

**From:** [Tose, Leslie W CIV USARMY CEPOA \(USA\)](#)  
**To:** [colby engstrom](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to Ipop Permitting  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 18, 2019 10:36:00 AM

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Thank-you, Colby for your comments.

Unfortunately, the Nationwide Permits (NWP) do not consider public comment, and hopefully my comments below can explain the procedural issues.

The NWP permit system has been designed to provide a streamlined system for permitting small projects that are minimal in impact, individually and cumulatively. The notification and comment procedures vary for each NWP. Many of the NWPs require notifying agencies under certain situations, such as exceeding a certain acreage or cubic yard threshold. A number of the NWPs can be verified without notifying the Corps, so long as the project proponent stays within the limits allowed by the permit. NWP 6, for Survey Activities, is one of those activities. However, in this case, Regional Condition B and General Condition 18, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, kick in and require coordination.

Regional Condition B states:

The Corps shall coordinate with applicable federal and state agencies, local governments, and federally recognized tribal governments when proposed projects are located within high value wetlands (as determined by a local government mapping effort), within an anadromous stream or lake, or within 500 feet of an anadromous stream or lake. When coordination is required under another federal act, the Corps will coordinate solely with the state or federal agency responsible for the act. The Agency will have 10 days to provide comment, and may request an extension to this time of up to 15 days (for a total of 25 days).

So, Regional Condition B states that the Corps must coordinate with agencies and tribal government.

General Condition 18:

No activity is authorized under any NWP which “may affect” a listed species or critical habitat, unless ESA section 7 consultation addressing the effects of the proposed activity has been completed.

This is a geeky response, but it explains procedurally what is done for the NWPs.

I will include your comment in the administrative record.

Sincerely, Leslie Tose

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-----Original Message-----

From: colby engstrom [<mailto:colbydakota@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2019 8:11 PM

To: Tose, Leslie W CIV USARMY CEPOA (USA) <Leslie.W.Tose@usace.army.mil>

Cc: leslietose@usace.army.mil

Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Opposition to Ipop Permitting

Hello, my name is Colby Engstrom and I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and Leslie Friedlob, my partner, in opposition of granting Ipop the General Permits outlined in the GPAC dated August 23, 2019.

I will start by stating that Leslie and I are the only full-time year round residents in the area of the proposed activity. In addition to living where we can see the proposed site from the top of our property, we also hold the claims in front of Solomon and also directly in front of the proposed locations. In addition to holding claim ADLs 715007 through 715036, we also hold a current APMA with an approved mining plan on stated claims. Several Ipop claims border and/or overlap our claims and the proposed site would create turbidity that would flow directly onto our claims resulting in a lack of visibility, not fit for dredging. Also, due to the lack of a full, completed, comprehensive plume study an educated decision on whether or not disturbance and sediment released would be within acceptable limits cannot be made.

The studies that have been concluded clearly state these are salmon bearing waters and this time frame proposed is critical to the salmon run, hence the law opposing activity at this time of year.

And though, as stated by Ipop, salmon may be drawn to dredge discharge, the silt emitted can cover and suffocate the eggs. This back water area of the sounds has particularly deep silt, comprised of decomposed vegetative and marine matter and I can tell you from personal experience that something as slight as paddling a canoe through these areas can stir sediment up enough for it to be very visible 18 hours later on the return trip. It does not settle out of the water column quickly, as stated by Ipop. In addition to mining, I am also a commercial fisherman and though I don't fish commercially for salmon, several families do and their operations set their nets exactly there the sediment would exit Bonanza Channel and the secondary outlet several hundred feet to the East. Crab stocks are also at an all-time low in the Norton Sound, and again, the sediment could impact the eggs laid at this time of year. Eelgrass beds are also common in this back water area and are clearly visible on days with heavy Northerly winds which can drop the water levels by as much as four feet. You can also clearly see dislodged eelgrass floating out on heavy discharge days. Ipop is also incorrect in stating activities would be affected by tides, as this area has very little fluctuation in tidal water levels but is instead influenced by Southerly storms which force water into the sound, valley rain which elevates the river level and Northerly winds which force water out. These back water areas especially at this time of year are important to millions of migrating water fowl, small birds, raptors, etc. that rear young and feed in preparation for further migration. There are also many beavers, otters, moose, bear, fox, and other animals that live and feed here. All of these invaluable resources we and many others use to survive as we subsist off of the bounty of the land. Ipop clearly does not understand this and no amount of money is worth the possibility of harming it.

Ipop also indicates their desire to utilize what they refer to as a public boat ramp on the southwest side of the Bonanza Bridge. Firstly, this is not a public boat ramp as indicated on any map, by any signage, nor has it ever been developed as one. Most public boat ramps are also part of the "Kids Don't Float" campaign; this is also not present. The boat ramp used by most is owned by the Solomon Native Corporation and is designated for fishing and subsistence activities only, it is also clearly posted by metal signage that it is not to be used for mining purposes or materials removal. Though Ipop has been notified by Solomon Native Corporation, myself, and other concerned citizens several times, they continue use it and are documented illegally using it as recently as July 14, 2019 when we contacted Ipop employees Ben and Tyler. They were very rude and discourteous and showed zero respect.

I'll also state that the Ipop claim of needing to operate at this time is ludicrous. The Solomon River Valley has been mined since the late 1800's in all forms: bucket line dredge, surface placer operations, hard rock, drift, and a multitude of small scale attempts. Throughout history animals, man, machine, and materials have been hauled across frozen rivers and tundra to their desired location for whatever purpose. For them to claim, in this day and age, with the equipment and their funding available, that they can't manage what the thousands less equipped before them could do is ridiculous. They also didn't damage \$80,000 worth of equipment as stated, I know because I watched them. They damaged a 20' pontoon boat they foolishly attempted to use as a sled to haul a much heavier drill rig and burnt the piston of a rented snowmobile that I personally hauled back into town and repaired. The thing most damaged was the Iditarod Winter Trail which they attempted to initially pull their poorly thought out boat/sled with a wheeled vehicle from Hastings Creek where the plowed road ended to the other side of Cape, approximately 4 miles where they got stuck. This left unsafe trail conditions with deep ruts and they made no attempt to fix it even after bringing in a snowcat. It's unfortunate that with all their resources they don't educate or prepare themselves properly as every other person before them have, but instead ask for special permission. I'd also like to point out that winter trail is traveled by thousands every winter and is crucial to us that live in these outlying areas just like the

fish and animals are crucial for our subsistence, and they have and continue to show zero respect for our land, animals, and people. They are concerned about the safety of their people but ignorant to the effects of their actions on those who live locally.

In addition, in August of 2019, a local Alaska State Trooper found a human skull in the area of proposed exploration. The Village of Solomon's current location is not, in fact, the original site of the village. There have actually been three different sites within the area occupied by the Village at different times in history (kept moving because of rising water levels). The fact that there are human remains being discovered today should indicate a desperate need to do a proper archeological study in the area and effectively document not only human remains, but also artifacts that have been left behind. Once the terrain is disturbed, the Archeologists will not be able to accurately make objects meaningful, like they can with undisturbed property.

The Ipop company is also apparently not sure exactly what they are trying to mine. First it was gold, then it was "the world's largest remediation of mercury," and now we are back to gold. They can't keep their story straight and also used without the consent of the groups of people such as Sierra Club, the EPA, ADEC etc. as supporters of their endeavors. When contacted, none of these groups were aware they were advertised as universally backing the Ipop project, or even knew what it was.

I find it particularly unnerving also that Claudia Wise, representing Ipop in a letter submitted to the DNR, is concerned about a public comment period. This should put up red flags for every department involved. No viable mining project has the need to fear public input. The good mining companies utilize the advice and concerns to bolster the quality of their operation and relationship with the community. It's alarming that Ipop continues to attempt to keep people uninformed.

From the inception of this project the dealings of Ipop have been shady and under-handed. It is clearly an attempt to establish another gold related TV show and not a viable attempt at mineral retrieval as is evident by many factors, especially the fact that it is what they advertised it as in the infomercials when soliciting investors. Please also take into consideration the fact that some of their investors have recently taken to social media and are very dissatisfied and are claiming fraudulent activity by Ipop and are looking into their legal options.

These many reasons/factors far out-weigh the positives of granting Ipop these permit amendments. I hope you find it apparent that this project needs to be halted. It is an environmentally devastating witch hunt for gold in order to produce a reality TV show that would benefit few afar and leave those who locally subsist on the land holding the empty bag.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Colby Engstrom