



## Dot Lake Village

Tracy Charles-Smith, President

PO Box 70488  
Fairbanks, AK

(907) 882- 2695

[tracy.charles-smith@dotlakevillage.org](mailto:tracy.charles-smith@dotlakevillage.org)

[www.dotlakevillage.org](http://www.dotlakevillage.org)

May 23, 2023

The Extractive Ore Industry and the “Man Camps” they create increase the populations in relatively small areas/communities which puts significant strains on local social infrastructure. These camps have also been shown to show significant harm to local native populations where they have been implemented.

Man Camps bring violence and crime in places where crime would not be otherwise (University of Colorado: <https://www.colorado.edu/program/fpw/2020/01/29/violence-extractive-industry-man-camps-endangers-indigenous-women-and-children>).

These camps place a strain on community infrastructures such as law enforcement, healthcare, emergency medical services and other social services that we depend on. We, as tribes, already experience slow law enforcement responses or none at all due to a lack of law enforcement in the region. Our law enforcement officers are already tasked with providing services to a vast area including tribes and communities.

“The presence of man camps on Indigenous land has been anything but benign. The US Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons noted that sex trafficking has increased near oil extraction camps.” <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:ea887259-d56d-4453-888c-d5cdb883ff73> <https://perma.cc/TSL5-AKJD> This recent publications cite a direct contribution to the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women being related to Man Camps.

In 2019 the U.S. Bureau of Justice statistics completed a study on violent victimization known to law enforcement where increased reports of crime coincided with the socioeconomic changes brought on by extractive industries. Violent victimization increased by 67-70% with native Americans experiencing a rate 2.5 times higher. Women as a whole experienced a 54% increase in the rate of unlawful sexual contact, which was due to a rise in reports of statutory rape.

In Alaska we have the highest rates for missing, murdered indigenous women. According to a 2018 report by the Violence Policy Center, Alaska had the highest rate of women murdered by men in the United States. Alaska has often been ranked among the states with the highest rates of violent crime in the United States. This includes crimes such as murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Unfortunately, the prevalence of violent crime affects both men and women.

When it comes to crimes against women specifically, Alaska has faced significant challenges. Factors such as high rates of alcohol and drug abuse, remote and isolated communities, poverty, and a lack of law enforcement resources in some areas contribute to the complex dynamics surrounding crime.

96% of Alaskan native women experience violence in their lifetime. With the lack of judicial resources, law enforcement and adding in remote workers for a mining operation, this will create a potentially deadly situation for the many women in our region.

With the assistance of the Department of Justice, Dot Lake Village has begun to create pathways for the victims of these types of crimes to rebuild their lives. We have worked closely with our neighboring villages and partners to



## Dot Lake Village

Tracy Charles-Smith, President

PO Box 70488  
Fairbanks, AK

(907) 882- 2695

[tracy.charles-smith@dotlakevillage.org](mailto:tracy.charles-smith@dotlakevillage.org)

[www.dotlakevillage.org](http://www.dotlakevillage.org)

offer services for victims. We believe that adding in these additional factors will overwhelm our already very limited resources.

Historically, Federal and State courts have not been able to properly investigate or successfully prosecute crimes against Alaskan Native women to a level that provides safety for our Native communities.

The evidenced based impacts of sexual violence has proven to have long term consequences; drugs, alcohol and lifelong mental health issues. These issues not only impact the victims but the community as a whole for generations.

The victimization of native women as a result of mining operations is a complex and serious issue that has been reported in various parts of the world. It is important to recognize that the impact of mining on indigenous communities, including women, can vary depending on the specific context and region. However, there are some common concerns and patterns that have emerged in relation to mining activities and their effects on native women. Here are a few key points to consider:

- **Violence and Human Rights Abuses:** There have been reports of increased violence against native women in areas surrounding mining operations. This violence can take various forms, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. Factors such as the influx of transient mining workers, the breakdown of social structures, and the militarization of mining areas can contribute to a heightened risk of violence. Furthermore, the lack of adequate legal protections and limited access to justice exacerbate the vulnerability of native women to human rights abuses.
- **Economic Exploitation and Labor Conditions:** Mining operations often employ indigenous people in low-skilled and poorly paid jobs. Women may face additional challenges, such as unequal pay, limited representation in decision-making processes, and unsafe working conditions. This economic exploitation can perpetuate gender inequalities and contribute to the marginalization of native women within their communities.
- **Lack of Consultation and Consent:** Indigenous communities are often excluded from decision-making processes related to mining operations that occur on their lands. This lack of consultation and consent violates their rights and can have detrimental consequences for native women. Exclusion from decision-making processes undermines their ability to voice their concerns and have a say in matters that directly affect their lives, lands, and resources.
- **Displacement and Dispossession:** Mining activities frequently involve the displacement of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. This displacement can result in the loss of cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and social cohesion within indigenous communities. When communities are uprooted, women may face specific challenges such as loss of access to healthcare facilities, increased vulnerability to violence, and disruptions to their roles as caretakers and community leaders.
- **Environmental Impact:** Mining operations often lead to significant environmental degradation, including deforestation, contamination of water sources, and disruption of ecosystems. These environmental changes can directly impact the livelihoods of indigenous communities, including their ability to access clean water, gather food, and engage in traditional practices. Indigenous women, who often play central



## Dot Lake Village

Tracy Charles-Smith, President

PO Box 70488  
Fairbanks, AK

(907) 882- 2695 

[tracy.charles-smith@dotlakevillage.org](mailto:tracy.charles-smith@dotlakevillage.org) 

[www.dotlakevillage.org](http://www.dotlakevillage.org) 

---

roles in gathering water and food for their families, can be disproportionately affected by these disruptions.

Addressing the victimization of native women in the context of mining operations requires comprehensive efforts from various stakeholders, including governments, mining companies, indigenous communities, and civil society organizations. These efforts should aim to ensure meaningful participation of indigenous women in decision-making processes, uphold their human rights, and promote sustainable and responsible mining practices that take into account the well-being of indigenous communities and their ecosystems.

**Man Camps and mining operations are temporary. Violence from man camps is generational.**

**Who is going to be responsible?**

Sincerely,



Tracy Charles-Smith  
Dot Lake Village, President