

LETTERS

Tsolum poison

A letter addressed to The Honourable Anne Edwards, Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and filed with this newspaper for publication.

The Comox Valley Chapter of the B.C. Steelhead Society continues to have a deep concern for the enhancement of the Tsolum River contaminated by acid mine drainage.

In the U.S. almost 20,000 kilometres of rivers have now been killed by acid mine drainage. We have our legacy of biocide on Vancouver Island, the Tsolum River near Courtenay, B.C. A toxic liquid which originates in the abandoned Mount Washington Copper Mine empties into the Courtenay Estuary via the Tsolum River. This abandoned mine is a prime producer of acid mine drainage.

Fish and other aquatic living things are being exposed to lethal levels of copper in the Tsolum River. It is difficult to estimate how much acid drainage it takes to kill a river, but extremely small concentrations of dissolved copper in water can kill fish. The once magnificent runs of salmonids in the Tsolum have been decimated. The copper continues to flow.

Your ministry, along with the provincial and federal ministries of environment, has undertaken the task of stopping the flow of copper from the Mount Washington mine site. This work began in 1988. Considerable expertise has been utilized in solving the problem. The work done there is known world wide. And yet no solution has been forthcoming.

We have no information that any control work will be continuing at the mine site this summer, other than perhaps some monitoring. Can you give us information as to your plans for the immediate and near future that will bring this work to completion?

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Chairman

Tsolum River Enhancement Committee

Comox Valley Chapter of the B.C. Steelhead Society

ISSUES/OPINIONS

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