HDI NORTHCLIFF

Q&A - EIA and MMER Schedule 2 Amendment & Fish Habitat Compensation Plan

Questions	Responses
EIA	
What is an EIA?	• Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the assessment of the environmental consequences (positive and negative) of a project prior to the decision to move forward with the proposed action. The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that decision makers, in this case the provincial and federal governments, consider the environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures to minimize potential impacts are adequate when deciding whether or not to approve a project. • Sisson filed a Draft EIA with the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DELG) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) in July 2013. • Following a comprehensive technical review of the environmental impact assessment report by various departments of both the provincial and federal governments and extensive public and First Nation consultation periods, the report was updated to reflect the technical questions and comments provided by the government departments, public and First Nations. • Sisson filed the final Environmental Impact Assessment Report with the Provincial government in February 2015.
When did Sisson receive EIA approval and what does it mean for Sisson?	• The Sisson Project received a provincial EIA approval in December 2015 and federal EA approval in June 2017. The EIA decisions provide the project with the required environmental approval to proceed to permitting, detailed design, construction and operation phases of a mine. • The provincial EIA approval contains 40 conditions that address issues raised by the Technical Review Committee (TRC) during the review of the environmental impact assessment. In addition, as a result of the consultation with the public and First Nations, the conditions reflect the recommendations of the independent provincial review panel. • The EIA conditions can be categorized into five (5) main areas: 1) Additional Permit Requirements, 2) Environmental Monitoring and Follow-up Programs, 3) TSF Construction & Management, 4) Water Quality & Management and 5) Socio-Economic Considerations.

	• The company will be required to address the EIA conditions at various phases of the project i.e. prior to construction, prior to operation, and on going throughout the life of the project.
Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMER)	
What is the MMER Schedule 2?	• The *Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (**MMER)*** falls under the *Fisheries Act*, which prohibits the deposit of deleterious substances into fish frequented waters unless authorized by regulation. The MMER Schedule 2 is a list of the bodies of water that are approved for the disposal of mine tailings by the Federal government. Currently there are 37 bodies of water listed in Schedule 2, associated with 19 mines in Canada.
Why is the MMER Schedule 2 Amendment necessary?	• The MMER amendment to Schedule 2 is one the additional federal regulatory/permitting activities that is required for the mine project to proceed with the construction of the Tailings Storage Facility (TSF). • The Sisson Mine project includes the construction of a Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) for the safe management and disposal of tailings (mine waste) which was included, reviewed and approved as part of the environmental impact assessment. • The construction of the proposed Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) will result in the loss of a natural water body (Bird Brook and a portion of Tributary "A" to West Branch Napadogan Brook) frequented by fish and therefore requires a regulatory amendment to list the water body on Schedule 2 of the Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (MMER) and an Authorization under the Fisheries Act. • The MMER process is a review of the Assessment of Tailings Management Alternatives Report and the proposed off-setting/fish habitat compensation plan filed with the Departments of Environment Canada and Climate Change (ECCC) and the Fisheries and Oceans. The information contained in these reports is the same as information presented in the Final EIA Report (February 2015 - Sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 and 7.4 respectively).
What will be done to ensure proper design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Tailings Storage Facility?	• Sisson is committed to the responsible development of the Sisson Mine project and the construction and operation of an environmental sustainable mine. • The design, construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the tailings storage facility is presented in various sections of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report dated February 2015: 3.4.1.2.7 TSF preparation (Construction) 3.4.1.2.8 Construction of the TSF embankments, Water Management Ponds and Ponding of Start-up water 3.2.4 Mining Waste and Water Management, 3.3.3 Alternative Locations for the Tailings Storage Facility, 3.3.4 Alternative Tailings Management Technologies, 3.4.2.3 Mine Waste and Water Management (Operation), 3.4.3.2.3 TSF Reclamation (Closure).

	• The predicted water quality levels at various points along the Napadogan can be found in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (February 2015) Section 7.6 Water Quality and Water Balance Modeling. • The Sisson Project Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) will be subject to rigorous oversight from government regulatory agencies. • Conditions 4, 9, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 39 outlined in the provincial EIA approval are directly related to the design, construction and operation of the tailings storage facility. This will include a thorough review of the final TSF design, by the Department of Resource Development and an Independent Tailing Review Board prior to receiving an approval to construct.
What will be done to ensure that waste water from the tailing storage facility and the site will not result in adverse impacts to the receiving environment?	• The water discharged from the tailing storage facility will be subject to MMER regulated water quality discharge limits to ensure protection of the receiving waters and the project is obliged, by law, to meet these limits. The Follow-up and Monitoring Program aimed at verifying both the environmental effects predictions made in the EIA Report and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation will be developed and implemented during the construction and operational phase of the mine. • Conditions 4, 7, 8, 29j outlined in the provincial EIA approval are directly related to the monitoring of water discharged to the receiving waters.
What is an Authorization under the Fisheries Act?	• Section 36 of the Fisheries Act prohibits the deposit of deleterious substances in waters frequented by fish without the authorization or approval of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. • Section 35 (2) of the Fisheries Act provides for the development of an offsetting plan/fish habitat compensation plan to off-set the impacts of the loss of fish habitat, in the case of Sisson the loss of Bird Brook, as a result of the construction of project. • The construction of the proposed Tailings Storage Facility (TSF) and the operation of the open pit will result in the loss of a natural water body (Bird Brook, and portions of Sisson Brook, Tributary "A" to West Branch Napadogan Brook, and McBean Brook) frequented by fish and therefore requires an Authorization under the Fisheries Act.
What is Sisson's Off Setting Fish Compensation Plan?	• Sisson is proposing to remove an old water-level control dam/road culvert on the Nashwaak River just below its exit from Nashwaak Lake, and to replace it with a bridge. The dam/culvert is a barrier to fish passage (*Final EIA Report*, Section 7.4, Page 7-82) • The total anticipated direct and indirect fish habitat lost as a result of the project is ~54,400 m^2. • The total fish habitat access regained as a result of the compensation plan is projected to be ~1,143,700 m^2 • The proposed off-setting /fish habitat compensation plan includes the indirect losses associated with the project and is included in the *Final EIA Report*, (Section 7.4, Page 7-82) • In addition, Sisson has committed to examining additional compensation ideas brought forward by other parties.
Is Atlantic salmon habitat lost?	• There will be indirect effect to Atlantic Salmon habitat due to potential reduction in water flow to habitat that supports Atlantic Salmon as a result of the loss of Bird Brook.