Mining Potential and Mineral Access in the Bering Strait Region

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Native Corporation Lands in the Bering Strait Region
Development on Alaska Native Corporation Lands

• For the first decades after ANCSA, most corporations played a passive role in exploration and mining.
• History with development within regions varied.
• Extractive industry proposals on Native corporation lands are subject to all federal and state environmental compliance requirements.
BSNC's Land Base and Mineral Development History

• We've been a passive partner in the exploration of our ANCSA mineral estate.

• Basic exploration and option to lease agreements have been executed with major and minor companies, beginning in the early 1980's.

• The mineral potential of the region is well known, historically (gold, silver, tin, uranium, thorium, beryllium, molybdenum, and REE potential).
Rock Creek: a mine that almost was--and may yet be--productive

• Alaska Gold Co., a subsidiary of NovaGold, began construction of the mine in 2006.

• A large area of BSNC mineral estate was contained within the development block.

• Untimely legal challenges, some poor management decisions, significant cost overruns, and the economic downturn of 2008-2009, ultimately forced the mine into maintenance and standby mode beginning in 2009.
Obstacles to Development

- Remote, arctic setting.
- Short exploration season.
- Limited/nonexistent transportation and energy transmission infrastructure.
- High costs and long supply chain.
- Energy costs prohibit ventures.
- Skilled labor and management shortages.
Map Compiled from ARDF Dataset, Bering Straits Native Corporation 2010.
ALASKA’S RARE-EARTH-ELEMENT POTENTIAL

- Bokan Mountain REE deposit
- REE-bearing occurrences and sediment anomalies; these sites have not been evaluated to determine their economic potential (see opposite page for names and further information)
- Areas with REE sediment anomalies in National Uranium Resource Evaluation (NURE) program data; exploration work is needed to determine whether REE occurrences are present, and if so, to determine their economic potential

State land shown in light blue
Roads shown as black lines

Figure 6. Location map of Alaska rare-earth-element occurrences and anomalies. See table 5 for information on individual numbered sites.

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Challenges Ahead

• “Go” or “No-go” decision for embarking upon the Nanuuq Gold Project.
• Capitalization of mine start-up.
• Development of a region-wide multi-year exploration program.
• Lobbying for transportation infrastructure improvements.
• Maintenance of work force.
• Value-added products from mining.