

# Lana Johnson

I am writing in support of the draft Reclamation Plan (F20232626RPA) and draft Waste Management Permit No. 2023DB0001 for Manh Choh. While there has been a great deal of speculation about the ore transport plan, there has been almost zero discussion or controversy about the mine itself, which is the subject of these permits/plans. The mine will have almost zero impact and will generate great economic benefits for the eastern part of Interior Alaska and for Fairbanks. The reclamation plan will return the site to a condition very similar to how it looks now but with a new lake. The land will be able to support a subsistence lifestyle for its owners for generations to come. The proposed bond appears generous enough to fully protect the landowners and the state.

Kinross has a long history of responsible mining in Alaska and should be congratulated for finding a new business model that will allow it to operate for many years to come. Fort Knox is an integral part of the Interior economy, supporting more than 1,000 good-paying jobs, buying locally, paying taxes, subsidizing power costs, supporting education - particularly UAF - and being a very good neighbor. We need more companies like Kinross in Alaska.

The company has the state's best record for reclamation, with three major projects under its belt. When it first entered the state, it started a decades-long rehabilitation of Fish Creek, a prime example of how long-life mines can sustainably co-exist with ecosystems and nearby populations. After nearly a century of mining activities prior to Kinross' entry into Alaska, water quality and fish habitat were seriously undermined by excessive sediment concentrations, uncontrolled run-off and erosion. The development of Fort Knox created opportunities to fix the damage and restore a habitat where native fish populations could thrive. The reclaimed wetlands area is now home to a vibrant fish hatchery as well as beavers, bald eagles and moose. The fact that such success has been achieved in an area immediately downstream of the mine's tailings storage facility is indicative of the high level of environmental protection that is central to ongoing operations at Fort Knox. Also is the fact that Kinross voluntarily paid for it all.

Then there is the reclamation of True North which the state calls an example of mining done right. In 2009, Kinross began a six-year process of reclaiming and restoring the 2,050-acre mineral development site. The work included grading and recontouring 149 acres, seeding and fertilizing 270 acres, planting vegetation on 52 acres, and removing all mining buildings. All was largely completed by 2014. The operators also began a long-term monitoring program to ensure long-term stability of the landscape. DEC Commissioner Jason Brune praised the operators of True North for meeting both the spirit and letter of state environmental protection laws and demonstrating the wisdom of supporting responsible mineral production in Alaska.

Kinross Alaska has also partnered with Trout Unlimited to create the Alaska Abandoned Mine Restoration Initiative – the first partnership of a major mining company and a fish conservation NGO working together in Alaska to restore stream beds to support salmon spawning.

The first project of the partnership is Phase II development, along with the U.S. Forest Service, of Resurrection Creek in Hope, Alaska, an area first mined in the 1890s. The project aims to rebuild historic wildlife and fish habitats at Resurrection Creek, a now popular recreation spot south of Anchorage on the Kenai Peninsula. Even though it's not yet complete, the project is already seeing

great results.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment in support of the Reclamation Plan and Waste Permit. I strongly encourage you to approve both.