

December 4, 2013

Marathon Joint Review Panel Secretariat:

The following is a list of some of my outstanding concerns about the proposed Stillwater mine. Some are statements and some are questions. They are in no particular order.

- The proposal talks about plans in the event of an emergency. A monumental devastation of the land and all of the life in it, is the *definition* of an emergency.
- I want to know how much would it cost after the mine is closed, to restore **everything** back to its' original state and fix all of the problems left in its' wake?
- What is the value of the lost opportunities provided by the land in its living state?
- How long will this land take to restore its' original, full, healthy function after this mine has been closed?
- I do not believe that we have any right to destroy land that belongs to so many other beings and to all the future generations.
- What is the long-term *cost* of this mine to our future?
- The *living* land is our livelihood.
- Land use mapping projects are being relied upon as the primary *instrument* of this consultation with our First Nation. The methodology of a land use map is designed to suit a very different purpose. Its' scope is intentionally narrow so as to preserve the quality of the data. The language of the process is dictated by restrictive legal and western scientific concepts. There is little place for the way that First Nations actually value the land. For instance, there is no convention for an "I value all of it" statement, let alone, belief. In this way, the process restricts what can be said, before the consultation has begun. This is especially disabling because it means that our community must adopt what is essentially a foreign language and foreign values (at the expense of our own) in order to contribute to the discussion.
- Our input is diminished even further because this process is incredibly time consuming and most people are over-burdened as it is.
- The language of this "consultation" process is inherently dismissive of our holistic worldview of the earth.
- Inherent in our First Nations culture is the belief that everything is connected and valuable and living. In western "economic" language these ideas don't hold as much credence. They are seen as metaphorical. For instance, I am not taken seriously when I echo the question asked by one of our Pic River youth. "What will happen to the frogs?"
- This is a fair and good question, worthy of extensive consideration. I would add to this question "What will happen to every single species affected by the proposed development?"

Thank you,
-Bonnie Couchie