

would occur to minimize noise and safety impacts on local residents, no new roads would be built that would access currently inaccessible areas. No new community would be established that by its simple presence would affect substantially a new area, and whose existence long after the project terminated would have continued impacts.

### **Cumulative Environmental Benefits**

The history of mining in the Fairbanks district in general, and in the True North area in particular, shows many small mines developed individually with separate road and water ditch systems as well as on-site facilities construction and disposal of tailings. While development of the True North and Ryan Lode prospects as stand alone projects with individual mills and tailings disposal facilities might look economically questionable at present, several respectable companies have very recently expended considerable resources to do just that. If they were to be developed individually, total environmental impacts clearly would be significantly greater than those under a regional mill concept whereby minimal on-site impacts would occur at each prospect with all processing and disposal of tailings wastes occurring at one already developed and permitted facility.

At Ryan Lode for instance, development of a mill with attendant grinding and crushing as well as a tailings disposal facility in close proximity to residential areas likely would be more disruptive than hauling ore to the Fort Knox Mill under a regional mill concept. The alternative of on-site heap leach processing, as pursued at Ryan Lode earlier in the 1990s, would obviate the need for a mill, but likely would cause equal or greater concern to nearby residents.

## Literature Cited

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