

Mine site, cause of Tsolum's 'death' to get clean-up

The Environment Ministry is spearheading a one million dollar project to clean up an abandoned mine site near Mt. Washington that has plagued the region with acid run-off for close to 20 years, ultimately resulting in the "death" of the Tsolum River.

"There have been slight improvements, but we need to reduce the metal levels off site by more than 95 per cent to have the kind of water quality we want in the Tsolum River," said ministry spokesperson Lloyd Erikson.

"The intention is to reclaim the site and protect Tsolum from copper pollution."

The first step will be to request proposals from about 10 consulting firms to do a complete analysis of the site and the extent of the damage, costing about \$10,000, said Erikson.

Then that report will come

before affected provincial ministries—Environment, Energy and Mines and Tourism—as well as the long-standing Mt. Washington Committee struck to deal with the problem of toxic run-off.

A further \$300,000 will go toward monitoring acid draining from the site, \$200,000 for organic damage to wetlands and trees in the area, and \$100,000 to hire a project manager.

Erikson said the proposal should come before Treasury Board within the next three weeks.

The announcement was "tremendous" news to local environmentalist Father Charles Brandt.

"It is clear the Ministry is going to take a strong role, and that we have support from Victoria now," he said.

"After 11 years of fighting, this looks just great."

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