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cc Richard Parkin, Judy Smith, Tami Fordham, Jeff Frithsen, Palmer Hough, Phil North, Cindi Godsey, Heather Dean, Phil North

bcc

Subject Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment Update

To the Intergovernmental Technical Team :

This is a brief update of our work on the Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment.

Conceptual Diagrams
After our meeting this summer, we incorporated your input on our approach and have revised the Conceptual Diagrams that are guiding our assessment. Here is a link to the revised set of diagrams: ftp://ftp.epa.gov/reg10ftp/bristolbay/IGTT/Revised_Draft_Conceptual_Diagrams/bba_diagrams_090711.pdf

You can also view them by going to www.epa.gov/region10/bristolbay, click on the link to the Intergovernmental Technical Team (in the box on the right hand side), and then click on the link to the Revised Draft Conceptual Diagrams.

Other Activities
In the past few months, we have been very busy working on several aspects of the assessment: Our (ambitious) goal remains to release a draft for public review in April 2012. We want to allow opportunity for review prior to the summer fishing season. We have been:

- Completing the characterization work, including a review and summary of existing information on fisheries, roads, wildlife, economics, and indigenous culture. Our assessment team is reviewing all this information for incorporation into the watershed assessment.
- Finishing and compiling the interviews of Tribal elders and culture bearers.
- Developing a scenario to use as we assess potential impacts of large-scale mining in the watershed. We have taken the suggestion of the IGTT to look at a range of scenarios, from a likely short-term smaller mine, to a long-term large scale mine. While we are looking at the Pebble prospect as the most likely short-term development, we are also looking at eventual development of other mining claims in the area.
- Refining our assessment approach.
- Developing a plan for peer review of our draft Watershed Assessment.

Upcoming Opportunities for Input
In December, we will publish a request for the public to provide suggestions on peer reviewers. The request will specify the areas of expertise we are seeking. EPA has retained an independent contractor who will select peer reviewers based on their expertise and manage the peer review process. We encourage you to suggest individuals who would provide expert peer review.

As always, we continue to welcome any information you have which may be relevant to our assessment.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me, Judy Smith, Tami Fordham, or Rick Parkin.

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