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**Xstrata Briefs New Brunswick Environmental Network
Mining Caucus on Closure Plan**

The New Brunswick Environmental Network Mining Caucus convened in Bathurst last week for a briefing and information session with Xstrata Zinc Inc. to hear the status of the closure plan for the Brunswick Mine site # 12 and the Belledune Smelter. The mine is the largest lead/ zinc mine in North America and is slated for closure in 2010, due to the depletion of large mineral deposits in the area. The Smelter still has several years of possible operation after the mine closes by diversifying its operations and sources of feed content.

According to Brenda Kelley of Bathurst Sustainable Development, “Discussions centered around the future sustainability of the mine, what regulatory requirements the mine and smelter must comply with concerning its closure and the public consultation process. Other issues were raised including post closure perpetual care, verification and peer review, health risk assessment models, the monitoring of the mine effluents in the post closure stage and cleanup of areas identified to have been impacted by the mining operation.”

Following an update of the mining regulations governing mining operations in Canada and NB several years ago, new mining operations must now develop and file their closure plans in consultation with stakeholders at the same time as they make their applications to operate. However, since the Brunswick Mine site #12 was opened close to 50 years ago, before the new regulations came into effect, Xstrata Zinc Inc. is only now preparing a closure plan.

“The caucus hopes to meet with mining regulators to better understand their roles and responsibilities and to discuss changes and amendments to both Federal and Provincial mining regulations.” says Randy Nason of the Grand Lake Watershed Guardians.

The New Brunswick Environmental Network Mining Caucus consists of representatives of citizen environmental groups from across the province who are interested in mining issues. The Caucus, which was formed last year, works to improve communication and cooperation among involved groups and between those groups and others.

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The NBEN Mining Caucus Steering Committee consists of the following organizations:

Bathurst Sustainable Development
Belledune Citizens Committee
Conservation Council of NB
Grand Lake Watershed Guardians
Groupe de Développement durable du Pays de Cocagne
Sentinelles Petitcodiac Riverkeeper