



THE OREDIGGER

Volume 86, Issue 3

October 5, 2005

THE VOICE OF THE COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES, A SUPERIOR EDUCATION IN APPLIED SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Mining Impacts Indigenous People and Native Lands



By Richard Tondreau
rtondrea@mines.edu

As Indigenous People around the world celebrate their cultures and way of life next Wednesday, students at Colorado School of Mines will have the opportunity to learn just how mining and other similar industries affect that very way life during the free presentation, Mining and Indigenous Peoples panel, to be held at 2 pm in Ballroom D of the Student Center.

At the presentation, students will learn about extractives industries from the perspective of native tribes living on the lands being mined. The tour consists of the indigenous people from Guatemala, Bolivia and the United States. The presenters, citizens from within these countries, will offer their perspective on extractives industries and on the current issue of free, prior and informed consent.

"Indigenous peoples around the world are asserting their right to be involved in decisions regarding mining and oil development in their communi-

ties," Paul Bugala of Oxfam America, said. "At the Mining and Indigenous Peoples panel on October 12, the CSM community will have an opportunity to learn the perspective of a group of stakeholders who are trying to change the way mining is done."

The presenters are the indigenous leaders and NGO representatives Mario Tema of the Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages; Daniel Vogt of Integral Development Association of El Estor, Guatemala (AEPDI); Carlos Cuasace, Chiquitano Indigenous Organization (OICH), Bolivia; Jorge Cortés of Applied Development Studies Collective (CEADES) Bolivia; and Carrie Dann and Julie Fishel of the Western Shoshone Defense Project, Nevada, USA.

According to Oxfam, it is important that students, who are headed for employment with global mining companies, understand the necessity for community participation and

consent when mining and oil projects take place.

Many indigenous peoples feel that some mining companies and governments don't respect the wishes of the people living on lands where possible ore deposits lie. While other mining companies take advantage of corrupt governments and the people that live within those countries. Current systems often do not allow for participation in the decision making process of the opening of mines.

The No Dirty Gold campaign calls on mining companies in the U.S. and elsewhere to recognize communities' rights to 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent.' For more information, please visit the website at www.nodirtygold.org.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent is a policy where companies try to gain consent from the inhabitants of the proposed mining area. However, before consent is given, the people in the area are told of all the possible repercussions of the mine, everything from how it will affect the local economy to possible environmental impacts.

The tour, sponsored by the Students for Change, the international Honors Society Phi Beta Delta and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), is visiting Mines with the help of organizations like Oxfam America and Earthworks to increase awareness and encourage activism. SFC, Phi Beta Delta and SWE want to expand the horizons of Mines' students and make them aware of some of the issues facing the world and in particular, engineers. Oxfam America is a non-government organization that is leading the charge against hunger, poverty and social injustice. Earthworks is a national group raising awareness about the environment.