



Celebrating Traditional Care of the Land and Water at Musselwhite Mine

Respect for customs and culture can take a very different format depending on the local context. The Global Center for Indigenous Community Relations will be examining ways this happens within Newmont and in the broader context to share good practices and creative ways that companies can respect Indigenous customs. One such example plays out twice each year at the Musselwhite mine, when mine staff, First Nation elders and community members come together for the annual opening and closing ceremonies. These two ceremonies are held when the mine begins water discharge in the spring and when it is shut off for the winter. Musselwhite is located on the traditional territory of North Caribou Lake First Nation. When the treated water is released from the wetland, the water flows downstream toward Wunnumin Lake First Nation and Kingfisher Lake First Nation. Each year, a ceremony is performed where the water is blessed before it is released to the environment. Under normal circumstances, this would be an opportunity for community members to gather on site and lead a ceremony with prayers and blessings for the care of the water and land in the new season.

The world was presented with challenges of many types in 2020, and this was no exception. But for all parties it was important to maintain this traditional practice, so all involved gathered virtually via videoconference to mark the start of effluent discharge in June. Amos Winter from Kingfisher Lake First Nation provided the blessing in 2020. His words of wisdom resonated with all participants.

"Water is an important resource in all cultures. Water brings life. Our ancestors used water to travel from place to place. Water is the single most important resource for everything we see. We bless the water so no harm comes to the water, the wildlife and the people along the river system."

Amos Winter, Kingfisher Lake First Nation

Making space and time for First Nation communities to care for the land through their traditional practices is an important way to respect customs and culture. The annual opening and closing ceremonies also play a critical role of reminding our

employees of the interconnected nature of the land where we work and the greater community.