



Chickaloon Village

*Traditional Council
(Nay'dini'aa Na')*

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Executive Director

For Immediate Release: June 9th 2010

Contact: Angela Wade 354-7403 angie@chickaloon.org

Press Conference: Chickaloon Tribe to address religious and cultural concerns regarding Usibelli Coal Mine Inc's plans to conduct coal exploration and mining activities in the Chickaloon Tribe's traditional use area.

Moose Creek: In the early 1900's coal mining severely impacted the Ahtna Athabascan Village of Chickaloon by introducing disease, alcohol and tobacco as well as many other social ills. Local salmon runs were decimated by coal mining impacts. The Tribe has spent the last 100 years trying to recover, adapt and restore what was destroyed during this time.

Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc. started construction of a road Monday to access coal from the Wishbone Hill coal lease area. Usibelli plans to conduct open pit strip mining, as well as blasting and hauling coal adjacent to Moose Creek. These activities will bisect a sacred hunting area which Tribal Members use for hunting ceremonial potlatch moose. Moose are sacred, essential aspects of the traditional ceremonies still practiced today by the Athabascan Peoples who have inhabited this area since time immemorial. The area's moose population is certain to be impacted by the blasting and other proposed mining activities. This will directly violate the freedom of religion of Chickaloon Village and its tribal citizens.

The road associated with this project will have up to two hundred trucks per day carrying loads of coal, spewing toxic cancer causing coal dust all over where the Chickaloon Tribe's traditional religious/cultural hunting and gathering use area is, where Tribal Citizens live including the entire area of the Tribal school and play ground.

Moose Creek is culturally significant to Chickaloon Village, as a traditional fishing site, a source for drinking water and a site for cultural, religious and spiritual ceremonies. Chickaloon Village Traditional Council has spent the last seven years and more than one million dollars to restore salmon habitat and salmon populations in Moose Creek, gaining national acclaim for their restoration efforts. Angela Wade, Chickaloon Village Environmental Stewardship Director and Tribal member says "If Usibelli conducts exploration and mines for coal along Moose Creek it will negatively impact our water rights and our sacred way of life".

Chickaloon Village will host a press conference on Thursday June 10th, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. at the Moose Creek Campgrounds located at mile 55 on the Glenn Highway. Speakers will include Angela Wade, Chickaloon Village Environmental Stewardship Director, Lisa Wade, Chickaloon Village Health and Social Services Director, Jessica Dryden

Winnestaffer, Chickaloon Village Tribal Fisheries Biologist and Kaylan Wade, a Chickaloon Village Youth Representative, Andrea Carmen, Executive Director of the International Indian Treaty Council. The Panel will be moderated by Shawna Larson, a Chickaloon Village Tribal Member. They will address the original coal mining that destroyed the Tribes traditional use salmon stream the 1920's, as well as the Tribal restoration that has been taking place for over 6 years and how new mining development will adversely affect this area which includes Chickaloon Village's right to traditional food and their freedom of religious practice.

If you have any questions or need additional directions please contact Shawna Larson at (907) 841-5163.

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