

## Present Day Red Dog

There are ongoing concerns in the village of Kivalina about toxic levels of zinc and other heavy metals in the creek near the mine coming from escapement of mine waste water. The creek near Red Dog flows into the Wulik River, the village's source of fish and drinking water. As well, they contend that there are elevated lead levels in the air from windblown dust around Red Dog facility. Villagers also allege that caribou migration has been affected by trucking along the 52-mile ore haul road between the mine and the port. Under the mine agreement, a committee of NANA representatives could close down the road if it affects the caribou.

The shallow water at the port, south of the village, used to be a prime area for Kivalina villagers to hunt beluga and bowhead whales in the summer. However, migration patterns appeared to have changed after construction of the port in the late 1980s by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) and none have been sighted since. Kivalina villagers said if the public were restricted from tidelands, it would infringe on their subsistence activities. Red Dog mine officials now want to increase zinc and lead production from the mine, requiring a deep water port accessible by barge. Teck Cominco's plan calls for dredging a 50-foot-deep channel extending about a mile into the Chukchi Sea. The deep water port plan is currently undergoing an Environmental Impact Study by the Army Corps of Engineers.

## EPA Toxic Releases Inventory

The EPA's 2005 TRI ranked Red Dog Alaska's number one emitter of toxic substances and the second biggest nationwide, with a release of 226,000 tons of toxics to the environment.

## Northern Alaska Environmental Center



830 College Road  
Fairbanks AK 99701  
(907) 452-5021  
[www.northern.org](http://www.northern.org)

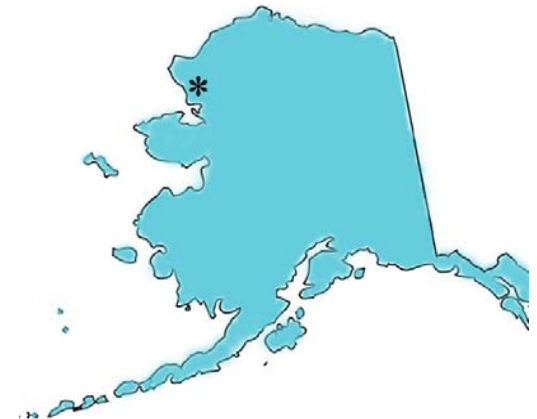
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## Red Dog Mine Fact Sheet



Updated April 2007

## **Name and Ownership**

Kotzebue-based NANA Regional Corporation, one of a dozen regional Alaska Native corporations, owns the Red Dog mine mineral deposit. The mine is operated by Teck Cominco, a Canadian mining company. The NANA Regional Corp. was formed by Inupiat shareholders under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

## **Location**

Red Dog is located 55 miles east of the North Slope Inupiaq Eskimo village of Kivalina (382 residents) along the Chukchi Sea coast and 40 miles from Noatak (428 residents). The mine complex is in the DeLong Mountains, in a valley in the middle of the western Brooks Range.

## **Type of Ore and Projected Production**

At an estimated resource of 25 million tons of zinc, Red Dog is the world's largest zinc mine. Four out of the eight largest known zinc deposits in the world are located in the Red Dog area. The mine also produces lead and silver. 2006 operating profit jumped to \$1.1 billion from \$325 million in 2005 due to high metal prices and Red Dog produced 557,500 tonnes of zinc and 123,500 tonnes of lead. NANA will get an estimated \$1 billion over the mine's projected 50 year life, and under terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, 70 percent of all royalties will be split with the state's other Native regional corporations. According to John Sims, director of the state Office of Minerals Development, "Red Dog will be able to produce and make a profit even at times when metal prices are depressed."

## **Employment**

In 2000, Red Dog employed 381 mine-mill workers. Touted as a major breakthrough in Native hire agreements, the formal operating agreement between NANA and Teck Cominco required the mine to have 100 percent Native workers by 2001. That goal has not been met; currently 62% of the workers are NANA shareholders.

## **History and**

### **Environmental/Cultural Concerns**

**1989:** Red Dog Mine opens. Zinc levels in Red Dog Creek concern state Fish and Game officials because the creek near the mine drains into the Wulik River, which has one of the biggest populations of arctic char in Alaska. Concentrations of zinc were measured at levels more than 600 times higher than what the government considers healthy to water life. The village of Kivalina uses those fish as part of their subsistence diet.

**1991:** EPA fined Cominco \$75,000 for illegally discharging heavy metals into a nearby creek – 134 separate permit violations.

**December 1991:** Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation issues warning to the Red Dog mine that lead levels outside the mill are 30 % higher than what is considered to be protective of human health. Workers at the mine are advised to use respirators when outside to avoid breathing the air. DEC issues a compliance order to Teck Cominco (then Cominco Alaska) that requires the company to improve the cover for the crushed ore stockpile, stop trucks from driving through the ore concentrate storage building, and to partially cover the building in order to reduce dust on site.

**May 2001:** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issues a Notice of Violation stating that certain mine operations were not in compliance with conditions of the Red Dog mine air permit. Teck Cominco agrees to implementation of additional operational procedures and controls to avoid future violations of the air permit.

**June 2001:** Heavy metal contamination along the Red Dog mine haul road exceed levels found in severely polluted areas of Central and Eastern Europe and all of western Russia, according to a National Park Service study released on June 20, 2001. The ore haul road crosses 24 miles of Cape Krusenstern National Monument (north of Kotzebue). There have been thirty trucks spills along the haul road since the mine opened in 1989.

**December 2001:** Red Dog Mine agrees to pay \$827,000 fine for 18 state air quality violations cited during a joint state and federal inspection in August 2000.

**Summer 2006:** NPS conducts field studies to revisit the 2001 haul road dust study. Findings will be published in fall of 2007.

**July 2006:** U.S. District Court found that Red Dog exceeded limits set by the federal law in 618 claims in a lawsuit filed by a half-dozen residents of the nearby arctic village of Kivalina. However, the judge denied the lawsuit's 1,300-plus other pollution claims in his July 28 ruling. The six plaintiffs argued that Teck Cominco discharged illegal amounts of pollution into the Wulik River, a stream they use for drinking water and subsistence fishing.