Jonesville Coal Mine

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Ground Truth Trekking

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Table of Contents

1. Background
2. Latest News

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Background

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MINE-WATER SETTLING POND — Two ponds alternate in the role of settling sediment carried by a stream coming out of the old Evan Jones coal mine. — Get Photo (/photos/mine-water-settling-pond/)

The Evans Jones Coal Mine operated between 1920 and 1968 in Sutton, AK where it produced over five million tons of coal and was the site of a serious mining accident (http://www3.gendisasters.com/alaska/5998/jonesville-ak-explosion-fire-coal-mine-oct-1937) in 1937. Much of the mine (now known as the Jonesville Mine) is currently under various stages (http://plants.alaska.gov/pdf/JonesvillePhase3and4ReportFinal.pdf) of active reclamation (/Issues/AlaskaCoal/CoalMineReclamation.html) under the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Act (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface_Mining_Control_and_Reclamation_Act_of_1977), largely as a result of coal fires (/Issues/AlaskaCoal/CoalFires.html) in the area. There are still a number of active fires at the site, mostly in the tailings waste left by previous operations.

Throughout the 1990's and 2000's there has been sporadic interest in re-opening the mine and multiple exploratory operations have been undertaken. In 2008 the rights to the mine, as well as two adjacent leases comprising 1,450 acres, were purchased by the Australian-based Black Range Minerals (http://www.blackrangeminerals.com/) through a subsidiary called Ranger Alaska. The most current resource estimate for this area is for 131 million tons of coal, including measured, indicated, and inferred resources (/Issues/AlaskaCoal/CoalTerminology.html).

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The coal at this site is primarily medium-grade bituminous coal (TypesOfCoal.html) and would most likely be exported to Asia.

Latest News

JONESVILLE COAL TAILINGS — We stood atop it as Russel Kirkham from the Alaskan DNR presented information on the possible re-mining of the tailings, and the company's permit renewal. Re-mining the tailings would be one of the only ways to extinguish the fires, which have been going on for many years. — Get Photo (/photos/jonesville-coal-tailings_1/)

In 2010 and 2011, Ranger Alaska applied for extensions of the mining permit (http://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/View.aspx?id=155469) at this site. Some of the biggest

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local concerns about the re-opening of the mine have to due with traffic and pollution associated with the transportation of the coal. Other issues have been raised such as possible groundwater contamination from the ongoing coal fires.

In March 2013, Ranger Alaska applied for exploration permits (http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/mining/coal/jonesville/) at the site. However annual reports (http://www.blackrangeminerals.com/content/ivestor-relations/annual-reports/) for the company describe the project as “held for sale” and no actual activity has taken place on the site for several years.

Further Reading

> Black Range Minerals website on the Jonesville coal mine (http://www.blackrangeminerals.com/content/projects/jonesville-coal-project/)

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