceremonial use of the site that has monitoring and communicating with future generations built into it.
- The current culture around Giant is of shame and guilt, and the feeling that it shouldn't be talked about as it's a black-eye – on our city and ourselves, reducing property value, guilt, etc. This needs to change. How can we wear the "black-eye" in a way that is useful?
- Somehow the interest in the site needs to be maintained, even after it's been remediated and the land is being used for other purposes.
- Some discussion about branding of the site in broad terms to facilitate building and maintaining that relationship with the site. Currently, it's fear, shame, negative. Hope and expectation that as remediation is completed, branding will change.
- Reference was made to a number of youth in Japan who were able to save many lives during the Tsunami because they recognized the signs of a pending Tsunami and warned people to seek high ground. They knew the warning signs from reading comic books. Another reminder to seek a diversity of creative ways to communicate the Giant maintenance needs and messages. Also, to make sure that it targets and respects many audiences. E.g. abstract art will not resonate with the YKDFN Elders.

Business Items:

5. Dates and itinerary for June workshop:

- Either the first or second week of June – a "Communicating with Future Generations week". John and Arn will visit. It will include workshops with grade 10-12 youth in schools: collaborative design workshops around creating stories and monuments to communicate with future generations. A 4 hr afternoon with Elders to first discuss terminology, then to hear from them thoughts on oral tradition, building a new legend, followed by a feast in the evening where youth can present their work.
 - Include an artist, if possible.
- The next CFG meeting will be during that CFG week. Likely held at YKARCC and open to the public.
- Adrian brought maps from Natalie as per an action item from last month.