

Toxic Legacies Project Backgrounder

WHO ARE WE?

The Toxic Legacies Project was created to examine the history and legacy of arsenic contamination at Giant Mine. The project is a partnership among researchers at Memorial and Lakehead Universities, the Goyatiko Language Society (a Yellowknives Dene First Nation non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the Weledeh language), and Alternatives North (a Yellowknife environmental and social justice coalition that conducts public interest research).

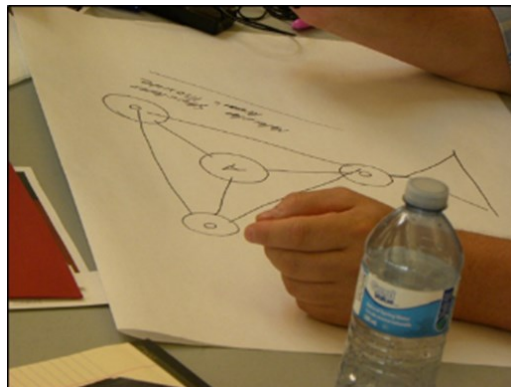
OUR GOALS

We have produced publically accessible historical material (videos, reports, maps, films, etc.) on the history of Giant Mine and how to communicate with future generations about the long term legacies of arsenic at the site. For more information, please visit our [website](http://www.toxiclegacies.com) (www.toxiclegacies.com).

Summary Conclusions: Workshop on Communicating with Future Generations at Giant Mine

The Workshop

On September 21st, 2016 we held a workshop with Yellowknives Dene Elders on the issue of communicating with future generations at Giant Mine. The next day we held a second workshop that included invited participants from a range of local stakeholders. The purpose of the workshops was to generate a range of ideas about how to communicate with future generations at Giant Mine. The points raised here are only a small selection of those raised at the workshop. For the complete results, you can see the full workshop report at www.toxiclegacies.com



Groupwork in action at the CFG workshop

Some Ideas for Communicating Danger

- A large wall built around the mine and the site left ugly so people will know there is danger.
- Monuments spread throughout the area, not just at Giant Mine.
- Signs indicating that mining took place but the contamination was not the fault of the Yellowknives Dene.
- A commemorative event held at the site every June 21st so the arsenic will be remembered.
- A variety of symbols suggesting that there is life on the surface of the earth but death underground
- Images of a giant monster underground holding up the mine
- A simple textual message to warn people against vandalizing the thermosyphons: "this keeps the land frozen and helps to keep us safe." Next to the text could be photos showing the arsenic underground.

Goyatiko Language Society



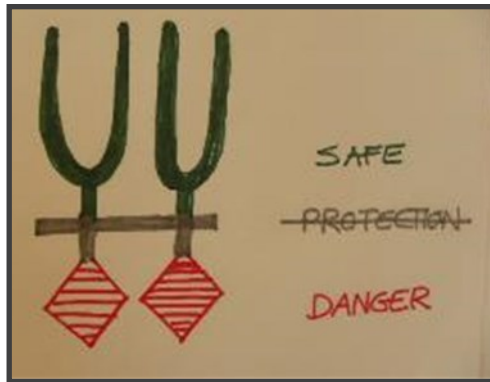
Social Sciences and Humanities
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Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada



PROJECT PARTNERS

- Mary Rose Sundberg, Goyatiko Language Society
- William Lines, Yellowknives Dene First Nation
- Tee Lim, Alternatives North
- John Sandlos, Memorial University
- Arn Keeling, Memorial University
- Ron Harpelle, Lakehead University
- Kelly Saxberg, Sheba Films
- France Benoit, Independent Filmmaker
- Special thanks to our local coordinator Rosanna Nicol
- Special thanks also to everyone who served on the CFG Committee and attended the workshop



Conceptual design for symbol warning of danger underground

Using Stories

- The Yellowknives Elders want to create a story or legend, possibly a Yamozha story about the mine and the arsenic contamination
- The impact of Giant Mine on the Yellowknives' hunting, fishing, medicine gathering and berry picking activities needs to be acknowledged.
- The Elders want to address the issue of compensation for lost access to land and resources
- Acknowledging the Yellowknives' role in the discovery of gold (the Liza Crookedhand story) is important to the community
- Carefully acknowledging the history of the Giant Mine strike is important
- It will take many more meetings, and information will have to be gathered from lots of community members, for the elders to create a story about Giant Mine

Issues and Challenges

- The issue of communicating with the future is complicated; more work needs to be done to come up with a clear strategy.
- Languages change over time
- The technical language the Giant Mine Remediation Project uses is difficult to understand
- Stable, multi-year funding is needed for any effort to communicate with future generations
- Staff turnover may mean knowledge is forgotten
- Changing technology is a potential barrier to cross-generational communication
- Many wrestled with the question of whether to warn people away from the site or engage them with the mine so that the arsenic is not forgotten.

CONTACT US

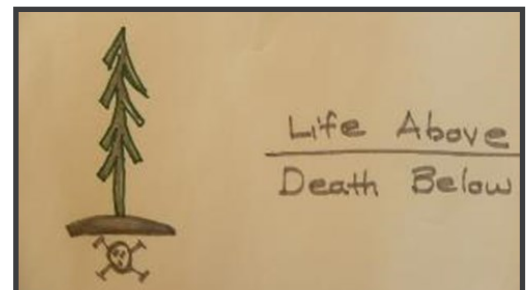
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Another conceptual design for symbol warning of danger underground