

What's Happening at Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock)

Summer 2024

Welcome to the Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock) Remediation Project Newsletter

The Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock) Remediation Team, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), Tłı̄chǫ Ndek'áowō (Tłı̄chǫ Government or "TG"), Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), AECOM and Sanexen Environmental (the "clean-up" contractor), wishes to keep everyone updated on what's happening at the Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock) site. The Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock) newsletter is an easy way to get important information out to our partners who want to stay informed about the Project.

Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock) Mine History

The Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ (Rayrock) mine site is a former uranium mine that operated between 1956 and 1959 and then was abandoned by the mine owner, Rayrock Mines Limited. During mine operations, the uranium ore was sent south for processing, and the waste (called "tailings" or rock that was crushed into very small pieces and mixed with chemicals to remove the uranium) was put into two tailings ponds. Throughout the 1960s until the late 1980s, buildings were removed. In 1996, the tailings ponds and mine entrances were closed and secured, but more work was still needed to clean the site.

In Tłı̄chǫ Yatì, the Rayrock mine area is called "Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ." It means "Where the rock points towards the water." Before the Rayrock uranium mine, Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ was known as a safe and healthy area for Tłı̄chǫ cultural gatherings (it was a stopping-off point along the Tłı̄chǫ "Trail of Our Ancestors") and was valued for its rich hunting and fishing resources. CIRNAC and the Tłı̄chǫ Government are now working together to heal the land and the history, and to leave significant social, economic, and cultural benefits for the Tłı̄chǫ.

See the Rayrock (Kwetı̄ᑦᑦ) Story Site for more information: <https://shorturl.at/Q1vtd>



Rayrock Mine in 1958 with Mill Lake (Shìzì tì whetǫ)

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A map of the Kwetųᑭᑦᑲᑦ (Rayrock) Remediation Project sites.

What is the Kwetųᑭᑦᑲᑦ (Rayrock) Remediation Project?

The main site within the Project is the Rayrock mine site, but remediation and clean up will also happen at the Sun Main sites, Barge Landing, power line between Rayrock and Snare Hydro, REX and smaller exploration sites around Rayrock.

Site Update

The clean-up focus at Rayrock is the lake by the old mill (see Mill Lake or Shìzì tì whetᑭ in the photo on the previous page). The plan is to drain and treat the lake water for release into Sherman Lake, then remove and store the contaminated sediments into a secure landfill.

In the winter of 2023, the Project Team built a winter road to Rayrock, set up a camp, brought in machinery and materials, and started the clean-up work in September. Between April and June 2024, the Project Team was busy clearing rock under the Mill, blasting and crushing the rock for the construction of the landfill and water treatment plant. Treatment of Mill Lake water will start in the Summer of 2024 and will continue on until freeze up.



Workers installing water piping to Sherman Lake.
March 24, 2024



Image of the mine area: moving crushed rock to a new location.
April 23, 2024

Team Update: In Photos

Sanexen thanks all of the Tłı̨ch̨o citizens for their help with the project. Their knowledge of the land made building the winter road and working at the Rayrock site possible.



*Joseph Alexis on the Emile River.
January 22, 2024*



*Robert Nitsiza checking the thickness of the ice.
February 16, 2024*



*Joseph Alexis and Roger Football working on the
winter road.
February 13, 2024*

Keeping Workers Safe on the Kwetj̨ᑲà (Rayrock) Site

The Project Team works hard to keep everyone safe.

Safety rules include wearing protective gear, checking for hazards before starting work, and making sure surroundings are safe.

Kwetł̄ᗵà Elders Committee Meeting



The Kwetł̄ᗵà Elders Committee held its annual meeting, themed “Healing the Land and the People”, on February 13-15, 2024, in Behchokò. Over 30 Tł̄chq Elders, youth, and citizens from all four Tł̄chq communities attended. This meeting aimed to keep the community informed about the clean-up work and monitoring being done on former mine sites within the Mqwhì Gogha Dè Njtlèè.

Hoghàdets’eeᗵ – Ełexè Eghàlats’eeda / Learning and Working Together (formerly Edànet’e Eghàlats’iida) Tł̄chq Gathering



The Hoghàdets’eeᗵ – Ełexè Eghàlats’eeda / Learning and Working Together Tł̄chq Gathering was held in March 2024, over three days in Behchokò. Sanexen (the clean-up contractor) and CIRNAC participated in the Tł̄chq Workers’ Day Job Fair.

Tłjchq Ndek'àowo and CIRNAC at National and International Conferences

CIRNAC and the TG demonstrated their collaboration at the November 2023 Federal Contaminated Sites Remediation Conference in Toronto and the April 2024 International Association for Impact Assessment Conference in Dublin discussing their innovative approaches to the Kwetłpaà (Rayrock) Remediation Project, blending Indigenous Knowledge with Western Science.



Violet Camsell-Blondin presenting at the April 2024 International Association for Impact Assessment Conference in Dublin, Ireland.

CIRNAC and Tłjchq Ndek'àowo at the November 2023 Federal Contaminated Sites Remediation Conference in Toronto.



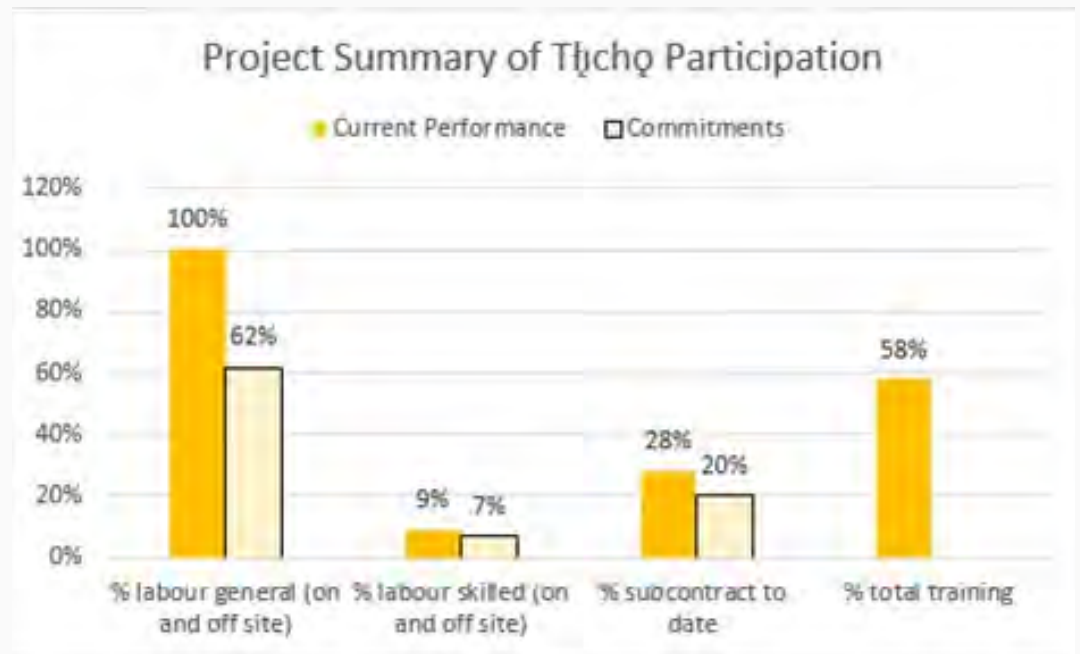
Freshet Tour



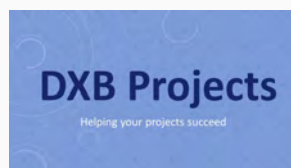
On May 8, 2024, nine Tłıchq community members, including Elders and Tłıchq monitors, visited the Kwetłłᓃà (Rayrock) site for the annual spring tour. The tour's purpose is to see how water flows on and off site when the snow melts during freshet peak. The Elders were happy with Sanexen's help going around the site and appreciated seeing the work being done at Mill Lake and on site.

Indigenous Opportunities Considerations at Kwetłłᓃà (Rayrock)

Indigenous Opportunities Considerations (IOCs) are tools within the Remediation Contract and Engineering Services contracts that the Project Team uses to foster local employment, training, and apprenticeships on the Project and to encourage subcontracting and support services from Tłıchq businesses. The following graph demonstrates that Sanexen has surpassed its Tłıchq labour and contracting commitments in 2023.



The Kwetłłᑦᑦ (Rayrock) Remediation Project is a collaboration between:



Contact Us

For more information on the Kwetłłᑦᑦ (Rayrock) Remediation Project and the groups working on the project, contact:

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