

# Holden Mine Clean-up Update

November 27, 2008

**T**hank you to all who are tracking this journey of improving the ecology of this valley Holden Village resides in. The 80+ acres of mine tailings and portal drainage continue to be studied so Rio Tinto (formerly Intalco) and the monitoring agencies (USFS, EPA and DOE) in hopes they can agree on the clean-up methods rather than dispute them in court. The cooperative nature of this process is growing as the agencies have agreed to a new timetable proposed by Rio Tinto that will allow new field data to be included in the solution's technical review.

This is good news for Holden Village because the added time will improve the opportunity to scope a solution that can reduce the number of disruptive heavy clean-up construction years as well as meet necessary clean-up directives. The agreement on this new time line was announced via a letter sent by the USFS on November 26 and provides for numerous technical check in points between now and June 2009. The agreement also acknowledges a commitment by Rio Tinto to begin in 2009 work within the mine to build structures that can help control the mine's polluted drainage and treat it before it enters Rail Road Cr.

The heavy construction years dealing with the tailings, waste rock, old mine structure and Rail Road Creek are still scoped for a 2011 start. There are, however, many findings possible in the next six months that can delay this. With 2011 being the earliest heavy construction can occur, the Village has been active in reviewing and planning for what our options and opportunities might be. They are all centered on the principle of no more than two heavily disrupted summers.



*A view looking east, of the tailings at the junction of Copper Cr. with Rail Road Cr.*

At the November 7 and 8, 2008, Holden Board of Directors meeting, the options of how Holden Village can turn this anticipated (and environmentally needed) mine clean-up construction disruption into opportunity was discussed. The result was a directive to the Directors to prepare the Village for its own infrastructure renewal period by taking on the major renovations the Village has needed for decades. The plan is to prepare Holden to emerge from the mine remediation work with a village ready for the next 50 years. This is a particularly applicable goal because in 2011, Holden Village, the non-profit Lutheran retreat facility we know today, will also be 50 years old.

Discussions have already begun with the Forest Service and Rio Tinto on what is ahead for the Village and how to integrate it into the clean-up work for the mine site. The Chelan media has portrayed the mine clean-up construction project the largest project in the area since the building of the dam on Lake Chelan. Our plan for Village renovation is scoping out to be the largest project we have also undertaken since the

early 1960's when the abandoned mining village was converted by numerous volunteers and contractors to the facilities we enjoy today.

The current strategizing is partially focused on how to use the current village facilities to house contractors during the summer and yet be available for winter programming beginning in 2011. We will soon be in discussions with Rio Tinto to see if we can provide the housing, meals and utilities in exchange for major infrastructure upgrades such as an additional hydro facility, improvements to our electrical transmission lines, drinking water system improvements, raw water (for irrigation and fire suppression) system development, and a longer term solution to our sewage treatment needs. We will also be exploring in these discussions how Holden can tackle the refurbishing needs of our existing buildings and still be able to accommodate the mine clean-up and village staff housing needs.

During the coming six months, the excellent Village staff and many very talented volunteers will be involved in working the possibilities. The adoption by the agencies of the schedule proposed by Rio Tinto is a very good outcome from this past summer's fieldwork by the mining company. One of the benefits is that it also allows Holden Village time to work through many of the more complex details of how we prepare for and emerge from the clean-up construction period. This outcome, as positive as it is, does not relieve the Village from preparing for the public hearing process on the proposed clean-up plan when it is finally release. However, with a continued collaborative approach between all parties to

this project (including Holden Village), as it appears to be becoming, the Village's testimony efforts will be greatly simplified to that of support for full speed ahead with the clean-up. When testimony is necessary, the voices of the Holden Community will still be important to validate that the Village's social, cultural, financial and programmatic well being is being considered and preserved by the project.

Our job (your job) of vigilance is not yet over as the public hearing process is still yet to be scheduled. With the adoption of the new schedule, the Agencies presenting their recommended plan to the public will occur after Rio Tinto has completed the technical work to show which elements of the current Agency plan (called Alternative 11) can or should be modified to best solve the clean-up problems. Our local community focus has been and will continue to be on Holden Village's short and long term viability, utilization of local resources for needed electricity (ie. additional hydro power) and a short period of heavy construction disruption (ie. less than 2 years). The newly approved schedule allows the time for Rio Tinto to validate their proposals which we believe better accommodates the Village's stated community needs.

Thank you again for your interest in this process and the Village's future. If you have question, let us know by emailing them to: [minecleanup@holdenvillage.org](mailto:minecleanup@holdenvillage.org)

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