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## **Appendix 3.4.1A Public Consultation Plan**



# **Blackwater Gold Project**

## Public and Stakeholder Consultation Plan

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Consultation is important through all stages of the Blackwater Gold Project (proposed Project) and is a key component of the Environmental Assessment (“EA”) process.

Consultation for the Blackwater Project includes providing transparent, accurate and timely information to the public and stakeholder groups and working closely with them to identify issues, perspectives, interests and concerns relative to the proposed Project. The consultation process for the Blackwater Project will meet and/or exceed provincial requirements and federal guidelines.

During the Pre-Application / Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase, consultation focuses on developing long-term positive relationships with stakeholders to ensure the proposed Project recognizes local interests, aligns with local goals and priorities and provides lasting benefits to the communities and the region. During the Application Review Stage, the Project will continue to consult with local communities and will provide results from environmental studies and the effects assessments.

This Plan identifies key stakeholder groups, provides a summary of consultation activities to date, outlines the intended future consultation activities, and identifies consultation milestones moving forward.

### 1.1 Proposed Project

New Gold is proposing to develop an open pit gold and silver mine approximately 160 km southwest of Prince George and 110 km southwest (straight line distance) of Vanderhoof in north central BC. The proposed Project is in an area that has seen active exploration since silver, lead and zinc were discovered there in 1973. Environmental studies are underway as the Project moves toward an anticipated 2015 construction and 2017 operations start.

The proposed Project includes mine facilities and support infrastructure that will be located within a proposed mine site. It also includes a mine access road, and a transmission line that will provide the mine site with electrical power.

New Gold is committed to hiring local people during the construction and operation phases. Following the environmental review process, if an EA Certificate is issued, New Gold expects to hire 1,000 to 1,500 (peak) construction workers and an operations workforce of 500 people. The life of the mine is projected to be 17 years.

## 2.0 REGULATORY APPROVAL PROCESS

The Blackwater Project will be reviewed under the British Columbia *Environmental Assessment Act* (BCEA Act) as well as the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEA Act). The proposed Project is subject to a coordinated review. New Gold expects to file its application for an environmental assessment certificate in early 2014, after finalizing the Application Information Requirements (AIR). New Gold and its consultants reference the following sources for guidance on proponent consultation requirements:

1. *British Columbia ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT [SBC 2002] CHAPTER 43– Public Consultation Policy Regulation*
2. *Environmental Assessment Office, User Guide (British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office, 2010)*
3. *Section 11 Order for the proposed Blackwater Gold Project (July 2013)*

The BC EAO and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) each determine the scope, procedures and methods according to which the respective provincial and federal environmental assessments of the proposed Project will be conducted. The Application for an Environmental Assessment Certificate (Application) / Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will include a summary of all consultation activities that New Gold has carried out in relation to the proposed Project.

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSULTATION IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan is intended to guide the activities and responsibilities of New Gold in the consultation process as directed by the BC EAO.

The responsibility of New Gold for public and stakeholder consultation is understood to include:

1. Designing and implementing the Public and Stakeholder Consultation Plan as part of the overall Application / EIS process;
2. Implementing procedural aspects of consultation and/or notifying interested persons throughout the process, including those likely to be directly affected and any others that may be potentially affected;
3. Providing mechanisms for two-way communication and ensuring meaningful consultation between New Gold, its stakeholders and the public;
4. Involving stakeholders and the public in Project planning;
5. Identifying potential public and stakeholder concerns that should be considered as a part of the Application, as well as measures that could be used in the proposed Project's design or operation to avoid, mitigate or otherwise address potential concerns; and
6. Identifying and assessing potential effects on environmental, economic, social, heritage and health conditions

## 4.0 CONSULTATION OF PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

New Gold is committed to open and transparent consultation with the public and Project stakeholders and ensuring the Project is aligned with community and regional objectives and aspirations. New Gold’s consultation program is designed to encourage positive relationships and community and regional support for the Project as it moves through the permitting process, construction and mine life cycle.

For the purpose of consultation requirements for the EA process, regulatory authorities instruct proponents to conduct a specific program of consultation activities with the public and stakeholder groups. This is highlighted in the July 9, 2013 Section 11 Order from the BC EAO.

‘Stakeholders’ are individuals and groups with a direct interest in the proposed Project. Key stakeholder groups who are expected to have an interest in the Project include, but are not limited to:

- Tenure holders and owners
- Business organizations
- Community and environmental organizations
- Economic Development organizations
- Education and training organizations
- Health and safety organizations
- Local and regional governments

**Table 1.0: Key Stakeholders**

<b>Tenure Holders and Owners</b>
<p>(Landowners/Guide-Outfitters/Lease-holders/Trappers/Forest Tenure Holders)</p> <p>Guide-Outfitters: 701137; 601039; 600384; 500929; 601049; 601048; 701166</p> <p>Range Tenures RAN077486; RAN0771171; RAN077385; RAN0771181; RAN0772341; RAN075154A; RAN075967A; RAN0772381</p> <p>Trappers: TR0712T035, TR0712T043, TR0601T003, TR0712T040, TR0512T027, TR0711T006, TR0712T036, TR0712T014, TR0512T014, TR0711T006, TR0604T053, TR0712T039, TR0712T029, TR0712T015, TR0601T006, TR0713T017</p>

<p>Mineral Tenures: 705780; 705785; 937689; 842320; 941569; 920729; 846788; 846794; 846797; 846798; 920729; 571641; 571638</p> <p>Forest Tenures: BC Timber Sales, Canfor, L&amp;M Lumber, Pinnacle Pellet, West Fraser Sawmills</p> <p>Private Land Owners: PID 015-513-584; PID 023-818-409; PID 025-830-597; PID 015-135-233; PID 015-132-404; PID 015-532-500; PID 015-545-300; PID 010-105-255; PID 009-280-481; PID 004-725-832; PID 007-860-269; PID 017-957-061; PID 017-957-079; PID 026-394-332; PID 017-957-061</p>
<p><b>Business Organizations</b> Burns Lake Chamber of Commerce Fort St. James Chamber of Commerce Fraser Lake Chamber of Commerce Prince George Chamber of Commerce Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce</p>
<p><b>Community and Environmental Organizations</b> Nechako Environment &amp; Water Stewardship Society Nechako Valley Regional Cattlemen's Association Nechako Valley Sporting Association – Fish and Wildlife Division Upper Nechako Wilderness Council</p>
<p><b>Economic Development Organizations</b> 16/97 Economic Alliance Community Futures Development Corporation of Stuart Nechako Initiatives Prince George Northern Development Initiative Trust Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation</p>
<p><b>Education and Training Organizations</b> College of New Caledonia Nechako Valley Post-Secondary Education Committee Progressive Employment Services Ltd. School District 91 – Nechako Lakes University of Northern British Columbia</p>

<p><b>Health and Safety Organizations</b></p> <p>Nechako Valley Community Services Society Northern Health Authority Royal Canadian Mounted Police</p>
<p><b>Local and Regional Governments (staff and elected officials)</b></p> <p>Cariboo Regional District Area I City of Prince George City of Quesnel/Cariboo Regional District Joint Planning Committee District of Fort St. James District of Vanderhoof Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Electoral Area C (Chilako/Nechako) Village of Burns Lake Village of Fraser Lake</p>

The Project will continue to work closely with all stakeholders potentially directly affected by the Project throughout the assessment process and through the life of the Project. Whenever possible, New Gold will identify opportunities to avoid or mitigate potential adverse effects identified by stakeholders through adjustments to Project design or components. For example, New Gold has adjusted the alignment of the transmission line to accommodate access and property effects identified by Tenure Holders and Owners. Negotiation of financial or other compensation may be considered when negative impacts of the project will cause financial or other damages that cannot be avoided or mitigated. A decision to compensate will consider project economics, permitting, and a positive investment decision by New Gold's Board of Directors, among other factors.

New Gold is committed to open, transparent and timely communication with all stakeholders, including those potentially directly affected by the Project. As the proposed Project evolves, New Gold will consult with additional groups that may express interest in the Project. Additional guidance is anticipated from the provincial and federal governments during the EA process regarding consultation with stakeholders and the public.



## 4.1 Focus Communities

New Gold's public and stakeholder consultation work is focused on private land owners, range and forest tenure holders, and trappers and guide outfitters in the Project area, as well as communities within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. These communities include:

- Vanderhoof and Rural Area F
- Fort St. James and Rural Area C
- Burns Lake and Rural Area B
- Fraser Lake and Rural Area D

The Project will also consult with the City of Prince George and stakeholders within the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George Electoral Area C (Chilako/Nechako), the City of Quesnel and Cariboo Regional District Area I. The neighbouring communities of Williams Lake, Houston and Smithers will be considered, based on the interests and impacts identified as we proceed with the consultation program.

## 5.0 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

New Gold is committed to building strong, constructive and responsive relationships that support the company's commitment to leaving a positive legacy in the communities and regions in which it operates.

The objective of public and stakeholder consultation is to demonstrate leading practices in maintaining transparent and open communications and consultation with local communities and other communities of interest associated with the Blackwater Project. In particular, New Gold seeks to identify communities of interest and consult with them to identify, evaluate and address their concerns and expectations as appropriate and use the input received from them to inform decisions made about the proposed Project.

Based on the results of a comprehensive stakeholder mapping program and an early consultation program, the following strategic goals have been identified:

1. Consult with stakeholders and the public to ensure key issues of concern and potential adverse effects are assessed and addressed in the Application and identify mitigation and/or avoidance measures;
2. Actively consult with elected officials, community leaders and citizens to ensure they understand the Project and have shared their local and regional knowledge about consequences, challenges and potential benefits;
3. Work closely with local government staff and elected officials to align the Project with regional aspirations and priorities;

4. Work to resolve emerging environmental, community, land-use and other issues in timely, face-to-face meetings that actively respect and respond to stakeholder concerns;
5. Partner to achieve mutual benefits early in the cycle of the Project and continue building partnerships and benefits throughout the life of the Project; and
6. Provide accessible, transparent and timely information about Project phases, the mining process, the EA process, Project-related opportunities and challenges.

## 6.0 PRE-APPLICATION STAGE

Consultation with stakeholders and the public is a key component of the provincial and federal EA process.

New Gold began consulting with stakeholders early in 2012 during the acquisition of the mineral claims for the proposed Project. This early consultation phase continued until November 5, 2012, when the BC EAO accepted the Project into the EA process by issuing a Section 10 order.

New Gold has continued to consult with Blackwater Project stakeholders and community members to develop long-term positive relationships and to ensure the proposed Project recognizes local interests, aligns with local goals and priorities and provides lasting benefits to the communities and the region. Public and stakeholder consultation will continue through the Pre-Application and Application Review stage of the project, and throughout the lifecycle of the Project.

### 6.1 Consultation activities conducted to-date

Key aspects of consultation for the Pre-Application stage include:

#### **Project Presentations**

The focus of these presentations has been to: engage community members, provide information on the Project, provide Project updates, gather feedback for the provincial and federal EA processes, provide information on employment and training opportunities, and gather information on concerns and interests related to the proposed Project.

New Gold has made presentations to the following public and stakeholder groups:

- Elected officials:  
*District of Vanderhoof, District of Fort St. James, Village of Burns Lake, Village of Fraser Lake, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Regional District of Cariboo, Area I, City of Prince George and City of Quesnel/Cariboo Regional District Joint Planning Committee, as well as local area MLAs and MPs*

- Business:  
*Fort St. James Chamber of Commerce, Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce, Prince George Chamber of Commerce*
- Education / Training:  
*College of New Caledonia*
- Community and Environmental Groups:  
*Nechako Valley Sporting Association – Fish and Wildlife Division, Nechako Valley Regional Cattlemen’s Association, Upper Nechako Wilderness Council*

New Gold had a tradeshow display or presented to the public and stakeholders at business forums, mining conferences, resource and economic summits and industry events.

Presentations to date include: 2012 Minerals North Conference (approx. 400 delegates and 200 exhibitors); Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako 2012 Business Forum (approx. 140 participants); Minerals North 2013 Conference and Tradeshow (approx. 900 delegates and exhibitors); Mineral Exploration Roundup 2013 (approx. 8000 participants from 38 countries); 2013 Initiatives Prince George Market Expansion Forum (approx. 130 representatives from businesses); 2013 BC Natural Resource Forum and Economic Summit (approx. 300 delegates); 2013 BC Mayors Caucus (88 Mayors); 2013 North Central Local Government Association annual general meeting; and 2013 Canadian Institute of Mining North Central BC Chapter annual meeting (approx. 145 delegates).

## Meetings

New Gold meets regularly with stakeholders, including private land owners, range and forest tenure holders, trappers and guide outfitters, to provide Project updates and address comments or concerns about the proposed Project. The focus of these meetings has ranged from employment opportunities to environmental issues, transmission line location, potential property impacts and mine construction.

## Community Liaison Committee

In 2012, New Gold worked with local regional governments to form the Blackwater Project Community Liaison Committee. The Community Liaison Committee is comprised of community members who represent a range of community and regional interests including social, education, environment, economic and community development as well as local and regional governments. The purpose of the Community Liaison Committee is to establish a continuing relationship between the Project and the region; create a comfortable space to share, discuss and address community and Project interests and concerns; and clarify expectations and understandings related to the Project and local communities.

New Gold has held Community Liaison meetings in the summer and fall of 2012 and winter and summer of 2013. As part of its February 28, 2013 meeting, New Gold sponsored a “Mining 101” course to improve members’ knowledge of the mining industry. A similar course was also offered to the public. As part of its June 13, 2013 meeting, New Gold hosted a site tour to

provide members with an opportunity to experience an active exploration project. More details on the site tour are included in “Site Tours” below.

### **Economic Development Workshops**

In February 2013, New Gold hosted a workshop with Economic Development Officers from the District of Vanderhoof, the District of Fort St. James, the Village of Fraser Lake, Quesnel/Cariboo Regional District and the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. The workshop’s objectives were to identify economic development opportunities within the region, explore New Gold’s role in economic development, and identify potential opportunities for joint action. Key regional economic goals, such as diversifying the economy and ensuring a stable, local workforce, were discussed.

Participating Economic Development Officers said they found the workshop encouraging and appreciated the opportunity to discuss how New Gold could support the communities and the region. The results of the workshop were shared and confirmed with members of the Community Liaison Committee. These results reinforced five economic objectives previously identified by the Community Liaison Committee, including:

- Enhance local and regional economies;
- Enhance workforce stability;
- Contribute to the health of communities;
- Support local and regional government cooperation and coordination; and
- Enhance environmental sustainability.

### **Citizens Forums**

In May 2013, New Gold hosted Citizens Forums in Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, Burns Lake and Fort St. James to learn more about community interests and explore ways New Gold could maximize social and economic benefits to the region and local communities.

The forums focused on local and regional values and assets and how New Gold could enhance community development. In the forums, participants developed a community asset map using participant images, drawings, photos and other visual elements.

### **Focus Groups**

New Gold facilitated focus groups with members of the project’s Community Liaison Committee on July 30, 2013 and August 21, 2013. The purpose of the focus groups was to receive community feedback on the project’s proposed human resource strategy including local hiring, local training and recruitment. This feedback will be taken into consideration in the project’s human resource strategy.

## Site Tours

Tours of the Blackwater exploration site help the public and stakeholders understand the Project and provide opportunities for informed comment, discussion and questions. To date, the Project has hosted the following tours of the Blackwater site:

- June 2012 – local media
- August 2012 – District of Vanderhoof Mayor Gerry Thiessen and then Saik'uz First Nation Chief Jackie Thomas
- March 2013 – College of New Caledonia (Nechako Campus), School District 91-Nechako Lakes, employment agencies and an Economic Development Officer
- June 2013 – the Project's Community Liaison Committee

New Gold anticipates hosting more site tours in the future.

## Open Houses

In October 2012, New Gold held open houses in Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, Burns Lake and Fraser Lake to introduce the Project to local communities and seek feedback about potential project effects and how the Blackwater Project could work with local communities and the region. More than 180 people attended.

From May 6 to 14, 2013, New Gold held six open houses in Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, Burns Lake, Quesnel, Fort St. James and Prince George. These open houses helped demonstrate New Gold's commitment to the long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability of the communities and region and provided an opportunity to answer questions and receive comments related to potential environmental effects and local hiring and procurement. Baseline study panels were available for review and comment and environmental consultants were present to answer questions. Nearly 250 people attended the open houses.

New Gold management, staff and project consultants were available at each open house to share information and seek feedback about how the Blackwater Project could work with the community. Open House Reports were prepared following each set of open houses.

## Project Newsletters and Stakeholder emails

New Gold has kept stakeholders and the public informed about the Project through quarterly newsletters and stakeholder emails. Newsletters were distributed on October 18, 2012 and April 25, 2012 by mail to more than 6,500 homes and handed out at Project events. More than 1,000 stakeholders receive regular emails updating them on Project events and status.

## Website

The Blackwater Project website ([www.newgold.com/blackwater](http://www.newgold.com/blackwater)) was launched in 2012 to keep people informed about the Project and continues to be updated with timely Project information.

### 6.1.1 Public and Stakeholder Comments

During the consultation process, New Gold is tracking and responding to issues and interests communicated by the public and stakeholders and incorporating them, as appropriate, into the proposed Project design and EA process.

An overview of key comments received to date is provided in Table 2.0 below. Each of the issues and interests raised in the comments below will be addressed in the Project's Application.

**Table 2.0: Stakeholder Comments**

Potential Issue	Comment	Responses
Cyanide	Potential effect of cyanide on the environment	<p>New Gold recognizes the potential risk of using cyanide in the gold recovery process and will implement international best management practices to protect its employees, adjacent communities and the environment.</p> <p>New Gold will comply with the International Cyanide Management Code (ICMC) and all federal, provincial and municipal regulations related to the safe transport, storage, handling and detoxification of dangerous goods including cyanide. Compliance with ICMC involves third party audits and disclosure of information to communities.</p> <p>New Gold proposes to include a Cyanide Management Plan in its Application.</p>
Community building	Assistance with local community projects	<p>New Gold actively supports community-building and promotes opportunities for economic diversification.</p> <p>The Application will identify the benefits of the Project to Canadians, particularly to the communities located in close proximity to the Project.</p>
Economic diversification	Desire for economic diversification and stabilization	<p>New Gold is working closely with local communities to support economic diversification and stabilization activities. For example, in February 2013, New Gold hosted a workshop with Economic Development Officers to identify ways to</p>

Potential Issue	Comment	Responses
		support economic diversification in the region.
Local employment	Focus on providing local jobs and local capacity building	<p>New Gold is committed to hiring locally whenever possible. To support local hiring and training, the Project has partnered with the BC Aboriginal Mine Training Association, Northwest College and the College of New Caledonia. More than 66 percent of the 2012 exploration workforce came from the local region.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of the project's potential effects on local employment.</p>
Fish	Potential effects to fish and fish habitat	<p>The proposed Project will aim to avoid water release to the environment during operations.</p> <p>The mine site will not impact anadromous salmon or salmon habitat, or rare or listed (threatened/endangered) fish species.</p> <p>A fish habitat mitigation and compensation plan will be developed so that there is no net loss of fish habitat as a result of constructing and operating the project.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of potential effects to fish and fish habitat.</p>
Land use	The potential for disruption to land used by trappers, guides and ranchers	<p>The Project team is working closely with First Nations, private land owners, range and forest tenure holders, trappers and guide outfitters to minimize land use conflicts.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of potential effects on non-traditional land use.</p>
Mine cycle	The short-term 'boom and bust' aspect of mining	New Gold is working with the Community Liaison Committee and community



Potential Issue	Comment	Responses
		<p>organizations to maximize long-term benefits to the local region.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of the potential effects of the project on family and community wellbeing.</p>
Procurement	Ensuring local procurement opportunities	<p>In 2012, New Gold spent more than \$130 million on goods and services – about 75 percent of that was spent in the local region. New Gold will support local procurement at every stage of the Project.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of effects on employment and business opportunities.</p>
Reclamation	Activity after mine life ends	<p>To ensure land is safely returned to productive use, mine closure and reclamation are regulated under the BC Environmental Assessment Act and the BC Mines Act.</p> <p>The Application will include a Project Closure and Reclamation Plan.</p>
Site access	Transportation to site, including road access from Quesnel	<p>New Gold is working to develop a transportation plan that supports local hiring and considers community interests and values.</p> <p>The Application will include a Transportation and Access Management Plan in its Application.</p>
Tailings Storage Facility	Impact of the Tailings Storage Facility on birds, particularly related to intoxication	<p>The Tailings Storage Facility will be designed, built and managed to minimize impacts to the environment, including birds.</p> <p>The potential effects of the tailings storage facility on surface water and groundwater flow and quality and on vegetation and wildlife will be assessed in the Application.</p>
Traffic	Traffic and road safety	New Gold will research existing traffic



Potential Issue	Comment	Responses
		<p>volumes as well as potential effects from foreseeable projects to determine the potential impacts on traffic in the area. New Gold has a road safety policy that employees are expected to adhere to.</p> <p>The Application will include a Transportation and Access Management Plan.</p>
Training	Need for education and training opportunities for local residents	<p>New Gold is working with local colleges and the school district to develop local education and training programs.</p> <p>The Application will include a Recruitment, Training and Employment Plan.</p>
Transmission line	Impact of the transmission line on the environment	<p>To minimize environmental impacts, the transmission line would follow existing roads and trails whenever possible and steps will be taken to maintain vegetation to the extent safely possible along the route. The Project team has been working with stakeholders to confirm a route that reduces impacts to land users.</p> <p>The potential effects of the transmission line on soils, vegetation and wildlife will be assessed in the Application.</p> <p>The Application will include a Landscape, Soils and Vegetation Management and Restoration Plan and a Transportation and Access Management Plan.</p>
Uncertainty	Concern over Project delays or cancellation	<p>New Gold has the experience, financial resources, and capital market expertise to develop the Blackwater Project and operate the mine through to post-closure.</p>
Water	Water quality and control of seepage	<p>The Project will be designed to protect water resources. New Gold will continue to conduct water quality monitoring to gather baseline data that will inform our</p>

Potential Issue	Comment	Responses
		<p>water management plan.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of potential effects on water quality and flow.</p>
Work Schedule	Scheduling of work and shifts affecting community benefits	<p>New Gold is engaging with the community to learn more about desired shift schedules and other elements to maximize the benefits to local communities.</p> <p>The Application will include an assessment of social and economic effects, including effects on family and community wellbeing.</p>

## **6.2 Pre-Application Stage and Draft Application Information Requirements (AIR) Public Comment Period**

This section describes how the Project intends to consult the public and stakeholders in the vicinity of the proposed Project during the Pre-Application Stage and draft AIR Public Comment Period with respect to the potential effects of the proposed Project on their interests.

The draft AIR outlines the studies, methodologies and information the Project will include in its application for a provincial environmental assessment certificate. As one of up to six opportunities for public participation in the federal and provincial assessment of the proposed Blackwater Project, the BC EAO's Project Assessment Lead will be seeking public comment on the draft AIR.

### **6.2.1 Activities before the draft AIR Public Comment Period**

Consistent with the requirements of the Order Under Section 11 (Order), at least seven days in advance of the formal public comment period there will be an advertisement regarding the availability of the draft AIR for public review and comment, and the time limits for the formal public comment period provided for in the Order.

The public comment period will be advertised in one or more of the following media:

- New Gold website
- Local newspapers suggested by community stakeholders
- Direct mail
- Newswire
- RSS feed from BC EAO websites

To ensure communities in the Project area are included, advertisements will be distributed in the following communities:

- Vanderhoof
- Fort St. James
- Fraser Lake
- Burns Lake
- Quesnel
- Prince George

In addition to print and digital advertising, hard copy advertisements will be posted in local libraries and public places.

### **6.2.2 Activities during the draft AIR Public Comment Period**

The Project Assessment Lead will provide a public comment period of at least 30 days on the draft AIR. The Project will place hard copies of the draft AIR in local libraries at the start of the public comment period.

#### **Open houses**

Consistent with the requirements of the Order, at least seven days in advance of the open houses there will be an advertisement regarding the date, time and location of any open houses held in respect of the proposed Project, whether organized by the Project or the Project Assessment Lead.

Details regarding location and timing of the open houses may be advertised in one or more of the following media:

- New Gold website
- Local newspapers suggested by community stakeholders
- Direct mail
- Newswire
- RSS feed from the BC EAO website

To ensure communities in the project area are included, advertisements will be placed with media in the following communities:

- Vanderhoof
- Fort St. James
- Fraser Lake
- Burns Lake
- Quesnel
- Prince George

The open houses will be scheduled for weekday evenings and will run from 4:00pm to 8:00pm. The open houses will include information panels for review, project information handouts, hard copies of the draft AIR, and other visual display components. Members of BC EAO and the Project will be available to respond to questions from the participants.

A media space will be available for media to privately interview open house participants or members of the Project team.

Open houses will be held in the following locations, given their proximity to the access road and proposed transmission line for the proposed Project:

- Vanderhoof
- Fraser Lake

### **6.2.3 Activities following the draft AIR Public Comment Period**

The Project will, within time limits set by the Project Assessment Lead, respond to issues that are identified in comments submitted by the public during the formal comment period, and that the Project Assessment Lead has notified the Project are within the scope of the assessment.

## **6.3 Additional activities New Gold will undertake during Pre-Application Stage**

The Project is committed to building strong, constructive and responsive relationships that support the Project's commitment to leaving a positive legacy in the communities and region in which it operates. Throughout the Pre-Application Stage and draft AIR public comment period, the Project will continue to communicate and consult with stakeholders in addition to the formal public comment period. All comments received will be recorded and responded to.

### **Face-to-face meetings and presentations**

The Project team will continue to meet with Project stakeholders in a face-to-face setting to provide Project updates and address comments, concerns and interests about the proposed Project. Discussion topics will include potential project impacts, project design, baseline reports and environmental updates, and potential socio-economic benefits. The Project will meet with the following stakeholders:

- Tenure holders and owners
- Nechako Valley Community Services Society
- Northern Health Authority
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Chambers of Commerce
- Upper Nechako Wilderness Council
- Nechako Valley Sporting Association
- Quesnel Community and Economic Development Corporation
- Community Futures Development Corporation - Stuart Nechako
- College of New Caledonia
- School District 91 – Nechako Lakes
- Cariboo Regional District Area I
- City of Prince George
- City of Quesnel/Cariboo Regional District Joint Planning Committee

- District of Vanderhoof
- Village of Burns Lake
- Village of Fraser Lake
- District of Fort St. James
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
- Regional District of Fraser-Fort George - Area C

**Community Liaison Committee Meeting**

The Project will hold the fifth Blackwater Project Community Liaison Committee meeting during the fall of 2013. The objective of this meeting will be to receive input on how the Project has addressed local and regional interests and review the progress of community partnerships.

**Community Leaders Meeting**

The Project will hold a Community Leaders Meeting (mayors and regional district chairs) in the fall of 2013. This meeting will include mayors and other local and regional government representatives. The purpose will be to confirm regional priorities and explore opportunities for New Gold to support regional priorities and objectives.

**Events**

The Project will continue to participate in events to engage community members, provide information and updates on the Project, gather feedback for the provincial and federal EA processes, provide information on employment and training opportunities, and gather information on concerns and interests related to the proposed Project.

The Project will participate in the following events:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
September 27, 2013	16/97 Economic Alliance Annual General Meeting	TBC
October 1, 2013	Vanderhoof Chamber of Commerce AGM	Vanderhoof
October 25-26 2013	Regional District of Bulkley Nechako Business Forum	Fort St. James
January 27-30 2014	AME BC Mineral Exploration Roundup Conference	Vancouver

### **Regional Citizens Forum Meeting**

The Project will hold a regional Citizens Forum during the fall of 2013 to ensure community members receive up-to-date information about the Project, have an opportunity to comment on the Project, receive feedback on their comments, and can increase the Project team's understanding of regional goals and aspirations.

### **Website Updates/Project Update Emails**

Throughout the Pre-Application Stage, the Project will continue to notify stakeholders and the public of up-to-date information via Project update emails and the Project website. The public and stakeholders will be notified of Pre-Application-related events, such as the launch of the draft AIR public comment period, baseline report results, preliminary results from the effects assessments and other Project-related information.

### **Site Tours**

The Project will continue to host tours of the Blackwater exploration site to help the public and stakeholders understand the Project and provide opportunities for informed comment, discussion and questions.

### **Working Group Meetings**

The Project will continue to participate in meetings with Working Group members to discuss the draft AIR.

### **Focus Groups**

The Project may hold information sessions in the fall with stakeholders and the public to discuss environmental baseline studies and to gain input to the development of potential mitigation strategies.

## **7.0 APPLICATION REVIEW STAGE**

This section describes how the Project intends to consult the public in the vicinity of the proposed Project during the Application Review Stage of the assessment with respect to the potential effects of the proposed Project on their interests.

## 7.1 Activities before the Application Review Stage Public Comment Period

Consistent with the requirements of the Order, at least seven days in advance of the formal public comment period the Project will advertise the availability of the Application for public review and comment, and the time limits for the formal public comment period provided for in the Order. As some of the local papers publish weekly only, ads may be published more than 7 days in advance.

The public comment period will be advertised in one or more of the following media:

- New Gold website
- Local newspapers suggested by community stakeholders
- Radio
- Newswire
- RSS feed from the BC EAO website

To ensure communities in the project area are included, advertisements will be placed with media in the following communities:

- Vanderhoof
- Fort St. James
- Fraser Lake
- Burns Lake
- Quesnel
- Prince George

In addition to print and digital advertising, hard copy advertisements will be posted in local libraries and public places.

## 7.2 Activities during the Application Review Stage Public Comment Period

During the Application Review Stage of the assessment, the Project Assessment Lead will provide a public comment period on the Application. This comment period will last at least 30 days.

During this period, the Proponent will provide results of the EA and environmental studies and continue to solicit stakeholder input. The engagement approach during this stage will be similar to the Pre-Application stage. The purpose of this engagement will be to:

- Identify and address public and stakeholder issues and concerns;
- Identify project effects; and
- Develop strategies that will mitigate potential effects.

The Project will continue its consultation program during the Application Review Stage. The consultation program will include open houses and information sessions held during the public

comment period and on-going consultation activities that will take place before, during and after the public comment period.

### **7.2.1 Open Houses and Information Sessions during the Public Comment Period**

#### **Open Houses**

Open houses to provide public review and comment on the Project's Application will be held in Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake. The Application Public Comment Period open houses will be scheduled near the middle of the Application comment period, expected to begin early 2014. Open houses will be scheduled for weekday evenings and will run for approximately four hours. The open houses will include information panels for review, project information handouts, hard copies of the Application, informational mine animations, and other visual display components. Members of BC EAO and the Project will be available to respond to questions from the participants.

A media space will be available for media to privately interview meeting participants or members of the Project team.

Advertising will be consistent with the requirements of the Section 11 Order and will follow the same format as the notification of the draft Air Public Comment Period outlined in section 6.2.1.

#### **Information Sessions**

To deepen the consultation on the Project's Application and ensure meaningful engagement with a diverse set of stakeholders and broad public representation, the Project proposes to hold one or more information sessions during the Application Review Stage.

Each information session will be open to the public and will provide participants with current information about the Project, environmental studies, baseline reports and the assessment process and engage the community in an information exchange on key topics related to the assessment of the Project, including the effects assessment, and plans to reduce, mitigate or compensate for potential effects. Comments, questions and issues raised during the sessions will be addressed by Project team members.

Each information session will run about three hours and will be professionally facilitated. The venues will contain a large screen for presentations and visual and informational panels for public review. The sessions will include an overview presentation, topic-specific presentations, an opportunity for questions and answers and may include small group break-out sessions by valued component or topic, depending on participation and level of interest.



Handouts will be provided to ensure participants are well prepared for the discussion topics. Visual and informational panels will be displayed around the room and the Project will prepare and deliver a PowerPoint presentation. All materials will be available on the Project website.

Subject to availability, the sessions will be held in an approximately 120-seat facility in Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake. A media room will be in place for media to privately interview meeting participants or members of the Project team.

To ensure communities in the project area are included, the Information Sessions will be advertised in:

- Vanderhoof
- Fort St. James
- Fraser Lake
- Burns Lake
- Quesnel
- Prince George

### **7.2.2 On-going Consultation and Communications Activities**

The Project is committed to ensuring a high level of public engagement through every stage of the project and will continue to actively communicate and consult with the public and stakeholders through the Application Review period by providing email updates, maintaining a timely and accurate website, answering questions from the public through email, telephone or in person, leading site tours, holding a Community Liaison meeting and a Community Leaders meeting, and distributing information updates through newsletters.

#### **Information Materials Update and Distribution**

Throughout the Application Review Stage, the Project will maintain its emphasis on ensuring the public and stakeholders have accurate and up-to-date information about the Project and the assessment process by continuing to email Project Updates to more than 1,000 stakeholders on the Project's email distribution list.

#### **Website**

Throughout the Application Review Stage, the Project will continue to provide up-to-date information through its website. The website will be used to notify the public and stakeholders of Application-related events, such as the launch of the public comment period.

The website contains a page dedicated to the assessment process, including a schematic showing where the Project is in the process and links to Baseline Reports and Baseline Report Summaries. Each baseline report along with a summary is posted to the website as it becomes available.

## **Correspondence**

The Project team regularly receives correspondence from the public and stakeholders. This correspondence is reviewed and responded to, as appropriate, in order to ensure the writer's issues or interests are addressed.

The Public can also provide comment on the Project and receive immediate feedback by calling or dropping in to the Project Office in Vanderhoof, which is open weekdays from 8:00am to 4:30pm.

All correspondence is tracked using an electronic public and stakeholder issues and response database.

## **Site Tours**

The Project has regularly held site tours with members of the community and will continue these through the Application Review Period and the life cycle of the project.

The site tour provides an opportunity for participants to experience bus travel to the site, travel the main access road, see the site itself, and ask questions of Project staff, including the lead geological engineer and health and safety officer.

## **Community Leaders Meetings**

As a follow-up to the meeting held in the fall of 2013, the Project will hold a Community Leaders Meeting during the Application Review Stage to receive their feedback on its community engagement and community development work, and to receive comments on the Application.

## **Community Liaison Committee Meeting**

As a follow up to Community Liaison Committee Meetings held during the Pre-Application Stage, the Project will hold a Community Liaison Committee meeting during the Application Review Stage to receive comments on the baseline reports, effects assessment, and plans to reduce, mitigate or compensate for potential Project effects.

The Project will receive participant input on how the Project has addressed local and regional interests and review the progress of community partnerships.

These comments will be recorded and addressed as part of the Application Review process.

It is expected the Community Liaison Committee will continue throughout the design and operations phases of the project.

## **Newsletters**

The Project has distributed quarterly newsletters by mail to more than 6,500 homes and businesses in the Project area since 2012. A newsletter will be distributed, around the time of the Application Review Period, providing an update on the environmental assessment process and the opportunities for public comment. The newsletter will also provide feedback on how comments received so far have been addressed and considered in the planning for and design of the Project.

## **Meetings (one on one and small groups)**

During the Application Review Period, the project team will continue to meet with Project stakeholders to obtain additional feedback and input into the proposed mitigation measures.

## **Focus Groups**

The Project has held Focus Groups with Community Liaison Committee and other community members in order to receive feedback on its human resource strategy and expects to continue this approach throughout the Application Review stage when topics arise that require focused discussion and input.

## **Issues Tracking**

All public and stakeholder comments gathered through all consultation vehicles are tracked and addressed using an electronic tracking system.

### **7.3 Activities following the Application Review Stage Public Comment Period**

After completion of the public consultation program, the Project, within time limits set by the Project Assessment Lead, will provide to the Project Assessment Lead a written report on the results of its public consultation activities, identifying views, issues and concerns raised by the public with respect to the proposed Project and how the Project intends to address them.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS**

In its consultation, New Gold is working towards alignment with ISO 26000 (Guidance on Social Responsibility) and the Mining Association of Canada's Towards Sustainable Mining. The Project's stakeholder and public consultation seeks alignment with the core values, code of ethics and protocols set forward by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

## 9.0 CONSULTATION DOCUMENTATION

To ensure information provided by the public and stakeholders is respected and meaningfully considered, while ensuring regulatory requirements are met, New Gold keeps records of formal correspondence and communications and will use these to develop and submit public consultation reports to the BC EAO.

## 10.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

New Gold understands the proposed Project will have an effect on local communities, First Nations groups, and the environment in the vicinity of the proposed Project. Implementing its Design for Closure approach, New Gold will work with these communities to develop and implement long-term economic, social, and environmentally sustainable opportunities while avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating negative Project effects.

New Gold is committed to significantly contributing to social and economic growth in local communities, the region, and the Province of British Columbia. Through all stages of the Project, New Gold will demonstrate respect for local interests and aspirations, and environmental values.

## 11.0 REFERENCES

Government of BC. 2002. *Environmental Assessment Act*. SBC 2002 c43.

Government of BC. 2009. *Environmental Assessment Office 2009 User Guide*. SBC 2009.

Government of Canada. 2012. *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. SC 2012, c. 19, s. 52.