

# Remediation work imminent on abandoned copper mine

## Tsolum River Partnership aided by B.C. government grant

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Part of Mount Washington will soon be shining brighter thanks to the work of the Tsolum River Partnership, which will soon begin work on an abandoned copper mine.

The partnership recently received a \$4.5-million grant from the provincial government to remediate copper that is leaching from the mine on the eastern side of the mountain.

"The mine site project can finally move forward. It's really good news," said Jack Minard, technical coordinator from the Tsolum River Restoration Society.

"This is just tremendous ... we've been working on it for over 25 years," added Father Charles Brandt who has been committed to the Tsolum River cause for years.

Copper that leached from the mine nearly eliminated the fisheries resource in the river, and lost revenues to the Comox Valley are estimated at \$2.7 million each year, totalling more than \$100 million during a span of four decades.

Next spring, work will begin on installing the

underdrains and preparing the surface for placement of an impermeable seal. A layer of till will be placed over the liner and re-vegetated as an alpine meadow.

Seepage beneath the cover will be collected in engineered drains installed beneath the liner and fed to a single discharge point.

The project site area, which has been classified as an active mine, will be monitored over the course of a few years to ensure that water quality increases. If the goal is not met by 2011, a lime treatment plant may be initiated.

"Hopefully if everything

goes according to plan, (the site) will be open to the public by the end of 2011," added Minard.

According to Brandt, once the copper is eliminated, a variety of organizations

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**Father Charles Brandt**

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ranging from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to the Ministry of the Environment would be interested

in what the Tsolum River could offer.

"I know they would be keen to repopulate the river. We have had a hatchery, and we could slowly realize (our goal) of bringing a variety of fish back into the river."

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**THIS APPARENT MOONSCAPE** is the remnants of a defunct copper mine.