

The Union  
Thursday, June 4, 2009

## **Do-over likely for mine draft environmental report**

By Dave Moller  
Senior Staff Writer

The controversial draft environmental report for the proposed reopening of the Idaho-Maryland Mine will probably be redone, or thoroughly revised according to Grass Valley officials.

“It will slow us down a little bit but it won’t stop the process,” mine President Dan Watkinson said late Wednesday. “It would answer a lot of questions and we’re leaning that way.”

A full, new draft report would mean another 45-day public comment period on, “To make everybody happy,” Watkinson said. He added that the Idaho-Maryland Mining Corporation could push to get the draft environmental report as is before the city’s Planning Commission and City Council, but will probably defer to the longer process.

Many Nevada County residents have commented on the report since it was issued in October last year and found it wanting for more detailed information on its effects on local wells, air quality and traffic.

Various state and local agencies also wanted more information, according to city Planning Director Tom Last.

Among those agencies is the state Fish and Game Department, which wants more information on the possible impacts to endangered species, Last said. The Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District in Grass Valley is also seeking more detail on air quality impacts from the proposed mining.

Rather than revise the lengthy document, it might be easier for the public and city mine project consultant ESA of San Francisco to start over, Last said.

“It seems likely,” said City Administrator Dan Holler. “You’ll probably see a significant rewrite, or a new EIR (environmental impact report).”

The final decision on whether to ask for a new report, or amend the existing one will hopefully be made by the end of the month, Last said.

“We thought it was inevitable,” said Ralph Silberstein, a member of Claim-GV, a group opposing the mine project.

“Their document failed to address a wide number of issues,” including emissions, impacts on wells, an analysis of the tailings left from the original mine and how the land would be reclaimed, said Silberstein.