



Development and implementation of the Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) practice in the USA sustainable mining development.

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New economic, environmental and social challenges for the mining industry in the USA show the need to implement “responsible” mining practices that include improved community involvement. Conflicts which occur in the US territory and with US mining companies around the world are now common between the mining proponents, NGO’s and communities. These conflicts can sometimes be alleviated by early development of modes of communication, and a formal discussion format that allows airing of concerns and potential resolution of problems.

One of the methods that can formalize this process is to establish a Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA), which deals specifically with challenges in relationships between mining operations and the local communities. It is a new practice related to mining operations that are oriented toward social needs and concerns of local communities that arise during the normal life of a mine, which can achieve sustainable mining practices. The GNA project being currently developed at the University of Nevada, USA in cooperation with the Newmont Mining Corporation has a goal of creating an open company/community dialog that will help identify and address sociological and environmental concerns associated with mining.

Discussion: The Good Neighbor Agreement currently evolving will address the following:

1. Identify spheres of possible cooperation between mining companies, government organizations, and NGO’s.
2. Provide an economically viable mechanism for developing a partnership between mining operations and the local communities that will increase mining industry’s accountability and provide higher levels of confidence for the community that a mine is operated in a safe and sustainable manner.

Implementation of the GNA can help identify and evaluate conflict criteria in mining/community relationships; determine the status of concerns; determine the role and responsibilities of stakeholders; analyze problem resolution feasibility; maintain the community involvement and support through economic benefits and environmental safeguards; develop options for the concerns resolution.

Difficulties in establishing the GNA standards include lack of insurance/bonding policies, and by the lack of audit and monitoring that could determine the level of exposure of the local community and the environment to the contaminants released at the mine sites. Since many problems of mines can occur during closure and post-closure, GNA’s should address those issues also.

The goal of the GNA is to have open access for the public to the safety, health, and environmental information pertaining to the mining operation, as well as to educate the local communities about mining practices that promote mutual acknowledgment of the need to build a relationship amenable to each other’s needs. Frequent conflicts between mining companies and surrounding communities lead to work disruptions or even mine closures and show the necessity of a less confrontational approach to environmental and social justice. The Good Neighbor Agreement is a unique way to provide the benefits for the both mining operations and local community to provide a mechanism for risk reduction and communication that offer the potential to protect both mining and community interests.