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West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1A2

666-6711 [initials] Keith Ferguson

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

4780-37/E170

9 May, 1985

Father Charles Brandt
Chairman, Tsolum River Enhancement Committee
B.C. Steelhead Society
R.R.#1, Site 22
Black Creek, B.C.
VOR 1C0

Dear Father Brandt:

Re: Copper Contaminated Leachate at Mt. Washington Mine

Thank you for the copy of your letter to the Honourable Stephen Rogers of April 24, 1985 regarding the acid mine drainage problem at the abandoned copper mine on Mt. Washington. We are aware of the problem, and local Department of Fisheries and Oceans personnel have recently highlighted the concern regarding the protection of the fisheries resources in the Tsolum River watershed. To date, a clear link has not been established between the declining pink runs in the Tsolum River and metals released from the Mt. Washington mine. Establishing a link may be difficult as, in cases like this, the causes of a declining fisheries resource are often complex. However, we do agree that potential contributing factors such as the copper leachate should be examined in detail.

Both provincial and federal agencies are defining the particulars of this situation. The Provincial Ministry of Environment (MOE) is compiling available information on the mining property. We have forwarded information to that agency from our Environmental Protection Service (EPS) and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) files and are awaiting an opportunity to review the matter. Future action will be based on the historical and contemporary findings.

In addition, my staff are planning a summer inspection of the property in conjunction with DFO and MOE personnel for a thorough update on site and downstream watershed conditions.

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The difficulty in effecting cleanup at the site appears to lie in the development and demise of this mine and the emergence of contaminated leachate prior to promulgation of provincial legislation clearly outlining responsibilities for reclamation and rehabilitation. While I have no illusions about the difficulties we must overcome in addressing the problems at Mt Washington, I can assure you we are prepared to pursue all possible avenues.

We appreciate your interest in this matter, and suggest that any historical or impact related information you may have for this watershed be directed to Mr. Oxland, M.O.E., at the following address.

Mr. T.H. Oxland, Director
Vancouver Island Region
Ministry of Environment
2569 Kenworth Road
Nanaimo, B.C. V9T 4P7

Yours truly,



M. Ito, P.Eng., Director
Environmental Protection Branch

cc: Mr. T. Oxland, MOE, Nanaimo
Mr. R.J. Higgins, DFO, Nanaimo
Mr. M.D. Nassichuk, DFO, Vancouver