

NEWS

My, what pretty skin you have



Gaeil Farrar photo
David Fait (left) pets one of the lizards participating in Safari Jeff's Living Wild show that came to Boitano Mall Thursday and Friday. The show featured lots of information on snakes, frogs, lizards and other reptiles as well as opportunities for children to pet some of the live stars of the show.

WL Indian Band signs mining agreement

Robyn Chambers
Tribune Staff Writer

The Williams Lake Indian Band and Spanish Mountain Gold Ltd. have signed a protocol agreement.

SMG is currently exploring a gold project near Likely — located within the Williams Lake Indian Band's traditional territory — that could yield four million ounces of gold.

The agreement, says the proponents, is one of several anticipated to be signed between the two parties as the project proceeds.

It represents the company's commitment to consult First Nations on issues such as environmental design, says Kirk Dressler, economic development officer and communications co-ordinator with the Williams Lake Indian Band.

"They've committed to meaningfully address the issues that we raise," he says. "The agreement says in the feasibility stage and in preliminary environmental design we provide feedback, and if we need an independent party to review it then they provide us with the resources to do that. As we get more details as the mine proceeds then additional work and resources would be required and a more detailed impact/benefit agreement would cover that off."

The company is seeking to strike a similar agreement with the Soda Creek Indian Band, which also has traditional interest in that area.

Colin Clancy, corporate communications offi-

cer with SMG, says some provincial permitting on the mine still needs to be obtained. The company has recently completed a preliminary economic analysis; a pre-feasibility study and a bankable feasibility study will follow.

It is estimated that process could take at least a year. If and when the mine is operational it could employ 260 people; the mine's lifespan is thought to be 10-15 years to remove the most accessible two million ounces of gold. If it is economically feasible to remove the additional two million, that could push the mine's operational period beyond that time.

In the future, Dressler

expects there will be numerous agreements signed between the Williams Lake Indian Band and SMG that will govern their relationship throughout the mine's life and could provide for job opportunities, contracts, capacity building and training for First Nations.

In a press release Williams Lake Indian Band chief Ann Louie said: "Our agreement demonstrates that First Nations and private industry can work together positively and co-operatively and seek to find a mutually beneficial common ground. First Nations are as interested as everyone else in seeing our region

survive and thrive economically."

Revenue sharing with the company and the provincial government is also an expectation on this project, says Dressler.

The provincial government recently re-affirmed its commitment to revenue sharing on mining projects with First Nations. According to the provincial government press release, the amount of revenue shared with First Nations is negotiated on a project-by-project basis based on factors such as the size of the proposed project, the nature and interests of a First Nation. Also, the mineral tax that a mine

pays rises and falls, and as that occurs the benefits received by a First Nations community changes correspondingly.

"In our opinion both parties — the government and the private proponent — have an obligation to First Nations," Dressler says of cost sharing. "We haven't yet dealt with those things."

"When we move to the next stage in mine development we will cover those off."

He says there are several other mining projects within the Williams Lake Indian Band traditional territory that are in the preliminary discussion stage; the SMG project is the most advanced.

Volunteers Needed

Help abandoned, neglected & abused animals!

BCSPCA 392-2179

122nd Lake Road, Stey 20

Hairdooz
By Natasha & TANNING
392-1994

Tanning Special

1 YEAR UNLIMITED TANNING
\$79.99 Reg \$588.00
Limited Spots Available

Stand up Booth & Face Tanner Lay Down Bed
Clean & Comfortable!

www.hairdoozbynatasha.ca

12B North Broadway Ave 250-392-1994

Travelling South?

New Spring Fashions

SAND WICH

PART TWO MEXX

ALEXANDER
clothing • jewellery • gifts

250-392-1161 41 S. First Ave.

FRIDAY MARCH 25 RAFE MAIR!

"Take Back Our BC"

Learn why your power bills are going through the roof

A TOWNHALL TOUR PRESENTED BY THE COMMON SENSE CANADIAN

Friday, March 25 7 pm
Williams Lake Secondary School Theatre
Suggested donation: \$10 / \$5 students & seniors

Rafe Mair & film by Damien Gillis
Co-presented by Williams Lake Council of Canadians
More info: TheCanadian.org

WLYSA.COM

Williams Lake Youth Soccer Association

Avoid being put on a waiting list Register by March 31st

after March 31st fees go up \$50 with a possible wait. Post dated cheques accepted until April 22nd.

Contact the office for other funding options.

To register: print form from: www.wlysa.com

drop off at the Youth Soccer Office located in room #114 at the Pioneer Log Homes Complex on Hodgson Rd.

or mail: WLYSA, #114-351 Hodgson Road, Williams Lake, BC V2G 3P7

For more information contact: Alana at 250-392-1103 or email wlysa@telus.net