

**Tsolum River Restoration Society**  
**Restoring the Tsolum River to Historic Levels of Health and Productivity**  
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Mt. Washington Milling Co.

An historical outline

August 11, 1999

Location

Original site: 1963: Prior to mining the surface of the site was covered by relatively shallow orthic ferro-humic gravely loamy sand. The vegetation zonation is classified as subalpine mountain hemlock, Pacific silver fir zone (includes Alpine tundra zone, blue berry, heather, cotton grass. *MT. Hemlock*)

*Cu: 0.245 4*

Location: <sup>*17 km*</sup> 14 miles NW of Courtenay, altitude 1,350m. Rainfall 1.6m per year.

Salmon: Tsolum River: 1950: pinks: 100,000; coho: 15,000; chum: 11,000; steelhead: 3,500.

History of mining on Mt. Washington:

1930s: adits and short mine tunnels were driven into the ground

1945: Gordon Murray checked out a gold showings staked by Malcolm MacKay

1956-1964: initial explorations work for Mt. Wash. continued.

1964: Mt. Washington Copper Co. and Cumberland Milling Co. formed Mt. Washington Milling Co and work commenced in the summer of 1964. Removal of waste rock. Mill set up, brought from Greenwood in the Kootenays. Power from Ct., 14 miles at a cost of \$100,000. *(22 km)*

\* Area 7.414

Opening of mine, Dec. 5, 1964. Brothers present. Japanese present Stock pile labeled one million dollars of minerals, precious.

Hauled down to Hatch Point near Crofton and then to Japan.

Frissonia

1,310 m. area of 7.4 ha and south pit of 5.7

940,000 t of overburden and waste rock were removed

360,000 t total ore mined

17,762 t of copper concentrate

drainage from mine site flows both to Oyster River via Piggott Creek and the Tsolum River via Pyrrhotite Creek, and little from McKay Drainage from the tailings into swamp to Wolf Lake via Headquarters creek to Tsolum.

1966-1967: Mt. Washington Milling co. worked. 1966 open pit mining ceased but mill continued to operate on stockpile ore to the end of March, 1967. In April went into receivership.

Left uncured: unrecovered

Hermitage: developed in 1964. I arrived at the Hermitage in Feb. ,1965 David Muir alerted me to dangers of the Mt. W. Milling Co. activities

Pink Salmon: I worked as a DFO technician from 1968, 69. Dr. Robbie Bamms. 5,500 pinks in Tsolum (68), 250 in '69.

78

Esso Minerals Canada

Oct. 1978- July, 1983, Esso Minerals Canada conducted leaching experiments.

1981 - Hatcher on H.D.C. Creek

1982 - Brown Bear  
1983: released 2 1/2 million pink fry into Tsolum. 1983<sup>3</sup> none returned.

1983: only 1000 pinks returned, and some 500 to 1000 went up Puntledge instead.  
*J. Over 500 to 1000 ...*

1983: begin to monitor water and found high cu levels

*☆* H. Genoe flew up phy. creek and discovered source of cu.

1984 - NO PINKS ~~Some 500 to 1000 went up Puntledge~~ ✓

1984: Became public at meeting in Campbell River. Bill McLean and Wayne White present. Frances Bula wrote up. Tsolum is dead.

~~NO PINKS RETURNED~~  
*10 PINKS RETURNED*

*Genoia Inland Resource Society*

1985: Steelhead Society, local branch took on as our major project the reclamation of Mine Site and enhancement of Tsolum R.

April 25, 1985: famous letter to Rogers and Pelton: TSOLUM RIVER OS

DEAD.

cc to different groups. Bryan Allan said was most effective.

1987: Field trip to Mt. Washington: DFO; Fed. M of Env. and MOEP.  
Tender appeared in local papers.

Hired S.R.K. *Stephen Robert and Kirsten*

1988-89: covered east dump of North Pit.  
mixed with lime and covered with 1 meter of till found locally.

90-93: Murray worked on site, covering with geotech, concrete, cleaning.

93-96: Mt. Washington Committee met.

No decrease in cu: considered failure. Dr. Pooling said must wait.

Various reports and studies:

Weins

Levelton

Knap

Senes

S.R.K. 2nd report to prepare cover.

MELP report

John Denizerger

GOLDER

April, 97: Tsolum River Task Force set up after 200 person meeting  
in Comox: Mandate: RESTORING tsolum RIVER TO  
HISTORICAL LEVELS OF HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY.

*E. Neill*

Had steering committee

Was not a Society.

Grant from DFO: \$270,000: various projects

\* State of the Tsolum edited by Kathy Campbell who with Jackie  
Sandiford was one of the facillitators of the project

1. Assess salmon habitat and to identify factors which were limiting salmon production in the Tsolum River.
2. Complete a hydrological assessment to supplement existing information on water supply and diversions.

3. Conduct a water-monitoring program that would support and supplement existing water monitoring programs.

4. Undertake demonstration projects in fish habitat restoration and water storage.

5. Prepare action plans to achieve progress toward these deliverables.

6. Acid-mine drainage (no funding for this).

Representatives from each work group formed a Steering Committee.

The steering committee advised the Comox Valley Project Watershed Society Directors and then after Oct. 1999, The Tsolum River Restoration Society Directors on project progress

Tsolum River Restoration Society formed in Spring, 1999 with Wayne White as first president. Dave Ferguson now president

*Cu loading in Tsolum reduced 50% (See 188 '99 Cover worked)*

~~Spring, 1999: Tsolum River Restoration Society created with W. White as president.~~

Acid Mine Drainage actions:

Delegation met in 1995 with then Mines Minister, the Honourable Anne Edwards,

In 1997 a second meeting was held with Mines Minister Dan Miller and Environment Minister, the Hon Cathy McGregor. The Ministers suggested that funds would be forthcoming only after an action plan could assure the government that further work would be successful in lowering copper levels in the river

August, 1999: Workshop and field trip on covers with outstanding

SRIC

Britannia

Aldo Lequist

*Ron Driedge  
Rep. Dist. of West Manna  
Deputy Pres of West Manna  
Ron Driedge*

*Tom Lundgren*

*DTG →*

~~2001~~ Task

MCE  
E Cam

NVI Mines

DFO  
PSF  
Title W

LTD  
Nat. Reserve  
Cance

2002 Todum River Partnership

TRAS  
Mins, amm.  
ETC

2003 Partnership developed Spockle Lake Wolaroke Project  
Rd. McCarroll & Bl. Weller (Summer)  
Fall: CW loadin, returns by 50% in total

2006 - March: 50,000 from MCE (peruse) To add to plan  
May: 4 1/2 M from MCE

2008 - April: Quantar Envir Dred & SPIK won contract

2009 - June-July: Begin work on reclamation, make Sit