

## Hayes, Dana GCPE:EX

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**From:** Franklin, Kimberley GCPE:EX  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 6, 2014 5:27 PM  
**To:** Karn, David GCPE:EX; Abbott, Rob ENV:EX; Airey, David ENV:EX; Austad, Bob ENV:EX; Bawtinheimer, Brian ENV:EX; Bell, Tom G ENV:EX; Brouwer, Shauna CSNR:EX; Canuel, Aaron ENV:EX; Caul, Doug D EAO:EX; Cotton, Brian GCPE:EX; Crebo, David GCPE:EX; Dalal, Suntanu GCPE:EX; Dale, Alec R ENV:EX; Danks, Anthony ENV:EX; Day, Kristin ENV:EX; Dhanowa, Damon ENV:EX; Doyle, Chris J ENV:EX; English, Heather ENV:EX; Forsdick, Doug O ENV:EX; Glover, Hannah GCPE:EX; Grbavac, Danielle ENV:EX; Hancock, Tom ENV:EX; Hitchcock, Gord ENV:EX; Jackson, Vickie ENV:EX; Jonker, Jennifer B ENV:EX; Kennedy, Karla EAO:EX; Kriwoken, Lynn ENV:EX; Leake, Greg EAO:EX; Lesiuk, Tim ENV:EX; Leslie, Barb ENV:EX; Lilly, Liz ENV:EX; Lord, Michael CSNR:EX; Lowe, Sonia GCPE:EX; McGuire, Jennifer ENV:EX; Melderis, Martin W ENV:EX; Mentzelopoulos, Athana JTST:EX; Mitschke, Matt ENV:EX; Murai, Launa Y ENV:EX; Murphy, Bernadette GCPE:EX; Nicoll, Sara ENV:EX; Olsen, Rod ENV:EX; Polak, Mary ENV:EX; Poss, Angie ENV:EX; Ranson, David ENV:EX; Shepard, Michael EAO:EX; Shoemaker, Wes ENV:EX; Speed, Brittney; Stainton, Beverley ENV:EX; Tsang, Diana CSNR:EX; van Marum, Karen GCPE:EX; Zacharias, Mark ENV:EX  
**Subject:** Media Report for Wednesday, August 6, 2014

### Media Report for Wednesday, August 6, 2014

#### Awaiting M.O. approval

**CBC On the Coast with Gloria Macarenko (Jodi – producer)** looking for MMP tomorrow (original request was for today) to speak about Mount Polley. They had MMB on today but would like to have the Environment Minister on. They can do a pre-tape tomorrow between 1-2:30 or live at 4:10 or 5:10. The segment would run 10 minutes and Minister would need to dial in five minutes before.

Not Responsive

#### Today's calls

**Canadian Press (James Keller), News 1130 (Simon Drunker), 24 Hours Vancouver (Mike Mui), Opinion 250 (Elaine), AM 1320 (Mary Luk), VICE (Peter Moskowitz), and Commodities Industry Reporter (Liesel Hill)** outlets looking for more information on Mount Polley mine. GCPE ensured all outlets had media advisory for afternoon conference call.

**Black Press (Tom Fletcher) and CKNW (Sean Leslie)** asked for more info around previous concerns, test data in the Sun. GCPE provided same response as sent to CKNW last evening.

Not Responsive

**Key Messages**  
**Mount Polley Mine Breach**  
**Confidential**  
**August 6, 2014**

- This is a serious incident that should not have happened and my Ministry is supporting local officials as they go through this challenging time.
- I have spoken with Al Richmond, chair of the Cariboo Regional District, and offered our support.
- Emergency Management BC is assisting the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre with the coordination of information and support to decision making. We have a dedicated liaison officer embedded with their Emergency Operations Centre, in addition to the support being provided through the Northeast Provincial Emergency Coordination Centre.
- We are grateful for the hard work of volunteer fire fighters, search and rescue crews and police who secured the area, going door-to-door with notifications of the water ban and evacuations after the breach.

**If Pressed:**

- There are more questions than answers at this time. It's important to allow investigators and officials for the Ministries of Energy and Mines and Environment to do their work.
- Water tests have been sent for analysis and will determine the full extent of potential environmental impacts with results expected later this week.
- Mine Inspectors are on-site investigating the cause of the breach and I won't speculate on the findings.

## Mt Polley Tailings Breach Key Messages

### On the breach at Mt. Polley dam:

- We are devoting every appropriate resource to working with local officials to clean up the site, mitigate any impacts to communities and the environment, and investigate the cause of the breach
- We will determine the cause of the event and we are determined to prevent an incident like this from happening again
- Any potential environmental impact from the tailings pond water on the local watershed is unknown at this time but all efforts are being made to make a determination as soon as possible
- There is a precautionary water ban advisory not to drink or bathe in the water and not to allow pets or livestock to drink the water
- Water tests have been sent for analysis and will determine the full extent of potential environmental impacts with results expected later this week
- Mine Inspectors are on-site investigating the cause of the breach and I can't speculate on the findings

### On Mt Polley mine and the process moving forward:

- The investigation determining what caused the breach will take several months
- Inspectors of Mines and other agencies will undertake a comprehensive investigation of the failure to determine root causes for the breach
- Lessons learned will be applied to other mines in the province as appropriate
- Imperial Metals announced that the mine is now in care and maintenance and not operating

### On previous incidents and mine safety:

- In the last 40 years, there have been no tailings dam breaches of this magnitude in BC
- The Mount Polley mine has a valid Mines Act permit and the company has been generally compliant with the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code and their Mines Act permit conditions

- The Ministry of Energy and Mines conducted a geotechnical inspection at the mine in September 2013, which resulted in no inspection orders related to the tailings facility
- BC has some of the highest safety standards when it comes to permitting and operating mines and Imperial Metals would not have received any approvals to operate in BC if they had not measured up to those standards

Background:

Update

Minister Bennett arrived on-site on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014 with support from other ministry staff and Geotech Engineers are on the ground to determine cause of the breach and will conduct an investigation going forward.

Minister Bennett is in Likely attending meetings where he is engaging local residents and media about the current situation and the steps being taken to mitigate as many impacts as possible for those affected in the coming days.

Incident:

Early in the morning of August 4 the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 Million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow of contaminated water continued into Quesnel Lake. The flow out of the breach has decreased dramatically, but has not completely stopped. This is a large breach and extremely rare. Ministry of Energy and Mines officials do not recall anything of this magnitude.

The environmental impact of the contaminated water on the local watershed is unknown at this time. Cariboo Regional District issued a water ban advisory not to drink or bath in the water.

The waterways affected by the ban, which earlier included Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek, now also include the entire Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers systems right up to the Fraser River.

## Speaking Points – August 6<sup>th</sup> press conference

### **Pollution Abatement Order**

- The Order requires Imperial Metals to:
  - take immediate action to stop the further release of mine tailings into nearby waterways; and
  - undertake a preliminary environmental impact assessment and submit an action plan to the ministry immediately
- In addition, a comprehensive environmental impact assessment and action plan must be submitted by Aug 15th.
- The company will be required to report out weekly on progress it's making with respect to this plan.
- A formal written report will be due by September 15<sup>th</sup> including:
  - a summary of environmental impact assessment results;
  - a description of cleanup activities, mitigation measures and site restoration measures implemented;
  - recommendations for additional mitigation and restorations;
  - a proposed ongoing monitoring program
- Failure to comply with the pollution abatement order could lead to a maximum fine of \$300,000 and/or a maximum of 6 months in jail under the Environmental Management Act.

## Sampling

- Given the nature of the issue, it is important that the protocols for legal sampling are followed so we get accurate results.
- The Ministry of Environment will provide results to First Nations, Interior Health officials and the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre when they become available.
- The Ministry is doing water sampling tests daily to determine the impacts on water quality.
- The Ministry of Environment is working with Imperial Metals to develop both short-term and long-term plans for further water quality testing.
- The Ministry intends to post results on our website, including a map of the sampling locations.

August 6, 2014

Ministry of Energy and Mines

MEDIA ADVISORY

WILLIAMS LAKE – Bill Bennett, Minister of Energy and Mines and Responsible for Core Review will provide an update on the Mount Polley tailings pond breach today in Williams Lake.

Bennett will available to province-wide media via media conference call.

Event Date: August 6, 2014

Time: 1 p.m.

Location:

XXXX

XXXX

Williams Lake, BC

Special Instructions:

Dial in numbers:

1-XXXXXXX toll free from Canada

604-XXXXXXX from Vancouver

Participant Pass Code: 64555#

Contact: Jake Jacobs  
Media Relations  
Ministry of Energy and Mines and  
Responsible for Core Review  
Ph. 250 952-0628

## **Mt. Polley Mine Dam Breach – August 5, 2014 – 7 pm**

Below is an update on the current status and steps being taken as of August 5, 2014 – 7 pm as reported out by the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Ministry of Environment, Cariboo Regional District, Emergency Management BC and Imperial Metals. Today's 9:30 am update follows. As more information becomes available it will be communicated to the public and the media.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mines Actions**

- Released a statement province-wide at 10:30 am from Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett expressing government concerns and actions to date
- Minister Bennett flew to Williams Lake arriving 2:30 pm and began an extensive media availability and attended the 4 pm community meeting in Likely
- MEM GCPE arranging and confirming potential media availability in Williams Lake Aug 6 at 1 pm. Public Safety communications director will be on site to provide support if it moves forward
- Geotech Engineers are on the ground to determine cause and plans going forward.
- Local West Fraser is sending two tug boats, being deployed to gather log debris and monitor water levels
- The water flows have slowed but not stopped. Efforts are being made to keep water to 1.7m or less to prevent overflow over tails.
- 3rd party water sampling to occur on Quesnel Lake. Should be on the lake tomorrow.
- Drones will be deployed for recon.
- First Nations asked why then fish floating dead. Mine rep said not from chemicals, likely bodily injury from rush of debris -Traditional lands for Williams Lake and Soda Creek FN and said major concerns but no contact from industry. Suggested they send a liaison to the Emergency Operation Center if the Regional District agrees
- Was noted that no breach of this magnitude in 40 years

### **Ministry Of Environment Actions**

- Sent a boat crew for visual recon and collect some samples
- Samples were taken for metals and ions, as well as bacterial
- The lake profile looks doesn't look too unusual, PH levels are ok, while turbidity is slightly elevated. Additional sampling is taking place.
- No dead fish observed for the 12hrs they were on Quesnel Lake
- Northern Health notes MoE asked her what to test, asks for frankness on what is in the tailings, that turbidity is not really relevant
- FN wants Mt Polly wants to do monitoring per their agreements
- Will be collecting upstream samples as well, though priority given to downstream.
- MoE to do daily sampling and noted the company has their own contractor in place to take over.
- It was noted three days is earliest for sample results in part because it is hard to transport out of Williams Lake.
- Some samples were retained as legal samples, but those they can share they will
- -Dr Parker, Hlth, asked if safe for the kids camp on Quesnel Lake (N/E of Hazeltine lake) can swim safely. He's not comfortable saying it's safe until samples returned.
- D. Weir from water stewardship says they will be ordering containment and in absence of an MoE order, will order Polley Lake elevation levels.



### **Cariboo Regional District Actions**

- Held a 4 pm community meeting in Likely attended by about 200 people and media
- Water is being supplied to those that need it.
- There is strong desire to get the message out that the Cariboo is not closed for business/tourism
- They are communicating directly to media and via Facebook
- Parks asking if Cedar Pt Park needs to continue to be closed.
- Those along Quesnel Lake were asked to leave (three campers) due to road impacts.

### **Emergency Management BC Actions**

- Confirmed communications director for Public Safety will arrive in Williams Lake Aug 6 at 9:30 am to provide communications support

### **Imperial Metals Actions**

- Imperial Metals CEO Brian Kynock held a 3 p m press conference where the company he addressed the drinking ban, stating we should err on the side of caution.
- He stated the wastewater is not toxic and almost meets drinking water standards. But the discharge of solids remains a concern
- Kynock apologized and says he knows it's going to take a long time to earn the community's trust back.

## **Mt. Polley Mine Dam Breach – August 5, 2014 – 9:30 am**

### **Situation**

Mt. Polley Mine is owned by Imperial Metals and is approximately 30 kms from the community of Likely. The tailing pond at Mt. Polley Mine is 4 kms by 4 kms. Exact volume is unknown.

Early in the morning of August 4 the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 Million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow of contaminated water continued into Quesnel Lake. The flow out of the breach has decreased dramatically, but has not completely stopped. This is a large breach and extremely rare. Ministry of Energy and Mines officials do not recall anything of this magnitude in at least the last 25 years.

RCMP, Mt. Polley Mine executives, Ministry of Environment, Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Transportation, Cariboo Regional District, Search and Rescue and Cariboo Dam Safety, responded to the event.

Cause of the breach is unknown at this time. The environmental impact of the contaminated water on the local watershed is unknown at this time. Effluent from copper-gold mine operations can include such harmful chemicals as arsenic, mercury, and sulphur.

Cariboo Regional District issued a water ban advisory not to drink, bath or feed livestock drawn from the following waterways - including Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek, and the entire Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers systems right up to the Fraser River.

The ban does not apply to people in Williams Lake, Quesnel or other towns along the Fraser River. Fishing by First Nations along the Fraser is also not affected.

Initially it was believed the small town of Likely was not directly affected because it was unclear how many people in the town used water from Quesnel Lake. Since then, the Cariboo Regional District has decided to start delivering water to Likely because the main supplier of bottled water in the area, a small grocery store, could not keep up with the demand.

There have been no reports of injuries or people getting sick from drinking water. There have been no reports of property damage. Search and rescue crews notified campers in the immediate area, and it appears they have set up camp elsewhere without any problems.

### **Emergency Management BC Actions**

Emergency Management BC and its Northeast Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre in Prince George is assisting the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre with the coordination of information and support to decision making. EMBC is also supporting search and rescue crews going door-to-door to recommend evacuation from park sites and notify water users of the water ban. Due to the influx of tourists in to the area over the long weekend, the numbers of people affected is unconfirmed but the Cariboo Regional District estimates range up to 300.

Concerns have been raised about boating safety on Mount Polley Lake and EMBC was advised August 8 a qualified individual is being brought to boom the wood debris on Quesnel Lake at the outlet of Hazeltine Creek. This work should start within the next day or two.

A public information line has been set up by the Cariboo Regional District, 250-398-5581, and updates will be posted to the Cariboo Regional District's emergency operations Facebook page.

### **Ministry of Environment Actions**

The Ministry says it further water testing will be required before the full extent of potential environmental impacts can be known. Water sampling took place the evening of Aug 4th. Samples will be sent for analysis on Aug 5th, with results expected within 3 days. MoE conservation officers are investigating the breach, with MEM mine inspectors.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mines Actions**

The Ministry of Energy and Mines sent two mine inspectors to investigate the cause and monitor the site by helicopter. The first report is expected August 5. Media have reported the Mt. Polley dam breached three months ago and that mine employees warned Imperial Metals executives it could happen again. MEM officials investigated the incident on May 24 and have said internally it was not a breach. It was a problem in how they managed the height of the water behind the dam and in a different area than the dam failure. The height of the water at the time of the breach will form part of the investigation. To date, Imperial Metals has been compliant with respect to recent orders regarding dam safety inspections.

### **Imperial Metals Actions**

Released a statement acknowledging the breach, does not know the cause, and is working with government officials. Imperial Metals CEO is now on site.

## **Q&A – Mount Polley Tailings Pond Breach**

### **Has it been stopped? If no, when can we expect it to?**

- The tailings flow from the dam has slowed considerably
- The ground around the breach, Polley Lake, the Hazeltine Creek is still stabilizing
- The public has been asked to stay away from this area and boaters on Quesnel Lake should stay away from Hazeltine Creek Lake and Quesnel Lake

### **When was the last time there was a major tailings pond breach like this in BC?**

- In the last 40 years, there have been no major tailings dam breaches of this magnitude in BC

### **What is Imperial Metal's track record? Have they had similar incidents?**

- In general, Imperial Metals has been compliant with the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code and their Mines Act permit conditions
- BC has some of the highest safety standards when it comes to permitting and operating mines and Imperial Metals would not have received any approvals to operate in BC if they had not measured up to those standards

### **What are the next steps in the process?**

- Inspectors of Mines and other agencies will undertake a comprehensive investigation of the failure to determine root causes if possible
- Lessons learned will apply to other mines in the province

### **How long will the process take?**

- The investigation determining what caused the breach will take several months

### **Has the mine been shut down? For how long?**

- The mine cannot operate without a location to store tailings
- Imperial Metals announced that the mine is now in care and maintenance

### **Given the incident at Mt. Polley, will you be inspecting all mines with tailings ponds....and when?**

- If the investigations shows early on that the breach was a result of a design failure or practise at Mt. Polley then directions will be given to other applicable mine sites and inspections will be undertaken at other applicable mines in BC
- Any and all lessons learned once the investigation is completed will apply to other mines in the province

### **How does BC compare to other jurisdictions on tailing pond breaches?**

- BC has experienced a very positive record. This is the first significant tailings dam failure in recent history.

**What are the potential penalties if it has been determined Imperial Metals did not follow regulations?**

- It's too early to determine whether Imperial Metals did not follow regulations
- Prosecution is possible pursuant to Section 37 of the BC Mines Act. This can be applied to a person who contravenes a provision of the Act, Code or the regulation or who impedes an investigation
- The decision to prosecute is made by Crown Counsel based on evidence that we collect

**How many other mines does Imperial Metals operate in BC?**

- Imperial Metals has a half interest in Huckleberry Mine near Houston, BC and Red Chris Mine is under construction and nearing operation status in Northwest BC

**How does this impact the economic health of the mining industry?**

- This is difficult to assess at this time. It will certainly bring more scrutiny to mine permitting processes
- Having said that, mining has a significant history and a promising future in BC
- Not only has the mining industry helped shape British Columbia over the last 150 years, it will play an important role in creating a strong and stable economic future

**What is the Mt Polley dam's track record? Have there been any deficiencies noted?**

- Mount Polley is up to date with geotechnical reporting requirements, including the annual dam safety inspection requirements. The Ministry of Energy and Mines conducted a geotechnical inspection at the mine in September 2013, which resulted in no inspection orders related to the tailings facility.
- The Mount Polley mine has a valid Mines Act permit. The company has been generally compliant with the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code and their Mines Act permit conditions.

**How was the dam at Mt Polley being operated?**

- Mount Polley Mining Corporation (the Permittee) is currently authorized by the Ministry of Environment to discharge 1.4 million cubic metres of water per year into Hazeltine Creek
- The company recently submitted an application in July 2014 to increase the volume of treated water to be discharged from the site to 3 million cubic metres per year

**What follow up actions does the ministry take and does it trigger a review of other province wide mining operations?**

- Inspectors of Mines and other agencies will undertake a comprehensive investigation of the failure to determine root causes if possible
- Lessons learned will be applied to other mines in the province as appropriate

### Who is responsible for the cleanup? Does the situation change if Imperial Metals goes bankrupt?

- Clean up from this accident is the responsibility of the company
- The ministry holds \$14.5 million in security bonding for the Mt Polley mine in the event that the company defaults on its responsibilities.

### The 2011 Gary Olding report implies the dam was overbuilt because a water discharge permit was delayed – is this true?

- The cause of the breach is under investigation and I can't speculate on the findings.
- Mount Polley is up to date with geotechnical reporting requirements, including the annual dam safety inspection requirements.
- The Ministry of Energy and Mines conducted a geotechnical inspection at the mine in September 2013, which resulted in no inspection orders related to the tailings facility.

### Further background on the Olding Report & Recent permit history:

- Mt Polley has had an effluent permit (#11678) with the Ministry of Environment since 1997.
- Mount Polley mine operates with an annual water surplus, and had 6.5 Mm3 (million cubic metres) of water stored in the Tailings Storage Facility.
- In 2009 Mt Polley applied for an permit amendment to discharge up to 1,400,000 m3/y of dam seepage effluent from the tailings storage facility to nearby Hazelton Creek. The amended permit limits discharge to 35% of that creek's daily flowrate, with contaminant limits, and requires an annual discharge plan.
- Prior to this permit being granted concerns were raised about the proposal, prompting an independent report by a third party.
- This report was commissioned to provide a review of the application submitted, requesting authority to discharge water from the mine to Hazelton Creek.
- The scope of the third party review included consideration of the environmental impacts on the receiving environment, monitoring of the discharge, and management conditions pertaining to the discharge. These recommendations were considered carefully in the amendment process and provided a basis for some of the conditions in the amended permit, which was approved in 2012.
- Mt Polley has since submitted a further permit amendment request to discharge up to 3,000,000 m3/y of treated effluent (ditch water) to Polley Lake, which overflows to Hazelton Creek.
- This application was received by the ministry this summer, and is being considered.

### How many active metal mines are there in BC?

#### Ministry of Energy and Mines - Active metal Mines – as of Aug 2014

Mine Name	Company	Commodity	Location	Production Start
Bralorne	Bralorne Gold Mines Ltd	Gold	Near Whistler/Pemberton	May 2011
Copper Mountain	Copper Mtn Mining Corp	Copper, gold, silver	Near Princeton	June 2011
Endako	Thompson Creek Minerals	Molybdenum	Near Fraser Lake	1965
Gibraltar	Taseko Mines Ltd	Copper,	Near Williams Lake	Re-opened by

		molybdenum		Taseko in 2004 (previously operated 1972– 1998)
Highland Valley Copper	Teck Resources Ltd	Copper, molybdenum	Near Ashcroft	1986 (this is when the Lornex and Valley Copper mines merged)
Huckleberry	Imperial Metals Corp	Copper, molybdenum	Near Houston	1997
Mount Polley	Imperial Metals Corp	Copper, gold, silver	Near Williams Lake	Re-opened 2005 (previously operated 1997 to 2001)
Mt. Milligan	Thompson Creek Metals Company	Copper, gold, silver	156 km northwest of Prince George	August 2013
Myra Falls	Nyrstar Inc	Copper, gold, silver, lead, zinc	Near Campbell River	circa 1966
New Afton	New Gold Inc	Gold	Near Kamloops	June 2012
Bonanza Ledge	Barkerville Gold	Gold		July 2014

**Note\*** Bonanza Ledge does not have a tailings impoundment

## Hayes, Dana GCPE:EX

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**Subject:** Media Report for Tuesday, August 5, 2014  
**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

### Media Report for Tuesday, August 5, 2014

#### Awaiting M.O. approval

Not Responsive

#### Today's calls

**Globe and Mail (Andrea Woo / Alexandra Posadzki)** We got a tip that Imperial had sought permission to discharge spring melt water from the tailings pond this spring, but that the Province denied the request. Is that accurate? What is the dam's track records? Have there been any deficiencies noted? Reporter also looking for how many permits were requested/approved/denied in the past few years? What are the conditions that have to be met?  
GCPE provided bullets & report:

**Reporter says there is a report that this mine applied for a permit to discharge tailings but it was not granted. Is this true?**

- Mount Polley has had an effluent permit (#11678) with the Ministry of Environment since 1997.
- Mount Polley mine operates with an annual water surplus, and had 6.5 million cubic metres of water stored in the tailings storage facility.
- In 2009, Mount Polley applied for an permit amendment to discharge up to 1,400,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year of dam seepage effluent from the tailings storage facility to nearby Hazeltine Creek. The amended permit limits discharge to 35% of that creek's daily flow rate, with contaminant limits, and requires an annual discharge plan.

- Prior to this permit being granted, concerns were raised about the proposal, prompting an independent report by a third party. (Brian Olding - attached)
- This report was commissioned to provide a review of the application submitted, requesting authority to discharge water from the mine to Hazeltine Creek.
- The scope of the third-party review included consideration of the environmental impacts on the receiving environment, monitoring of the discharge and management conditions pertaining to the discharge. These recommendations were considered carefully in the amendment process and provided a basis for some of the conditions in the amended permit, which was approved in 2012.
- Mount Polley has since submitted a further permit amendment request to discharge up to 3,000,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year of treated effluent (ditch water) to Polley Lake, which overflows to Hazeltine Creek.
- This application was received by the ministry this summer and is being considered.

**Question: Doing a follow on the Mount Polley mine tailings pond breach and am looking for inspection records: What is the dam's track records? Have there been any deficiencies noted? etc.**

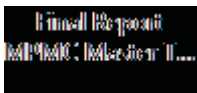
- The Ministry of Environment is not responsible for inspecting the geotechnical integrity of the tailings pond structure; rather it is responsible for ensuring no unauthorized effluent discharge from the tailings pond structure.

From the Ministry of Energy and Mines:

- Mount Polley is up-to-date with geotechnical reporting requirements, including the annual dam safety inspection requirements. The Ministry of Energy and Mines conducted a geotechnical inspection at the mine in September 2013, which resulted in no inspection orders related to the tailings facility.

**Question: Also, we got a tip that Imperial had sought permission to discharge spring melt water from the tailings pond this spring but that the province denied the request. Is that accurate?**

- On July 9, 2014, Mount Polley Mining Corporation applied for a permit amendment to increase treated effluent from the tailings pond and the necessary accompanying reports were submitted on July 11, 2014.
- The permit amendment process was in progress when the Aug. 4, 2014 incident occurred.



**Vancouver Sun (Tara Carmen)** We know that several years ago Imperial Metals applied to the Ministry for permission to discharge effluent into Hazeltine Creek. If that is true, the Ministry must have a record somewhere about what's in that tailings pond and we would like to know what. We are also wondering whether the Ministry ever issued that permit? Through checking the company's submissions to Environment Canada that the tailings contain thousands of kilos of compounds including arsenic, lead and mercury, among other things. How much of a concern is this for human health and the health of ecosystems in the area?

GCPE provided bullets & report:

#### **Recent permit history:**

- Mount Polley has had an effluent permit (#11678) with the Ministry of Environment since 1997.
- Mount Polley mine operates with an annual water surplus, and had 6.5 million cubic metres of water stored in the tailings storage facility.
- In 2009, Mount Polley applied for an permit amendment to discharge up to 1,400,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year of dam seepage effluent from the tailings storage facility to nearby Hazeltine Creek. The amended permit limits discharge to 35% of that creek's daily flow rate, with contaminant limits, and requires an annual discharge plan.



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- This report was commissioned to provide a review of the application submitted, requesting authority to discharge water from the mine to Hazeltine Creek.
- The scope of the third-party review included consideration of the environmental impacts on the receiving environment, monitoring of the discharge and management conditions pertaining to the discharge. These recommendations were considered carefully in the amendment process and provided a basis for some of the conditions in the amended permit, which was approved in 2012.
- Mount Polley has since submitted a further permit amendment request to discharge up to 3,000,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year of treated effluent (ditch water) to Polley Lake, which overflows to Hazeltine Creek.
- This application was received by the ministry this summer and is being considered.

#### **Tailings supernatant:**

- B.C. Water Quality Guidelines are levels at which the potential exists for impacts on various water uses. Environmental Protection Division staff reviewed the tailings supernatant (i.e., the liquid in the tailings pond) data sent by Mount Polley Mining Corporation on Aug. 4, 2014 and found that for the impounded tailings supernatant:
  - The selenium concentration exceeded the drinking water guideline of 10 ug/L by a factor 2.8 times.
  - Sulphate did not exceed the drinking water guideline of 500 mg/L in May 2014. However, there have been frequent small exceedances of this guideline over the last few years.
  - Molybdenum concentrations were well below drinking water guidelines over the last two years. However, recent molybdenum concentrations in the supernatant exceeded livestock watering and irrigation guidelines of 0.05 mg/L.
  - Organic carbon concentrations exceed the 4 mg/L guidelines for chlorination (water treated with chlorine that contains >4 mg/L of organic carbon can result in toxic chlorination by-products).
- In addition, the concentration of several parameters in the supernatant exceed aquatic life guidelines, such as nitrate, cadmium, copper, iron and selenium; some of these only sporadically in the last few years.

#### **Effluent Discharge Compliance:**

- The Ministry of Environment is not responsible for inspecting the geotechnical integrity of the tailings pond structure; this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy and Mines. The Ministry of Environment is responsible to ensure no unauthorized effluent discharge from the tailings pond structure. With that respect, the ministry conducted 14 inspections (office review and on-site) on the Mt. Polley Mine since 2012. The following non-compliances were observed:
- The polluter pay principle ensures those who are responsible for spills are also responsible for cleaning them up and is designed to keep the cost of response off of taxpayers. Any individual or company responsible for a hazardous material spill must pay for the clean-up.
- May 24, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for exceedance of the height of effluent within the tailings impoundment. The effluent level returned to authorized levels commencing June 30, 2014.
- April 18, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for bypass of authorized treatment works. The site experienced high flows due to spring freshet which caused the pump system to become blocked and resulted in an overflow of effluent to the long ditch. Flow did not reach the creek and was directed into Till Borrow Pit.
- January and April 2012: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for not submitting monitoring data for one of the groundwater monitoring wells (GW05-1).
- Aug. 30, 2012: The ministry issued a warning to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for failure to report exceedance of the height of effluent for the perimeter pond (E7). This perimeter pond overflowed, releasing approximately 150 cubic metres of effluent over 13 hours to ground.

**The Province (Cassidy Olivier), CKNW (Liza Yudza), CTV (Jon Woodward), CBC Radio (Meera Bains) and News1130** called looking for the status of Imperial's permit applications and timelines.  
GCPE provided bullets & report:

**Recent permit history:**

- Mount Polley has had an effluent permit (#11678) with the Ministry of Environment since 1997.
- Mount Polley mine operates with an annual water surplus, and had 6.5 million cubic metres of water stored in the tailings storage facility.
- In 2009, Mount Polley applied for an permit amendment to discharge up to 1,400,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year of dam seepage effluent from the tailings storage facility to nearby Hazeltine Creek. The amended permit limits discharge to 35% of that creek's daily flow rate, with contaminant limits, and requires an annual discharge plan.
  - Prior to this permit being granted, concerns were raised about the proposal, prompting an independent report by a third party. (Brian Olding - attached)
  - This report was commissioned to provide a review of the application submitted, requesting authority to discharge water from the mine to Hazeltine Creek.
  - The scope of the third-party review included consideration of the environmental impacts on the receiving environment, monitoring of the discharge and management conditions pertaining to the discharge. These recommendations were considered carefully in the amendment process and provided a basis for some of the conditions in the amended permit, which was approved in 2012.
- Mount Polley has since submitted a further permit amendment request to discharge up to 3,000,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year of treated effluent (ditch water) to Polley Lake, which overflows to Hazeltine Creek.
- This application was received by the ministry this summer and is being considered.

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  - Sulphate did not exceed the drinking water guideline of 500 mg/L in May 2014. However, there have been frequent small exceedances of this guideline over the last few years.
  - Molybdenum concentrations were well below drinking water guidelines over the last two years. However, recent molybdenum concentrations in the supernatant exceeded livestock watering and irrigation guidelines of 0.05 mg/L.
  - Organic carbon concentrations exceed the 4 mg/L guidelines for chlorination (water treated with chlorine that contains >4 mg/L of organic carbon can result in toxic chlorination by-products).
- In addition, the concentration of several parameters in the supernatant exceed aquatic life guidelines, such as nitrate, cadmium, copper, iron and selenium; some of these only sporadically in the last few years.

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- May 24, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for exceedance of the height of effluent within the tailings impoundment. The effluent level returned to authorized levels commencing June 30, 2014.

- April 18, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for bypass of authorized treatment works. The site experienced high flows due to spring freshet which caused the pump system to become blocked and resulted in an overflow of effluent to the long ditch. Flow did not reach the creek and was directed into Till Borrow Pit.
- January and April 2012: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for not submitting monitoring data for one of the groundwater monitoring wells (GW05-1).
- Aug. 30, 2012: The ministry issued a warning to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for failure to report exceedance of the height of effluent for the perimeter pond (E7). This perimeter pond overflowed, releasing approximately 150 cubic metres of effluent over 13 hours to ground.

**International Environment Reporter (Jeremy Hainsworth), CTV News Channel, Toronto (Sangeeta Patel) and Yahoo Canada News (Steve Mertl)** called for more details around the Mount Polley tailing breach. ENV GCPE referred them to MEM GCPE as MBB is responding for government. **CBC Radio (Luke Brocki), The Canadian Press (Beth Leighton), CKNW (Desk)** called on Monday, August 4 – were referred to MEM.

Not Responsive

Not Responsive

**Previous calls completed**

**Vancouver 24 Hours (David P. Ball), Vancouver Sun (Denise Ryan), Opinion 250 Prince George (Elaine/Ben Meissner)**  
called on Monday, Aug. 4 regarding the Mount Polley mine tailings pond breach.  
GCPE provided a statement by email.

**Previous calls not resolved**

Not Responsive

**Kim Franklin**

Government Communications & Public Engagement  
Ministry of Environment

**Tel:** 250 953.3698 | **Mobile:** 250 886.0830

## **Introduction**

- Thank you for coming
- Introduce:
  - Jennifer McGuire, Environmental Protection Division, Ministry of Environment
  - Al Richmond, Chair Regional District
- Acknowledge:
  - Minister Oakes
  - MLA Barnett
- Want to provide an update on the work underway to address and mitigate impacts to the community and the environment
- Also want to provide an update on investigations into the cause of the breach
- We are devoting every appropriate resource to addressing this incident
- This should not have happened and we are determined to prevent an incident like this from happening again

## **Water Quality and Water Samples**

- The current water ban is necessary as we err on the side of caution
- Environment Ministry staff took initial water quality samples on August 4 from the waterways impacted by the tailings pond spill
- These samples were sent to Vancouver on Tuesday morning for analysis and we have directed officials to obtain results as quickly as possible
- Given the nature of the issue, it is important that the protocols for legal sampling are followed so we get accurate results
- We may get preliminary results as early as tomorrow; however, this is not confirmed
- The Ministry of Environment will provide results to Interior Health officials and the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre when they become available

- The Ministry continues to conduct water sampling tests daily to determine the impacts on water quality
- The Ministry is also working with Imperial Metals to develop both short-term and long-term plans for further water quality testing

### **Polley Lake**

- Due to the large amount of tailings in Polley Lake, the water level has risen
- Water levels are being monitored and appear to be stabilizing
- Mine management in consultation with Geotech consultants and Ministry geotechnical engineers are reviewing options to lower the water level in Polley Lake
- This may include pumping the water into a historic empty pit on the site or pumping or diverting the water to the Hazeltine Creek

## **Tailings pond**

- The flow out of the tailings pond has decreased, but has not completely stopped
- Imperial Metals continues to work to stop flow out of the pond
- Forecast of rain could cause further tailings to flow out of the pond
- Mine management in consultation with Geotech consultants and Ministry experts are reviewing a plan to build a berm to prevent further tailings from flowing into Hazeltine Creek

## **Debris in water and threat to Likely bridge**

- Debris in the water are being cleared and contained
- Ministry staff are monitoring the Likely Bridge
- Good progress is being made by West Fraser to boom the debris in Quesnel Lake and prevent it from reaching the bridge



- We have two excavators stationed at the Likely Bridge to respond should any significant accumulations of debris threaten the bridge
- At this point, there is no imminent threat to the structure, and we're taking proactive steps to ensure public safety and access to and from the community

### **What is in the tailings?**

- Still determining what levels of possible harmful substances exist in the tailings
- Imperial Metals has indicated they are confident the levels are safe
- Once water sample results are obtained, we will know more on this and will share it with you

### **Emergency Management BC**

- Emergency Management BC continues to provide support to the Regional District as needed

- Emergency Management assisted with the coordination and exchange of information to the Regional District and First Nations from mining executives, related agencies and ministry officials
- Emergency Management has also provided a provincial liaison officer to the regional district emergency operations centre to provide direct guidance and linkages to provincial resources

### **Ongoing investigation by MEM inspectors**

- MEM Inspectors are starting the interview process in conjunction with the Conservation Service.
- This will involve interviewing mine staff and the review of all applicable documentation on the mine site
- Inspectors of Mines and other agencies will undertake a comprehensive investigation of the failure to determine root causes for the breach
- The investigation determining what caused the breach will take several months

- Lessons learned will be applied to other mines in the province as appropriate
- Imperial Metals announced that the mine is now in care and maintenance and not operating
- It is important to note – the number of inspections conducted by the Ministry is as frequent today as it was 5 years ago and has remained consistent over the past few years

### **Previous dam incident at Mt Polley**

- I also want to provide further clarification with regards to instances of non-compliance at the Mt Polley Mine.
- There has been one incident where the height of the tailings pond was above authorized levels
- The other incidents reported by the Ministry of Environment do not concern the tailings pond – they have to do with other components of the mine facility
- May 24, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for exceedance of the height of effluent within the tailings

impoundment. The effluent level returned to authorized levels commencing June 30, 2014.

- April 18, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for bypass of authorized treatment works. The site experienced high flows due to spring freshet which caused the pump system to become blocked and resulted in an overflow of effluent to the long ditch. Flow did not reach the creek and was directed into Till Borrow Pit.
- January and April 2012: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for not submitting monitoring data for one of the groundwater monitoring wells (GW05-1).
- Aug. 30, 2012: The ministry issued a warning to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for failure to report exceedance of the height of effluent for the perimeter pond (E7). This perimeter pond overflowed, releasing approximately 150 cubic metres of effluent over 13 hours to ground

## Olding report

- There have also media reports regarding the Technical Assessment Report prepared by Brian Olding and Associates
- In 2009, Mount Polley applied for a permit amendment to discharge up to 1,400,000 m<sup>3</sup> per year of dam seepage effluent from the tailings storage facility to Hazeltine Creek
- The recommendations in the Olding report were considered and provided a basis for some of the conditions in the amended permit which was issued in 2012.
- The cause of the breach is under investigation and it is not possible at this time to provide any definitive answers on possible contributing factors
- What I can tell you is that:
  - Mount Polley was up to date with geotechnical reporting requirements, including the annual dam safety inspection requirements
  - The Ministry of Energy and Mines conducted a geotechnical inspection at the mine in

September 2013, which resulted in no inspection orders related to the tailings facility

### **Clean up and pollution abatement order – Environment lead**

- Have Jennifer McGuire here to speak about clean up
- A Pollution Abatement Order has been issued by the Ministry of Environment to Imperial Metals
- Jennifer will provide further details shortly
- Would like to reiterate we are devoting every appropriate resource working with local officials to clean up the site, mitigate any impacts to communities and the environment

### **JENNIFER SPEAKS**

## **Regional District**

- Doing a great job – public is understandably upset and they are working hard to help residents
- Appreciate and value the ongoing coordination
- Will let them speak to current operations taking place right now
- Introduce AI

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## FACTSHEET

Aug. 6, 2014

Ministry of Energy and Mines  
Ministry of Environment

### **Mount Polley tailings pond situation update**

WILLIAMS LAKE – Government and Cariboo Regional District officials continue to work together to address the breach at the Mt. Polley tailings pond, to test the local drinking water to determine if it is safe for locals to drink or bathe in, and to help ensure the safety and well-being of local residents.

This fact sheet will be updated daily with the latest information available.

#### **New today:**

1. The Ministry of Environment has issued a Pollution Abatement Order to Mount Polley Mining Corp. This order requires immediate action to stop the further release of mine tailings into nearby waterways and to submit environmental impact assessments and clean-up action plans to the ministry.

It also requires the company to submit a written summary of actions taken to stop the release of mine tailings and to undertake preliminary environmental impact assessment and submit an action plan by today. The company must also submit a detailed action plan by Aug 15, and it is required to report weekly on the implementation of action plan measures.

2. The Cariboo Regional District (CRD) declared a state of local emergency (SOLE) allowing it the exceptional powers to suspend certain rights and freedoms in the interest of ensuring public safety. In this case, the CRD required the ability to gain access to private property in order to provide heavy equipment support to the West Fraser Mills forest company that is deploying tub boats for collection/control of woody debris from Lake Quesnel.

Additionally, the declaration allows the CRD to better enable a fair distribution of potable water to the residents of Likely.

3. Tug boats have been working in the area to boom the debris in the water and excavators are on standby in the event they are needed as well. Significant progress has been made.
4. Polley Lake: the mine's management, in consultation with Geotech consultants and government geotechnical engineers, are reviewing alternatives to lower the water level in Polley Lake. These may include pumping the water into a historic empty pit on the site or pumping or diverting the water to the Hazeltine Creek.
5. Tailings Pond: the mine's management in consultation with Geotech consultants and government experts are reviewing a plan to build a berm to prevent further tailings from flowing into Hazeltine Creek.



6. Ministry of Energy and Mines inspectors continue their investigation. They have now begun the interview process in conjunction with the Conservation Service. This will involve interviewing mine staff and a review of all applicable documentation on the mine site.
7. Quesnel Lake & Likely Bridge: Good progress is being made by West Fraser to boom the debris in Quesnel Lake and prevent it from reaching the bridge. The Ministry of Transportation has two excavators stationed at the Likely Bridge to respond should any significant accumulations of debris threaten the bridge. At this point, there is no imminent threat to the structure.

#### **Current situation:**

- The flow out of the breach has decreased dramatically, but has not completely stopped. Imperial Metals continues to work to stop flow out of the pond.
- A small amount of tailings backed into the mouth of Polley Lake and the main slurry flow went down Hazletine Creek where it meets Quesnel Lake. The slurry and a large debris pile appear to be stationary at this point. Hazleton Creek was originally about four feet wide and is now up to 150 feet wide.
- The cause of the breach is still unknown at this time. Ministry of Environment conservation officers are investigating the breach along with Ministry of Energy and Mines mine inspectors, two of whom have been monitoring the site by helicopter.
- Water sampling took place the evening of August 4th and samples were sent for testing early yesterday morning. Drinking water testing continues and results are expected tomorrow or Friday morning at the latest. Until that point, the environmental impact of the contaminated water on the local watershed remains unknown.
- In the meantime, the CRD has issued a water ban advisory not to drink, bath or feed livestock drawn from the following waterways: Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek. The entire Quesnel River system right up to the Fraser River is under a do not drink advisory. **\*\*Note: boiling will not help\*\***
- There have been no reports of injuries or people getting sick from drinking water. There have been no reports of property damage.
- The cost of the cleanup of the breach is the responsibility of Imperial Metals, and is not a cost borne by B.C. taxpayers.

#### **Water Ban:**

The ban does not apply to people in Williams Lake, Quesnel or other towns along the Fraser River. Fishing by First Nations along the Fraser is also not affected.

Initially, it was believed the small town of Likely was not directly affected because it was unclear how many people in the town used water from Quesnel Lake. Since then, the Cariboo Regional District has decided to start delivering water to Likely because the main supplier of bottled water in the area, a small grocery store, could not keep up with the demand.

Search and rescue volunteers continue going door-to-door to recommend evacuation from park sites and notify water users of the water ban. They are also supporting water delivery efforts.

Due to the influx of tourists in to the area over the long weekend, the numbers of people affected is unconfirmed but the CRD estimates it could range up to 300.

### **Regional infrastructure and waterways:**

Waterways affected by this event include Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek.

Additionally the Horsefly Likely Forest Service (Ditch Road) has been washed out at Hazeltine Creek and the Gavin Lake Forest Service Road was washed out closer to the dam breach area. The Likely Bridge is **not affected** at this time.

### **Previous site inspections:**

To date, Imperial Metals has been compliant with respect to recent orders regarding dam safety inspections. The last inspection by government mining officials took place in September 2013.

Here is a list of recent advisories to Mt. Polley from the Ministry of Environment, only one of which was related to height of the tailings pond. The Ministry of Environment is responsible to ensure no unauthorized effluent discharge from the tailings pond structure:

- May 24, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for exceedance of the height of effluent within the tailings impoundment. The effluent level returned to authorized levels commencing June 30, 2014.
- April 18, 2014: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for bypass of authorized treatment works. The site experienced high flows due to spring freshet which caused the pump system to become blocked and resulted in an overflow of effluent to the long ditch. Flow did not reach the creek and was directed into Till Borrow Pit.
- January and April 2012: The ministry issued an advisory to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for not submitting monitoring data for one of the groundwater monitoring wells.

- August 30, 2012: The ministry issued a warning to Mount Polley Mining Corporation for failure to report exceedance of the height of effluent for the perimeter pond. This perimeter pond overflowed, releasing approximately 150 cubic metres of effluent over 13 hours to ground.

**Additional background:**

Early in the morning of August 4 the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow of contaminated water continued into Quesnel Lake.

The Mt. Polley Mine is owned by Imperial Metals and is approximately 30 kms from the community of Likely.

The tailing pond at Mt. Polley Mine is 4 kms by 4 kms. This is a large breach and extremely rare.

Officials with the Ministry of Energy and Mines do not recall anything of this magnitude in at least the last 40 years.

**For more information:**

A public information line has been set up by the CRD: 250 398-5581

Updates will be posted to the Cariboo Regional District's emergency operations Facebook page, here: <http://www.facebook.com/CRDeEmergencyoperations> or on the CRD website at: <http://www.cariboord.ca/>

For a collection of documents from government and partners surrounding the Mt. Polley breach, visit: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/eemp/incidents/2014/mount-polley.htm>

Contact: Jake Jacobs  
Media Relations  
Ministry of Energy and Mines and Responsible for Core  
Review  
250 952-0628

Cariboo Regional District  
Communications  
250 305-8151  
[sburich@cariboord.ca](mailto:sburich@cariboord.ca)

## **Mt. Polley Mine Dam Breach – August 5, 2014 – 7 pm**

Below is an update on the current status and steps being taken as of August 5, 2014 – 7 pm as reported out by the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Ministry of Environment, Cariboo Regional District, Emergency Management BC and Imperial Metals. Today's 9:30 am update follows. As more information becomes available it will be communicated to the public and the media.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mines Actions**

- Released a statement province-wide at 10:30 am from Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett expressing government concerns and actions to date
- Minister Bennett flew to Williams Lake arriving 2:30 pm and began an extensive media availability and attended the 4 pm community meeting in Likely
- MEM GCPE arranging and confirming potential media availability in Williams Lake Aug 6 at 1 pm. Public Safety communications director will be on site to provide support if it moves forward
- Geotech Engineers are on the ground to determine cause and plans going forward.
- Local West Fraser is sending two tug boats, being deployed to gather log debris and monitor water levels
- The water flows have slowed but not stopped. Efforts are being made to keep water to 1.7m or less to prevent overflow over tails.
- 3rd party water sampling to occur on Quesnel Lake. Should be on the lake tomorrow.
- Drones will be deployed for recon.
- First Nations asked why then fish floating dead. Mine rep said not from chemicals, likely bodily injury from rush of debris -Traditional lands for Williams Lake and Soda Creek FN and said major concerns but no contact from industry. Suggested they send a liaison to the Emergency Operation Center if the Regional District agrees
- Was noted that no breach of this magnitude in 40 years

### **Ministry Of Environment Actions**

- Sent a boat crew for visual recon and collect some samples
- Samples were taken for metals and ions, as well as bacterial
- The lake profile looks doesn't look too unusual, PH levels are ok, while turbidity is slightly elevated. Additional sampling is taking place.
- No dead fish observed for the 12hrs they were on Quesnel Lake
- Northern Health notes MoE asked her what to test, asks for frankness on what is in the tailings, that turbidity is not really relevant
- FN wants Mt Polly wants to do monitoring per their agreements
- Will be collecting upstream samples as well, though priority given to downstream.
- MoE to do daily sampling and noted the company has their own contractor in place to take over.
- It was noted three days is earliest for sample results in part because it is hard to transport out of Williams Lake.
- Some samples were retained as legal samples, but those they can share they will
- -Dr Parker, Hlth, asked if safe for the kids camp on Quesnel Lake (N/E of Hazeltine lake) can swim safely. He's not comfortable saying it's safe until samples returned.
- D. Weir from water stewardship says they will be ordering containment and in absence of an MoE order, will order Polley Lake elevation levels.

### **Cariboo Regional District Actions**

- Held a 4 pm community meeting in Likely attended by about 200 people and media
- Water is being supplied to those that need it.
- There is strong desire to get the message out that the Cariboo is not closed for business/tourism
- They are communicating directly to media and via Facebook
- Parks asking if Cedar Pt Park needs to continue to be closed.
- Those along Quesnel Lake were asked to leave (three campers) due to road impacts.

### **Emergency Management BC Actions**

- Confirmed communications director for Public Safety will arrive in Williams Lake Aug 6 at 9:30 am to provide communications support

### **Imperial Metals Actions**

- Imperial Metals CEO Brian Kynock held a 3 p m press conference where the company he addressed the drinking ban, stating we should err on the side of caution.
- He stated the wastewater is not toxic and almost meets drinking water standards. But the discharge of solids remains a concern
- Kynock apologized and says he knows it's going to take a long time to earn the community's trust back.

## **Mt. Polley Mine Dam Breach – August 5, 2014 – 9:30 am**

### **Situation**

Mt. Polley Mine is owned by Imperial Metals and is approximately 30 kms from the community of Likely. The tailing pond at Mt. Polley Mine is 4 kms by 4 kms. Exact volume is unknown.

Early in the morning of August 4 the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 Million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow of contaminated water continued into Quesnel Lake. The flow out of the breach has decreased dramatically, but has not completely stopped. This is a large breach and extremely rare. Ministry of Energy and Mines officials do not recall anything of this magnitude in at least the last 25 years.

RCMP, Mt. Polley Mine executives, Ministry of Environment, Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Transportation, Cariboo Regional District, Search and Rescue and Cariboo Dam Safety, responded to the event.

Cause of the breach is unknown at this time. The environmental impact of the contaminated water on the local watershed is unknown at this time. Effluent from copper-gold mine operations can include such harmful chemicals as arsenic, mercury, and sulphur.

Cariboo Regional District issued a water ban advisory not to drink, bath or feed livestock drawn from the following waterways - including Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek, and the entire Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers systems right up to the Fraser River.

The ban does not apply to people in Williams Lake, Quesnel or other towns along the Fraser River. Fishing by First Nations along the Fraser is also not affected.

Initially it was believed the small town of Likely was not directly affected because it was unclear how many people in the town used water from Quesnel Lake. Since then, the Cariboo Regional District has decided to start delivering water to Likely because the main supplier of bottled water in the area, a small grocery store, could not keep up with the demand.

There have been no reports of injuries or people getting sick from drinking water. There have been no reports of property damage. Search and rescue crews notified campers in the immediate area, and it appears they have set up camp elsewhere without any problems.

### **Emergency Management BC Actions**

Emergency Management BC and its Northeast Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre in Prince George is assisting the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre with the coordination of information and support to decision making. EMBC is also supporting search and rescue crews going door-to-door to recommend evacuation from park sites and notify water users of the water ban. Due to the influx of tourists in to the area over the long weekend, the numbers of people affected is unconfirmed but the Cariboo Regional District estimates range up to 300.

Concerns have been raised about boating safety on Mount Polley Lake and EMBC was advised August 8 a qualified individual is being brought to boom the wood debris on Quesnel Lake at the outlet of Hazeltine Creek. This work should start within the next day or two.

A public information line has been set up by the Cariboo Regional District, 250-398-5581, and updates will be posted to the Cariboo Regional District's emergency operations Facebook page.

### **Ministry of Environment Actions**

The Ministry says it further water testing will be required before the full extent of potential environmental impacts can be known. Water sampling took place the evening of Aug 4th. Samples will be sent for analysis on Aug 5th, with results expected within 3 days. MoE conservation officers are investigating the breach, with MEM mine inspectors.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mines Actions**

The Ministry of Energy and Mines sent two mine inspectors to investigate the cause and monitor the site by helicopter. The first report is expected August 5. Media have reported the Mt. Polley dam breached three months ago and that mine employees warned Imperial Metals executives it could happen again. MEM officials investigated the incident on May 24 and have said internally it was not a breach. It was a problem in how they managed the height of the water behind the dam and in a different area than the dam failure. The height of the water at the time of the breach will form part of the investigation. To date, Imperial Metals has been compliant with respect to recent orders regarding dam safety inspections.

### **Imperial Metals Actions**

Released a statement acknowledging the breach, does not know the cause, and is working with government officials. Imperial Metals CEO is now on site.

## **Mt. Polley Mine Dam Breach – August 5, 2014 – 8 am**

### **Situation**

Mt. Polley Mine is owned by Imperial Metals and is approximately 30 kms from the community of Likely. The tailing pond at Mt. Polley Mine is 4 kms by 4 kms. Exact volume is unknown.

Early in the morning of August 4 the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 Million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow of contaminated water continued into Quesnel Lake. The flow out of the breach has decreased dramatically, but has not completely stopped. This is a large breach and extremely rare. Ministry of Energy and Mines officials do not recall anything of this magnitude in at least the last 25 years.

RCMP, Mt. Polley Mine executives, Ministry of Environment, Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Transportation, Cariboo Regional District, Search and Rescue and Cariboo Dam Safety, responded to the event.

Cause of the breach is unknown at this time. The environmental impact of the contaminated water on the local watershed is unknown at this time. Effluent from copper-gold mine operations can include such harmful chemicals as arsenic, mercury, and sulphur.

Cariboo Regional District issued a water ban advisory not to drink or bath in the water. The waterways affected by the ban, which earlier included Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazletine Creek and Cariboo Creek, now also include the entire Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers systems right up to the Fraser River.

Those areas are sparsely populated and the Cariboo Regional District has not determined how many additional people have been affected. The ban does not apply to people in Williams Lake or other towns along the Fraser River.

Initially it was believed the small town of Likely was not directly affected because it was unclear how many people in the town used water from Quesnel Lake. Since then, the Cariboo Regional District has decided to start delivering water to Likely because the main supplier of bottled water in the area, a small grocery store, could not keep up with the demand.

There have been no reports of injuries or people getting sick from drinking water. There have been no reports of property damage. Search and rescue crews removed campers from the immediate area, but shelters have not been provided for them, as they appear to have set up camp elsewhere without any problems.

### **Emergency Management BC Actions**

Emergency Management BC and its Northeast Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre in Prince George is assisting the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre with the coordination of information and support to decision making. EMBC is also supporting search and rescue crews going door-to-door to recommend evacuation from park sites and notify water users of the water ban. Due to the influx of tourists in to the area over the long weekend, the numbers of people affected is unconfirmed but the Cariboo Regional District estimates range up to 300.

A public information line has been set up by the Cariboo Regional District, 250-398-5581, and updates will be posted to the Cariboo Regional District's emergency operations Facebook page.

### **Ministry of Environment Actions**

The Ministry says it further water testing will be required before the full extent of potential environmental impacts can be known. Water sampling took place the evening of Aug 4th. Samples will be sent for analysis on Aug 5th, with results expected within 3 days. MoE conservation officers are investigating the breach, with MEM mine inspectors.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mines Actions**

The Ministry of Energy and Mines sent two mine inspectors to investigate the cause and monitor the site by helicopter. The first report is expected August 5. Media have reported the Mt. Polley dam breached three months ago and that mine employees warned Imperial Metals executives it could happen again. MEM officials investigated the incident on May 24 and have said internally it was not a breach. It was a problem in how they managed the height of the water behind the dam and in a different area than the dam failure. The height of the water at the time of the breach will form part of the investigation. To date, Imperial Metals has been compliant with respect to recent orders regarding dam safety inspections.

### **Imperial Metals Actions**

Released a statement acknowledging the breach, does not know the cause, and is working with government officials. Imperial Metals CEO is now on site.



## **Mt. Polley Mine Dam Breach – August 5, 2014 – 9:30 am**

### **Situation**

Mt. Polley Mine is owned by Imperial Metals and is approximately 30 kms from the community of Likely. The tailing pond at Mt. Polley Mine is 4 kms by 4 kms. Exact volume is unknown.

Early in the morning of August 4 the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 Million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow of contaminated water continued into Quesnel Lake. The flow out of the breach has decreased dramatically, but has not completely stopped. This is a large breach and extremely rare. Ministry of Energy and Mines officials do not recall anything of this magnitude in at least the last 25 years.

RCMP, Mt. Polley Mine executives, Ministry of Environment, Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Transportation, Cariboo Regional District, Search and Rescue and Cariboo Dam Safety, responded to the event.

Cause of the breach is unknown at this time. The environmental impact of the contaminated water on the local watershed is unknown at this time. Effluent from copper-gold mine operations can include such harmful chemicals as arsenic, mercury, and sulphur.

Cariboo Regional District issued a water ban advisory not to drink, bath or feed livestock drawn from the following waterways - including Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek, and the entire Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers systems right up to the Fraser River.

The ban does not apply to people in Williams Lake, Quesnel or other towns along the Fraser River. Fishing by First Nations along the Fraser is also not affected.

Initially it was believed the small town of Likely was not directly affected because it was unclear how many people in the town used water from Quesnel Lake. Since then, the Cariboo Regional District has decided to start delivering water to Likely because the main supplier of bottled water in the area, a small grocery store, could not keep up with the demand.

There have been no reports of injuries or people getting sick from drinking water. There have been no reports of property damage. Search and rescue crews notified campers in the immediate area, and it appears they have set up camp elsewhere without any problems.

### **Emergency Management BC Actions**

Emergency Management BC and its Northeast Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centre in Prince George is assisting the Cariboo Regional District Emergency Operations Centre with the coordination of information and support to decision making. EMBC is also supporting search and rescue crews going door-to-door to recommend evacuation from park sites and notify water users of the water ban. Due to the influx of tourists in to the area over the long weekend, the numbers of people affected is unconfirmed but the Cariboo Regional District estimates range up to 300.

Concerns have been raised about boating safety on Mount Polley Lake and EMBC was advised August 8 a qualified individual is being brought to boom the wood debris on Quesnel Lake at the outlet of Hazeltine Creek. This work should start within the next day or two.

A public information line has been set up by the Cariboo Regional District, 250-398-5581, and updates will be posted to the Cariboo Regional District's emergency operations Facebook page.

### **Ministry of Environment Actions**

The Ministry says it further water testing will be required before the full extent of potential environmental impacts can be known. Water sampling took place the evening of Aug 4th. Samples will be sent for analysis on Aug 5th, with results expected within 3 days. MoE conservation officers are investigating the breach, with MEM mine inspectors.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mines Actions**

The Ministry of Energy and Mines sent two mine inspectors to investigate the cause and monitor the site by helicopter. The first report is expected August 5. Media have reported the Mt. Polley dam breached three months ago and that mine employees warned Imperial Metals executives it could happen again. MEM officials investigated the incident on May 24 and have said internally it was not a breach. It was a problem in how they managed the height of the water behind the dam and in a different area than the dam failure. The height of the water at the time of the breach will form part of the investigation. To date, Imperial Metals has been compliant with respect to recent orders regarding dam safety inspections.

### **Imperial Metals Actions**

Released a statement acknowledging the breach, does not know the cause, and is working with government officials. Imperial Metals CEO is now on site.

# STATEMENT

## **Bill Bennett, Minister of Energy and Mines, on Mt. Polley Mine Incident**

In the early morning of August 4, 2014, the tailings pond dam at the Mt. Polley Mine site breached and released an estimated 10 Million cubic metres of water and 4.5 million cubic metres of fine sand into Polley Lake. Hazletine Creek flows out of Polley Lake and the flow may have continued into Quesnel Lake.

This is a serious incident that should not have happened. We are devoting every appropriate resource working with local officials to clean up the site, mitigate any impacts to communities and the environment and investigate the cause of the breach. We will determine the cause of the event and we are determined to prevent an incident like this from happening again.

RCMP, Mt. Polley Mine executives, Ministry of Energy and Mines, Ministry of Environment, Emergency Management BC, Ministry of Transportation, Cariboo Regional District, Search and Rescue and Cariboo Dam Safety, responded to the event. Any potential environmental impact from the tailings pond water on the local watershed is unknown at this time but all efforts are being made to make a determination as soon as possible..

Cariboo Regional District, in consultation with Interior Health, has issued a precautionary water ban advisory not to drink or bath in the water and not allow pets or livestock to drink the water. The waterways affected by the ban include Quesnel Lake, Polley Lake, Hazeltine Creek and Cariboo Creek, as well as the Quesnel and Cariboo Rivers systems up to the Fraser River. The ban does not apply to people in Williams Lake or other towns along the Fraser River.

The Ministry of Environment is on site conducting water tests to determine the full extent of potential environmental impacts. Water sampling took place the evening of Aug 4th. Samples have been sent for analysis today, with results expected later this week.

The Ministry of Energy and Mines Inspectors are at the mine site investigating the cause.

Emergency Management BC has set up a public information line at 250-398-5581 and updates will be posted to the Cariboo Regional District's emergency operations Facebook page.

As more information becomes available, the BC government will provide that information to British Columbians.

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