



# **State of Alaska Transboundary Partner Dialogue June 1, 2018**



EPA Region 10 Update  
Patty McGrath, Mining Advisor



# Agenda

- Current EPA activities on AK/BC transboundary mining issues
- US Department of State Gaps Analysis Process
- Contacts for more information



# Transboundary Mining - EPA Role & Activities

- Project-specific: Review projects that have the potential to impact transboundary watersheds.
- Strategic engagement: Participate with Canadian and US federal and state agencies and tribes in broader-level meetings and discussions to improve coordination and effectiveness.
- Communication: Inform tribes, agencies and public of our activities related to transboundary mining.



# Transboundary Mine Project Reviews

- EPA is involved in reviewing:
  - Environmental assessments/Environmental Impact Statements
  - Select permitting documents
- We comment on technical and process issues:
  - Technical
    - Adequacy of transboundary waters baseline environmental information
    - Potential impacts to transboundary waters and fisheries and mitigation and monitoring
  - Process
    - Responsiveness to EPA comments
    - Involvement of US tribes
    - Public meetings on US side of border

# BC/AK Transboundary Mine Projects

- Operating Mines
  - Brucejack
  - Red Chris
- EA Complete – Projects on hold
  - Galore Creek
  - KSM
  - **Tulsequah**
- Proposed projects
  - **Red Mountain Gold**



- Watersheds – Unuk, Stikine, Taku, Alsek

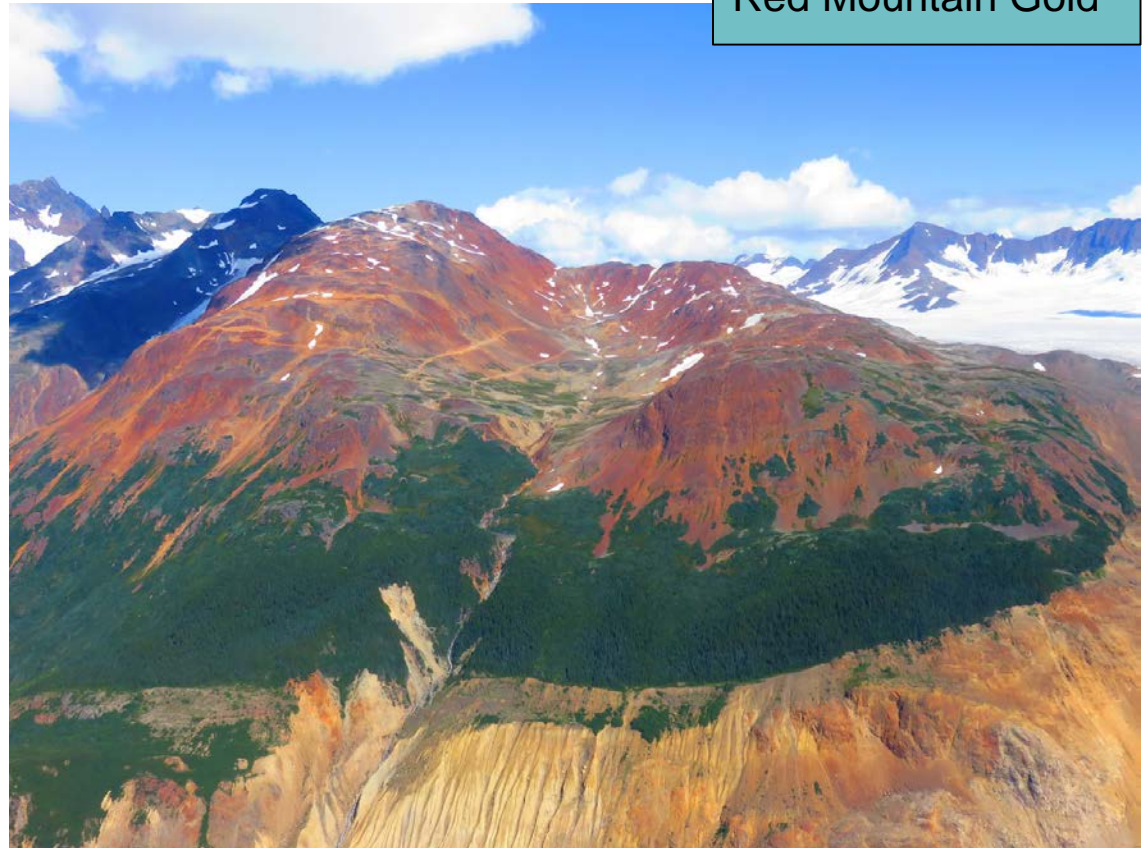
We are currently involved in reviewing aspects of **highlighted** projects.



# Proposed Red Mountain Gold Project

- Proposed underground gold/silver mine
- Approx. 1000 tons ore/day for 7 years, with expansion possibilities
- Located in Bitter Creek watershed-drains to Portland Canal, approx. 24 miles upstream from border (near Hyder, AK)

Red Mountain Gold







# Proposed Red Mountain Gold Project

- The Project is subject to a cooperative EA/EIS led by the BC EAO with CEAA involvement.
- The EA/EIS was out for public comment on November 14 to December 14, 2017
- EPA is participating on the EA/EIS Workgroup and submitted comments.
- Notably – first EA/EIS where CEAA has conducted direct outreach to US tribes (letters to 5 SE Alaska tribes providing a point of contact and asking about input)
- Next step – EAO is preparing draft assessment report

EAO website for more information:

<https://projects.eao.gov.bc.ca/p/red-mountain-underground-gold/detail>



# Tulsequah Chief

- Historic underground copper/zinc/gold mine
- Located adjacent to Tulsequah River in the Taku watershed approximately 10 miles upstream of the border
- Several proposals for redevelopment in the last 15 years
- Most recent was Chieftain Metals which received EA approvals & permits
- Chieftain went bankrupt & is in receivership





# Tulsequah Chief

- Metal contaminated discharges from historic adits & waste piles
- BC Ministry of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources has conducted some reclamation
- BC MOE completed an Aquatic Ecological Risk Assessment (July 2017)
- EPA reviewed the risk assessment & submitted comments recommending remediation



BC website for more information:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/site-permitting-compliance/tulsequah-mine>



# EPA Strategic Engagement on AK/BC Transboundary Mining

- Focus resources on highest priority projects & issues
- Participate in AK/BC MOU/SOC activities at the request of the State of Alaska
  - Transboundary Mining Partner Dialogue
  - Provided comments on Draft Communication Plan, Draft Reciprocal Procedures, and Draft Water Quality Monitoring Program Plan



## EPA Strategic Engagement

- Support EPA headquarters Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA)
  - Provide information for the US/Canada bilateral meetings
  - Provide feedback on changes to Canada's federal impact assessment regulations
- Communications with other Federal agencies, State of Alaska agencies, Tribes (e.g, Regional Tribal Operations Committee), and Canadian agencies
- Participate in the Federal Interagency Working Group on Transboundary Mining



# Federal Interagency Working Group on Transboundary Mining

- At October 2017 bilateral, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) expressed an openness to learning more about US concerns over specific gaps or areas for improvement in existing processes with a particular emphasis on areas that federal involvement could help address
- To inform this process, State Department established Federal Interagency Working Group on Transboundary Mining
- Participants include: State Department, EPA (OITA, OW, regions 8 & 10), Department of Interior, US Forest Service



# Transboundary Mining Gaps Analysis

- Scope – BC/AK watersheds and BC Elk River/Lake Koocanusa/Kootenai watershed (MT/ID)
- The Working Group received input from other US federal agencies, states, and tribes on areas that could benefit from additional federal engagement and/or strengthened collaboration.
- Range of suggestions for improvements to current efforts, focus on:
  - improving decision-making processes,
  - scope of collaboration, and
  - improved data collection





# Transboundary Mining Gaps Analysis

- State Department shared the “preliminary assessment of opportunities for enhanced collaboration” with GAC at the April 26 bilateral meeting.
- GAC is reviewing and discussions will continue in the coming months.

The Working Group is sensitive to the developed agreements and procedures for cooperation that are in place between BC and State of Alaska (MOU/SOC).



## For More Information

### **EPA Contacts:**

Patty McGrath

Mining Advisor

(206) 553-6113

[mcgrath.patricia@epa.gov](mailto:mcgrath.patricia@epa.gov)

Michelle Davis

SE Alaska Tribal Coordinator

(907) 271-3434

[davis.michelle@epa.gov](mailto:davis.michelle@epa.gov)

### **State Department Contact:**

Julien Katchinoff

Transboundary Water

Specialist

(202) 647-2475

[KatchinoffJM@state.gov](mailto:KatchinoffJM@state.gov)