

## CLEANUP CLOCK FACTSHEET

### **50 Years Of Acutely Lethal Acid Mine Drainage And Canadian Government Inaction In The Taku Watershed**

May 2007

When Cominco abandoned the Tulsequah Chief and Big Bull mines in the 1950's it never cleaned up the toxic legacy of acid mine drainage and heavy metals. Since then these two mine sites have poured tons of these poisons into the waters of the salmon-rich Taku watershed. Redcorp Ventures (parent company of Redfern Resources) now owns the two mines and is thus responsible for cleanup. But Redcorp seems more interested in re-opening the mine site than in stopping the pollution and Canadian federal and British Columbia provincial regulatory agencies are letting them get away with this.

British Columbia first tested the Tulsequah Chief site in 1990, and found "considerable acid generation," adding that the water samples taken were "acutely toxic" to fish. In January 1993 the BC government issued a pollution abatement order for the Tulsequah Chief mine site. Officials retested the site five times between 1998 and 2003. In spite of those findings BC has taken no meaningful action to enforce clean-up. Repeated requests to BC for information on the status of the site, the nature of existing pollution and the status of cleanup efforts have been met with denials.

In July 2002 Environment Canada issued Inspector's Directions under the federal Fisheries Act for the Big Bull and Tulsequah Chief sites, ordering the company to stop toxic mine drainage from entering the Tulsequah River by October 2003. The company tried some fixes, but Environment Canada's inspection in the Fall of 2003 found that "none of the measures undertaken by Redfern had significantly reduced the acutely lethal toxicity of the ARD [Acid Rock Drainage] discharges from the two mine sites." Redcorp then requested and received an extension of the cleanup deadline until June 2005.

Redcorp installed a water treatment plant at the Tulsequah Chief site in July of 2005, but apparently did not undertake any significant cleanup at Big Bull. Redcorp president Terry Chandler said the plant should reduce the level of metals in the drainage by 90 per cent. However, since the company, BC and Canada have refused repeated requests for information about the status of pollution and site cleanup, there is no way to know if the plant is working or not. The latest information we have is from 2003 and this is far from complete. There is no reason to believe that the Fisheries Act violations at both mine sites have been halted.

Chandler also said in July 2005 that in order to build a better treatment system, the company needs a road into the site and money to run a treatment plant, things that can only be done if the mine is reopened. Since the opening is in doubt due to economic, regulatory and technical issues, cleanup is also in doubt.