



How Much is that Gold Really Worth?

Foreword

Humans may not recognize how much of the Earth's vital resources are taken by methods of mining, fracking, and drilling. Any major extraction of the Earth's mineral sources can have great impact on the mine site and/or the surrounding areas. These impacts are not recognized until a major contamination or disaster occurs, due to the simple fact that the mines and their affected areas may not be located where they can be widely noticed. Most people have a tendency to not really recognize or may even deny the impact when a disaster occurs.

These mining areas are not easily accessible and may take persistence in order to see or witness what happens. Also many people lack the education and knowledge to really understand the ramifications of contamination. So, it's simply another toxic spill or contamination. To really make a change or impact, a large group of people is required to take action to ensure that the company responsible for the contamination is held 100% accountable.

Companies will clean up their disasters only as long as the public is watching and aware. This clean-up will occur when the public (usually in the impacted area) is severely outraged at a particular issue, and makes a stand to insist that the company rectify the issue. Rarely does one follow up after the initial reports unless there is a major media blitz. Once the issue is no longer being addressed by the media it begins to

loose traction, the people return to the normalcy of living, and quickly forget. This often means that they may not ever follow up on what happened to the impacted area - to know if or how the mess was properly dealt with.

This article addresses the process of the mining and extraction of Gold, and the impacts the mining operations have on the ecosystem, wildlife, and human welfare.

It all starts with the need for more...

Mining

There is no actual date that is recognized as to when humanity began to mine for gold, but it has been a sought after mineral as long as there has been a written record of humanity, and has become a large part of our everyday lives, becoming highly traded as a world exchange commodity. Within the last 50 years half of the entire amount of the Earth's hidden gold has been extracted. The average life span of a gold mine is 10 to 20 years until an area is depleted of its resources of this highly profitable mineral. Each year around 2,500 metric tons of gold are extracted all over the world. This is equivalent to a room the size of 20' by 30' with a roof of 8' feet.

Mexico as a country is very mineral rich, has historically been a mining country since colonial times, and in recent years more and more mines have begun full scale operations, while extraction concessions have also skyrocketed.

Another aspect that has helped the mining companies are the sweeping national reforms of President Peña Nieto, particularly the Energy Reform package. These reforms, approved in record time by a rubberstamp Congress, has dramatically loosened regulations in the fossil fuels industry and opened many protected areas to industrial exploitation, much like George W. Bush did in the United States during his term with EPA regulations by dismissing the Kyoto Protocol. This blatant disregard for the environment has led us to an all-time high of extracting resources from the Earth at an astounding rate.

Open-pit mining is the most commonly used method to extract minerals. The ground is broken up using strong explosives and then trucked to another location in order to reach gold-laden rock layers. The traditional method of mining consisted of digging tunnels and slowly removing the rock and mineral through a single entrance, proved to be

costly and time consuming. To increase profits for the company the open-pit method has become the most widely adopted practice.

Following the extraction from the rock, the gold is then leached from the rock and ore. Using this process, the ore is crushed into small particles, then sprayed with cyanide, which bonds with the gold, causing it to drop to the bottom of the heap. A secondary set of chemicals is used to remove the cyanide from the gold to reveal the precious mineral.

Access to an abundant supply of fresh water is vital for the operation of every mine. The water required inevitably depletes the water supplies of the local communities. (*Note: It is unclear if this process can also add to contamination threats, but this question is being highly researched.)

Amalgamation mining uses mercury to extract gold and is primarily used in small scale artisan mining. To extract the gold the miner uses mercury and when it is brought into contact with rock sediment that is crushed, the gold particles then bond with the mercury, and are extracted.

*Note – The mining methods above are not only used to extract gold but also a number of other minerals like; copper, coal, diamonds, granite, metallic ores, uranium, and phosphate - just to name a few of the more commonly known minerals.

Once the mineral is smelted into solid gold bars it is then sold to five main sectors: jewelry (52%), industrial (12%), investment (16%), holdings (18%), an unaccounted sector (2%). The overall value of the price of gold fluctuates as the supply and demand do. The current Gold Price Index for a Troy ounce is: \$1,224.80 USD (as of October 2014).

Who owns all that gold in the end? The top 10 nations in gold reserves are: the United States of America, Germany, Italy, France, China, Switzerland, Qatar, Russia, Japan, and The Netherlands.

Impacts of Mining

The amount of energy and water consumption varies by the size of the mine and how much the mine is producing. Large amounts of energy consumption mean more use of nuclear power plants and the increased release of greenhouse gas emissions. There are several areas that the mining industry negatively impacts, from the health of the environment, water, and wildlife, to the way humans are affected.

Mining operations can cause large areas to have contaminated water, waste land, and depleted local fresh water sources. A mining company

must have unlimited access to electricity and abundant fresh water in order to process the minerals.

Open-pit / Heap Leaching

When an open pit mine is created the rock and soil and plants are removed by cutting and blasting, the rock waste result is called "overburden", which essentially does not have any monetary value. Another type of waste called "waste rock" is the ore or sediments that contain small amounts of the desired mineral in them, in this case gold. This waste is set aside because it is considered a low profit material until it can be refined and sold for a small profit. The last sedimentary waste that has little monetary value but which is retained for resale, are called "slags". This byproduct is comprised of a non-metallic material used for repurposing, or building new roads.

Tailings, Mine Water and Waste Water

"Tailings" are finely ground minerals, rock, and waste products that come from the process of extracting gold from ore. These tailings are mixed with "mine water" to become slurry which is stored in a pond with several layers of earth, waste rock, sitting atop thin plastic liners. Mine water originates as fresh water then is reused in various ways throughout the mining process. One argument that mining companies claim, regarding water and its usage, is that that the water is reused until it can be used no more. Due to the high level of toxins used to clean the ore, the "reuse" life of mine water is very brief. There are no clear and safe methods employed to dispose of this contaminated water. In some cases the government requires these tailings ponds to be sealed once the mine is closed thus leaving a contaminated water source. Some mining companies use desalinization plants in order to procure fresh water. Desalinization plants also have a negative impact, with chemical waste "water treatment sludge" and brine deposits. Water treatment sludge is the byproduct of the process used by water treatment plants. This waste consists of all of the solids that have been removed during the mining process, as well as chemicals utilized during each stage. The only provision to properly dispose of this waste is if it contains arsenic and thus requires "special handling".

Amalgamation Impacts

The miners using this technique in small scale mining are at major risk from the side effects of directly handling the mercury. Vapors that are released during the process can cause neurological and organ damage. Research shows that mercury poisoning can lead to birth defects of pregnant women.

Air Pollution

Another grave impact of mining operations is the substantially lowered quality of air. Extensive use of fossil fuels utilized in the entire mining production, diesel being the most commonly used, send greenhouse gas emissions, consisting of CO₂ and toxic chemicals into the air. Regretfully, there is no real statistical data on how much greenhouse gas each mine emits, since none are required to report this information to environmental or governmental agencies.

"Gaseous wastes include particulate matter (dust) and sulphur oxides (SO_x). The majority of emissions to the atmosphere is produced during high-temperature chemical processing such as smelting, and varies in their composition and potential for environmental contamination."

According to Mining Facts.org (2012)

Water Pollution and Contamination

The waste product from each mine varies, and there are two main areas of concern. First is the introduction of sediment that contains acid, cyanide, and other contaminants which seep into fresh water aquifers.

"For instance, where waste rock and tailings contain significant quantities of sulphide minerals and are exposed to air and water, acid rock drainage (ARD) can occur." -Mining Facts.org (2012)

Tailings ponds are also sources of highly dangerous toxic materials that will cause contamination if a breach occurs, potentially flooding surrounding areas with cyanide filled water. This will contaminate all the waterways connected in the area and the earth that it touches.

The second issue is the potential contamination of arable land that produces life and vegetation from the "fill" that was considered waste to the company. Mining companies are required to restore the area once the mining operation has extracted its ore and closed the site. This means that all the soil and rock which had been treated is filled back into the open-pit. These areas are supposed to be able to grow foliage again but since the topsoil has been destroyed, it can never quite regain

the vitality the area had prior to the mining operation.

The recent toxic spill and contamination from the Mount Polley mine near British Columbia, Canada, consisted of approximately 25 million cubic meters of contaminated mine water, including: 10 million cubic meters of water, 13.8 million cubic meters of tailings slurry, and 0.6 million cubic meters of construction waste that poured out into the water and lands surrounding the mine.

Social Impacts, Economic and Financial Tolls

There are even more negative impacts that go further than simply the mining operations. There are impacts to all life surrounding the area of any mining site. Human health, plant life, and animals have first-hand implications of the mine and suffer significantly when any breach, spill, or even ordinary mining operations occur.

Most countries where there is mining are poor and the population has little opportunity or resources to be able to move away from the area to avoid the ramifications of a project. Instead the residents must stay and take a direct hit from these companies which affects their well-being for years to come.

Mineral-rich developing countries have some of the slowest growth rates and the highest poverty rates in the world leaving them at a grave disadvantage. Unfortunately, a disadvantage for the people becomes an advantage for the mining company seeking concession, thus making the area more attractive for conducting their operations. Usually, the mining company has to win the public's approval to gain access to mineral rich areas all over the world. They attempt to gain their permits without causing social upheaval or unrest. The mining companies promise schools, hospitals, infrastructure, jobs, economic stability, and may even out right pay bribes for this approval. The few jobs that they offer are not able to sustain the local people. Mining operations are highly technical and require people who are educated in the field. Many times the companies bring highly educated employees experienced in the industry from other areas of the country or other countries. Local people do not see those jobs in many cases. This lack of opportunity and further degradation of the local population then often leads to drug abuse, alcoholism, prostitution, and crime. In many cases mining can change the social and economic dynamic of an entire town or area.

Note: There are companies that pay citizens to mine the minerals by

hand. For these people it is an endless search for the precious piece of rock that contains the sought after mineral in order to be paid a pittance for its retrieval. Potentially, it can take months for them to find anything at all, so in turn they work countless hours for no pay.

“While mining companies may fund social programs and provide infrastructure such as roads and schools, this may have the unintended consequence of displacing local government and decision-making structures. And when the minerals are gone and the mining stops, the communities can become financially and politically unstable as they are forced to absorb the costs of cleaning up the environmental damage.

"Loss of traditional ways and means of living, these large, open-pit mines can displace farmers and other groups - including indigenous peoples - from their ancestral lands, frequently without enough compensation to buy land elsewhere. Those who hang on often experience decreased revenue due to the environmental damage to the resources on which they rely for agriculture, such as water." ("No Dirty Gold", 2014)

Who pays when contamination and environmental disasters happen?

“Few countries have effective measures in place to hold mining companies financially accountable for the damage they cause. Even in the United States, the antiquated 1872 Mining Law leaves the burden of abandoned mine clean-up to the taxpayers. Mining companies in the United States have underestimated the costs of closing their operations at as much as \$72 billion. When that happens, taxpayers have to step in to pick up the tab. Taxpayers Pay the Price.” ("No Dirty Gold", 2014)

Human Rights Abuses

Many human rights are violated when it comes to the mining companies gaining their concessions and/or permits and even when the mine is operational. Often laws are passed, people are paid off which will enable a project to get off of the ground quickly. But what happens when the people don't want the mine? What happens when they stand up and protect their lands and basic natural rights?

Human Rights abuses occur from: forced physical relocation, physical attacks, imprisonment, and loss of life. Mining companies are in a unique position due to the fact that many times all that is needed to get their projects approved is to pay (bribe) local, state, and federal

authorities in order to obtain permits and land concessions. Indigenous people often are removed from lands by military or police force because the government claims that they have no right to their tribal lands due to no money was ever paid for it.

When will the abuse of people, wildlife, and natural rights for profit end?

It will take each and every one of us to take notice, learn, and demand what every being on this Earth is entitled to by being alive: Pure water, clean air, naturally grown food, and shelter, all are rightful entitlements for every living being. These provided by the Earth for free that should not be bought and sold for profit.

The Sierra de Laguna Biosphere Reserve

"UNESCO has designated the Sierra de la Laguna a global biosphere reserve: This semi-arid to temperate sub humid climate area represents highly important and contrasted ecosystems, including arid zones, matorrales, low deciduous forest type, evergreen oak: *Quercus devia* ("encino") woods, pine-evergreen oak mix woods and oases with palms and "guerivos" situated throughout the gallery forest following the long river basins."

"The Biosphere reserve was established by a Mexican presidential decree on 6 June 1994, which designated a core area and buffer zones. The core area is centered on the higher-elevation oak-pine forests, while the transition area includes the communities of Todos Santos, El Pescadero, El Triunfo, San Antonio, San Bartolo, Buena Vista, Los Barriles, Las Cuevas, Santiago and Miraflores." ("Wikipedia Sierra De Laguna", 2013)

The Sierra de la Laguna Biosphere Reserve ranges over 112,000 hectares. For decades many companies have tried to gain the mineral resources this land has to offer.

Todos Santos & BCS: Against the Los Cardones Mining Project

When a mining project is formulated it is made up of several groups, companies, investors, and even lawmakers who join together to make it happen. This creates a project that could include several countries connected to one single mining site.

Overview of Mining Project and Companies

The Los Cardones Mine proposes to operate at a location near the town of Todos Santos, BCS, Mexico, a small agricultural and highly popular tourist town now under direct threat of a large scale open pit mining project. This is not the first time this magical town has faced the mining companies. For years, Canadian and US mining companies have been trying relentlessly to gain their final permits and concessions to develop an open pit gold mine in the area. This proposed project intends to include 316 hectares of the Sierra de Laguna Biosphere Reserve, in addition to a smaller section of private land located next to the biosphere which was earlier acquired from Vista Gold of Littleton, CO, USA.

In 2013 when Vista Gold still primarily held a majority of the shares of the Los Cardones Mine project the project was cancelled. However, Vista Gold was already working on the "Earn in Right Agreement" with Investure Group, a process that began in early 2012. Because of the cancelation in 2013 Vista Gold agreed to take another course of action to better ensure the success of obtaining the proper concessions and permits to make the project a reality. Less than a year later the town had to face the mining company yet again, to resume the fight to defend and protect their environment and the well-being of its inhabitants. Only this time the project easily received the proper permits from the Federal Government and SEMARNAT.

Currently, the people are depending on their local legislators and governmental bodies to protect them and the environment from this project. The local legislation can help the people by denying the company the permits for land use. This is called a POEL. It's not only the welfare of the people that is in jeopardy, but also the flora, fauna, wildlife, and the aquifer that supplies this entire area with water, are at stake. This entire region seems to be constantly under threat of exploitative projects wherein foreign companies make huge profits, and the local residents and ecosystem suffer for generations to come.

The proposed Los Cardones Mine project claims to have gold reserves of 1.3 million ounces, and foresees a life span of 10 years, with an annual production average of 142,000 ounces of gold each year, for the first five years of operation. The costs of production are \$372.00 USD per troy ounce, with a current Gold Price Index at USD: \$1,224.80 per troy ounce. (October 2014) Total Profit (minus stock interest): \$1,592,240,000 USD. If we take that number and divide it by the number of inhabitants of Baja California Sur (600,000) we get \$2,653.73 USD, which means that

each Life is worth that amount to Investure Group and its shareholders. This does not include payment for the destruction that will certainly be caused to the environment.

The type of mine they are planning to operate is an Open-Pit & CIP Extraction Plant (Cyanidation Gold Exploration and extraction). The company that will be overseeing and operating the mine is Desarrollos Zapal, SA de CV (La Paz, BCS). The vested political and influential parties named by local activist organizations and citizens are Ricardo Salinas Pliego (TV Azteca) and his daughter, Senator Ninfa Salinas Sada of the "Green" Party (PVEM) and chair of the Senate Environmental Committee. The Investure Group also owns the Monterde Gold and Silver Project in Southwestern Chihuahua, with an estimated reserve of 1.2 million ounces of gold and silver.

Founder/CEO of Investure Group

One aspect that isn't often discussed is the money and financing behind these operations. It is important that we cover this information since these people and the companies they represent are rarely held accountable for any of the negative effects that arise due to their mining operations. It's important that we reveal and look at all of the layers that have an effect on a project like this coming into fruition.

The founder and CEO of Investure Group is John Detmold. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics and has sat on the board for several mining organizations. The other organizations / positions that he has sat on the board are; Chairman, Qvex, Inc, Chairman, Banca Quadrum, Founder and CEO, Quadrum, S.A. de C.V., Chairman, FerroQuadrum, S.A. de C.V., Chairman, Servicios Financieros Quadrum, S.A., Chairman, Endasa, S.A. de C.V., Managing Director, Rio Tinto, Kimber Resources, Frontera Copper, Shareholder in the company Bougainville Copper, LTD in the Panguna Mine on the island of Bougainville, and Chairman, Black Iron (which currently holds a mining allotment with a subsidiary company called; Shymanivske Steel LLC, Ukraine).

When researching Mr. Detmold's background it was hard to distinguish one company from the next, in order to start to put the puzzle together it proved more fruitful to follow the money and research financial publications. This research began to reveal more layers of the mining story: stocks, buying/selling mining operations, and other resourced based companies. Many times the same banking organizations and

shareholders names repeat in several different sectors of mining, indicating how one parent company may buy and sell smaller companies and help them to obtain permits, particularly in areas that have proven difficult to gain these concessions, as well as aiding in their profits from sale of stocks. It seems that the Investure Group is in a position to have the power and the liquidity of cash which enables them to gain access to mining areas where other companies have proven unsuccessful. In turn, this is used to Mr. Detmold's benefit as he makes billions of dollars in profits and never is held accountable for the impacts caused by mining.

Public Relations by the Mining Company

The Los Cardones Mine has its own website where a brief overview of the proposed project is presented. On their home page a 7 minute video promotes and reviews the objectives of their operations.

Safety/Technology & Innovation: Their promotional video states that this is will be a responsible mine that will only use the latest and "state of the art" equipment to extract and process the minerals. It also shows that the separation of the gold from ore will happen in a closed circuit plant that will reuse mine water until it is no longer useable, while keeping the toxic waste under control.

Los Cardones video mentions the importance of the below list.

Integrates with local community:

Compatible with tourism (?)

Compatible with local organic farming/agriculture (?)

Social Responsibility: The video states that it will bring better healthcare, schools, jobs, and economy to the region. With additional promises of paved roads and modernized infrastructure.

Here are a few questions to think about in regard to what the video presents. (*Note - This section will be completed after first hand view of the Piedras Verdes project.)

Who would want to vacation in a place where the water and land are contaminated with mining waste?

How does a mine benefit organic farming and agriculture?

Who will benefit from all the new upgrades for the area if the area is contaminated with toxic waste that will no longer promote healthy life?

Who will be left to live with the inevitable consequences of the degradation of their environment during and after the mining operations?

Model Location of Los Cardones (according to their project video is: Piedras Verdes)

The Piedras Verdes copper mine began in 2005, when the mining company moved the town's inhabitants from their homes into a new community in order to place their operations near the old location of the town. Jobs, schools, healthcare, and infrastructure were promised to the people of the area. What they received was much different than promised to Nuevo Piedras Verdes. Almost 10 years after the start of this project the area suffers from potable water problems. No one can get potable water pumped directly into their homes; instead tanker trucks are required to come and fill their water storage containers. Agriculture and farming have suffered due to the water shortages, and many people are no longer able to provide for themselves by growing crops and raising farm animals. The people have little if any help from the company or their government organizations. There is more financial data out there on this mine than the negative impacts that it has had on the region. This is due to the fact the environmental disasters do not turn a profit.

Sonoran Mine Spill

In September 2014 there was a contamination from a spill in Cananea, Sonora, MX at the Buenavista del Cobre mine. This disaster sent approximately 15 million gallons of acidic toxic waste into the Sonoran River. The cause of the spill was negligence/facility failure at the mine site, releasing toxic poison into ecosystem. One report showed a woman whose face was badly burned by the toxins in the water. She unknowingly rinsed her face in the contaminated water.

Wildlife and vegetation suffered as well. Farmers were forced to sell their livestock before they perished from water and vegetation contamination. The citizens of this area have protested by blocking highways and protesting to their local governmental officials, but still have not be adequately reimbursed for the loss of quality of life and health.

Todos Santos and Citizens of Baja California Sur

Faced with a gold mine located near aquifers that supply the area of Baja California Sur with water, the residents of this area are taking the Sonoran spill very seriously. Not only did this happen to their fellow countrymen by this same mining company, but it also has the potential to gravely impact them, their land and water source. Knowing that action needed to be taken at once, the people of the state of Baja California Sur met first to educate themselves and others about this proposal, and then to take the necessary steps of action to oppose it. Social movements, individuals, and organizations enable citizen fronts to conduct mass events and protests. It is important to remember that a successful fight is won in many stages.

To accomplish this three different organizational aspects are needed: legislative activists, organizational/event activists, and public education activists. For Todos Santos these include Frente Ciudadano en Defensa del Agua y la Vida, Sociedad Organizada por Sudcalifornia, Agua Mas Vale Que Oro, including the citizens of Todos Santos. Even though they have no official organization, they have been on the front lines when action is required to ensure the mine does not get approved. Three separate organizations representing a movement of this sort may cause a hindrance, some confusion, and the need to overcome many obstacles. Each organization believes that it has the correct way to oppose the mine. Often information as well as contacts become compartmentalized in order to advance their opposition rather than all working together on different action points.

The people of Todos Santos have been encouraging the various organizations to work together along with the people to ensure that the overall goal is being successfully addressed: To permanently ban any mining operations which threaten the future of this area of the world, be it on land or in the sea.

(An aspect that is rarely talked about is how mining, fracking, and drilling companies will either pay infiltrators to fight against their opposition, or will bribe members inside of the protest movement to halt actions that will put an end to these projects. It's a very hard road to follow and very often difficult to research since this is not a matter of public record and is done in cash transactions that cannot be easily traced.)

Local Action Taken - Timeline

*August 4, 2014 many people gathered in the parking lot at Ayuntamiento in Todos Santos (their local government offices) to lead a protest march (by car) to TV Azteca in La Paz (the state's capital) where they chanted, "No al a mina, el agua es la vida," which means: "No to the mine, water is life". There they burnt an effigy of Ricardo Salinas Pliego, President of TV Azteca along with a few paper mache pigs with officials' names on them. Once they cleaned up the burnt materials the protestors proceeded to the Malecon in La Paz where they met to rally with the local people. That night everyone who would be affected by the mining project signed a petition to notify all involved parties that the public sector did not approve of the project.

*August 30, 2014, another rally was held in which the kayakers of the area demonstrated their support to organize against the mining companies.

Meanwhile, Layne, the company that was contracted to conduct the drilling for a desalinization plant for the mine in Las Playitas near Todos Santos began drilling prior to obtaining proper permits. The town officials of Todos Santos called on Conagua to evaluate the site and subsequently close it due to illegal drilling. To their disappointment they didn't get any results.

*September 3rd, 2014 the Sud-delegado of Todos Santos, dissatisfied with the lack of support of Conagua, called for the townspeople to rally to close the entrance to the wells until the illegal drilling was stopped. The entrance to the drill site was blocked and workers from Conagua were forced to close the site since no permits had been obtained by the drilling company. The people won this small victory of many battles to come.

*September 12, 2014, the townspeople of Todos Santos organized a rally at the town plaza to sign a pact to officially oppose the mining project. Originally scheduled for the 5th of September, the event was rescheduled to the following week due to the impending Hurricane Norbert.

*The Pacto de Todos Santos was a successful rally for residents of Baja California Sur. Many hundreds of people from all areas of the Southern Baja tip gathered together in Todos Santos to sign the Pact opposing the mining project. Altogether, 2,600 signatures were collected.

It was event for the youth and the older generations to unite, and to

state in one voice that mining is NOT welcomed in BCS, and that the future of this land is to remain in good health for generations to come. There were passionate responses from the public when representatives of the area spoke. The Delegado did an excellent job addressing the people and speaking from the heart on this important issue.

*September 14, 2014, Category 4 Hurricane Odile made landfall and wreaked havoc on the Baja peninsula, causing damages and destruction to many roads, homes, businesses, communications, water, and electricity. With this natural disaster happening, still the people of Todos Santos got together immediately to plan their next course of action in opposing the mining operations.

Many of the people located in the region recognize that had the Los Cardones mine been in operation the force of this hurricane would have caused widespread contamination to virtually everything that resides in the shadow of the Sierra de Laguna. As it was, many homes, ranches, and farms were washed away or destroyed by the raging waters flowing from the mountainous Sierra de Laguna Biosphere (mountainous) Reserve. Had this water contained tailings or chemical toxins from a mine all of the inhabitants and the environment of the area would have suffered exponentially more than from a natural disaster.

*October 2, 2014 – The Citizens of Todos Santos met with the Delegado in response to Guerra Abud's public approval of the Los Cardones Mega Gold Mine. In the interview with Mr. Abud he would not even specify the type of mineral the concessions were for.

During the citizens' meeting the Subdelegado for Las Playitas destroyed 1 bag of flour as a symbol that we cannot be bought for hurricane rations. When the meeting concluded it was decided that the people would take over the building at SEMARNAT in order for their voice to be heard opposing the proposed mine.

*October 8, 2014, people gathered in the Parque Los Pinos in Todos Santos to caravan to the offices of SEMARNAT in La Paz. The caravans arrived and were greeted by La Paz locals who had already begun the protest. It started with a group entering the offices of SEMARNAT demanding that Sudcalifornianos be heard about the objections to the Los Cardones mining proposal and ANY mining projects that threaten the area. The people expressed their concerns about the recent toxic spill from the mine in Sonora, and what their fellow countrymen have had to endure due to the contamination of their area.

When these people who gathered there were not satisfied with the answers being provided by SEMARNAT they went to the offices of Congress and demanded to be heard. And they were heard. The session began and the gathered citizens pleaded their case. The results from this meeting were that they would sign the PACTO de Todos Santos on the following day in La Paz.

Another win for the people. A committee will be formed of citizens and members of the Congress to go to speak to the official headquarters of SEMARNAT in Mexico City. The next action was to lock down the building at SEMARNAT. The building and parking lot were cleared of people and the gates to the offices were locked until they had an agreement to be heard from the local level of SEMARNAT. When they got their agreement the citizens reopened the gates to the SEMARNAT offices.

*October 10, 2014, The Citizens of Todos Santos returned to Congress to hear the representatives state their positions regarding the mining operations, forming the committee to investigate and oppose the mega mining project, up to the Federal level if necessary.

The PACTO de Todos Santos will not be signed until all 21 Legislators are able to sign it.

The Committee includes:

- Luis Martín Pérez Murrieta
- Deputy Jesus Verdugo Salvador Ojeda
- Jisela Paes Martinez
- Carlos Castro Ceseña
- Edith Aguilar independent Villavicencio

On Monday October 13, 2014 the committee along with the Citizens will be traveling to the Mine location to check on the alleged claims that drilling has already taken place.

October 23, The Diputados along with mining company and citizens from Todos Santos visit the Los Cardones mine site. The visit was late in the day and only saw a few of the sections, which showed where they would remove the Earth and the site for the tailings pond. The citizens of Todos Santos were quieted; while pro mine persons were allowed to ask their questions.

On October 28, 2014 – Desarrollos Zapal announced that the company will be suspending the project due to the negative perception of the public. They want to teach the public about their view of responsible

mining. One must recall that the Los Cardones promotional video shows the Piedras Verdes Mine as its peer site. This area has already suffered contamination to the surrounding area and the inhabitants.

Guerra Abud came to La Paz and held a press conference at SEMARNAT stating that the project is only halted due to the company and not an official suspension. He also stated that President Pena Nieto will not be reviewing the mine as asked by the people of the region (due to the company's suspension.)

Organizations opposing the proposed Los Cardones Mine:

- Frente Ciudadano en Defensa del Agua y La Vida, A.C. (coalition of social groups and organizations with a common goal of protecting BCS resources)
- Medio Ambiente y Sociedad, A.C.
- Agua Vale más que Oro, A.C.
- La Sociedad de Historia Natural Niparajá, A.C.
- Sociedad Organizada por Sudcalifornia, A.C.
- Agricultural and Fishing co-ops of southern BCS

Future Steps

Cineminuto – Festival de Cine

Documentary – Escuela de Cine

Launch of comprehensive website

Other Scheduled Protest Events

November 5, 2014 Citizens from Todos Santos will travel to Ciudad Constitucion for a town gathering in opposition of the Don Deigo mine which is seeking concessions to mine for phosphate off the Pacific Coast.

The Frente in coordination with the citizens of Todos Santos, La Paz, and Los Cabos to take action and protest at city hall to encourage Estella Ponce to emit the POEL. Date to be determined. Actions have started to gather people for this event.

Residents of Baja California Sur planned an event a Playa Tule where they will create a human SOS sign to be seen from the skies. This event was postponed due to Hurricane Odile and should happen in late November 2014.

How to get involved locally

Attend meetings, get on contact lists, take action when called upon, and educate your friends, family, and neighbors about the proposed project and the impact of it. When using social media use hashtags (#) which will bring attention to specific topics so people can find a wider range of information.

How to get involved abroad

Read and share the stories of the local fight, educate others about the impacts of mining, help make a stand against the major corporations that exploit life for their profit. Visit our websites and social media pages.

References

All The World's Gold. (2010).

Retrieved from <http://www.numbersleuth.org/worlds-gold/>

Mining Facts.org. (2012).

Retrieved from <http://www.miningfacts.org/Environment/How-are-waste-materials-managed-a...>

CBC News British Columbia. (2014).

Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/mount-polley-mine-spill-7...>

No Dirty Gold. (2014).

Retrieved from

http://nodirtygold.earthworksaction.org/impacts/social_impacts#.VFPmcvnF-So

Wikipedia Sierra de Laguna. (2013).

Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierra_de_la_Laguna_Los_Cardones . (2014).

Retrieved from <http://loscardones.com.mx/>