

## Who Will Speak For Them?

I shared our initial findings with Tlingit Elder David Katzeek, Klukwan Thunderbird Elder and Joey Zuboff, Deisheetaan (Raven Beaver) Clan Leader of Angoon. Their look was as one of great loss. After a moment of silence David, his voice raising, said,

"Can you hear them? They are calling - they are crying - the salmon people, the seal people, all of the creatures of the sea are calling. Who will hear them? Who will speak for them? That is what our elders would ask, who will speak for them?"

"You have brought us the scientific evidence of the damage being done to Hawk Inlet and you have asked the agencies for a study and that's okay, but our Elders would have said (to the mine and regulators) STOP doing what you are doing NOW - can't you hear the voices of the sea people?" They can't wait for the government to do a study - a study will give you promises, but we were promised this mine would not harm our food, not contaminate our water and not contaminate our land and our people. This is not just a Native issue. It is an issue for Native and non-Native. We must all hear and we must all speak?"

Joey Zuboff voiced agreement with David's words.

David Katzeek speaks with force, authority, spirituality and wisdom.

These are the same expressions I heard from the City of Angoon and the Angoon Tribe - they didn't want more promises. They want action.

Angoon's first request was to Alaska Health and Social Services Commissioner Valerie Davidson to use our laboratory results and determine if their traditional foods in Hawk Inlet are safe to eat. And, if not safe what will the State do? Angoon referred to all food: commercial, sports and personal use, not just their traditional food. We share that concern since we have observed commercial crab and shrimp pots set in front of the mine loading dock, an especially hot spot for heavy metals.

Friends of Admiralty has for years requested that the 1981 pre-mining baseline study - the definitive pre-mine state of health of Hawk Inlet's Natural environment - be replicated to measure environmental changes as a result of mining - now going on some 30 years. The fact that the permitting agencies felt there was no reason to use the baseline, but opted for on-going monitoring moved us to do our study. Our study duplicated a number of sample sites of the 81 study. We not only proved the value of the original study, but also that our results have raised credible evidence that all is not well with the mine. Changes must be made to realize the promises of environmental protection in every permit issued to the mine.

I value the Elder's words to STOP the pollution NOW. Gov. Walker's Administration has put the risk of Canadian mines to Southeast Alaska as an important issue, so our own mines should be at least of equal concern. The Forest Service will be starting a new tailing's expansion EIS effort within two years. Hecla mine has to be rethinking options for tailing's water treatment and disposal, given the 2003 FS decision to limit tailing's expansion until more data is available or a different strategy for disposal is sought.

We endorse Angoon's letter to Governor Walker's Administration that requests four actions:

1. Determine if people's health is at risk for eating food from Hawk Inlet.
2. Replicate a modified 1981 pre-mine baseline study to determine the mine's impacts on the marine environment and adjacent watersheds.
3. Once the exact sources and mechanics of pollution are discovered, design an effective way to stop it.
4. Establish a scientific and technical committee, with stakeholders involved to provide guidance and oversight to the entire study and restoration.

In addition we believe the following must happen and soon:

1. The Forest Service must take responsibility and provide leadership for the health of the Inlet. They permit the mine and the standards are law in ANILCA (see Legacy section of this newsletter).
2. The state of Alaska must reevaluate the monitoring program under the state's waste water discharge permit and fix the errors. that have allowed the monitoring to miss the obvious data that good science would have provided. Monitoring protocols must cover all trophic levels, and conclusions must be based on science.
3. Compensation to Angoon, and other villages, must be made for loss of traditional use areas.
4. The State of Alaska must declare the entirety of Hawk Inlet an "Impaired Water Body."
5. The State of Alaska and EPA must set the Total Maximum Daily Limits (TMDL) of toxins that Greens Creek Hecla mine is allowed to discharge into the inlet.

I grieve with all to see yet another part of our earth, and the health of the people who subsist on its bounty, sacrificed for corporate profit and convenience. Meanwhile the government agencies tasked with protecting this precious resource turn a blind eye. It should have never happened. It cannot be allowed to continue.

In the future, the permitting agencies must adequately monitor impacts to the health of the Hawk Inlet ecosystem. Hecla should live up to its claim as a cutting edge, environmentally responsible mine operator with science-based engineering innovations of tailings storage and wastewater treatment. And the rest of us must play our part. We can listen as Tlingit Elder David Katzeek and Angoon Cultural Leader Joey Zuboff look at the science and hear the creatures of the sea calling. For they ask of us all, "Who will speak for them?"