



Factsheet: potential open-pit mining of Catface Mountain

Description of the Catface Property, Vancouver Island, BC is a report prepared by SRK Consulting (Steffen, Robertson and Kirsten (Canada)) for Doublestar Resources in February 2003.

The report summarizes all the info collected up to then about the Catface Mountain copper deposit. It also offers an analysis of waste rock and tailings disposal options, something not considered in previous reports. (Map on page 4 by Wilderness Committee, based on SRK report.)

Here's a summary of the main points from the SRK report about the potential open-pit copper mine on Catface Mountain in Clayoquot Sound:

- 158 million tonnes estimated copper-molybdenum deposit, with potential for 300 million tonnes
- the 158 million tonnes is from "Cliff Zone" deposit
- potential exists for expansion of Cliff deposit, plus there are 2 more deposits, Irishman (Bawden) Creek Zone and Hecate Bay Zone, which have not been studied enough to enable resource estimates, hence the potential for 300 million tonnes total
- gold, silver and possibly rhenium also present, but not estimated
- low grade copper, 0.4%, which means 99.6% of ore is waste and ends up as tailings
- volume of tailings would be in the order of 103 to 250 million cubic metres (123 to 300 million tonnes) (tailings = pulverized ore that remains after minerals are extracted)
- volume of waste rock could be 110 to 170 million cubic metres (198 to 306 million tonnes) (waste rock = rock that has to be stripped off in order to reach the copper ore)
- closest suitable area for dumping waste rock and building tailings pond is lowland to north of Catface Mtn, at Whitepine Cove
- map shows potential waste rock disposal area as occupying the upper half of Pineetl Creek, a salmon bearing stream that flows into Whitepine Cove at Pineetl Indian Reserve (Ahousesht First Nation)

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- map shows potential tailings pond covering the lower half of Pineetl Valley, as well as covering or impinging on four adjacent streams (two of which flow through a wetland into salmon-bearing Cypre River)
- tailings pond is shown as about 2 km x 1 km in area, stretching from Pineetl Indian Reserve boundary to Cypre River
- a dam 50 to 80 metres high would be required to hold the tailings pond
- the main “Cliff Zone” deposit extends to 350 metres depth, so at least the top 350 metres (40%) of Catface Mountain’s 880-metre South Peak would be scooped out
- mining of Irishman Creek and Hecate Bay Zones would further increase a mine’s footprint
- due to high rainfall (3.3 metres annually), issue of runoff from open-pit mine and its effect on water volume and water quality in streams that encircle Catface Mt
- issue of heavy metal and sulphuric acid leaching: water drainage may be acid rock drainage, or neutral drainage containing copper, or possibly alkaline drainage containing molybdenum
- seismic (tremor or earthquake) and tsunami risks exist
- required infrastructure: deep water port, ore processing plant, office, maintenance facilities, power generation
- mining giant Falconbridge, which originally staked Catface mineral claims in 1960, retains a right to “back in” to a 50.1% interest in Catface. (Note: because Falconbridge was bought by Noranda, which was bought by Xstrata, as of 2006 the “back in” right is held by Swiss-based Xstrata, one of the world’s largest mining companies)

Additional impacts not covered by SRK report:

- continuous noise and dust (mine operates non-stop, 24/7), night lighting
- will be seen and heard from Ahousaht (3 km west of Catface), Opitsat (11 km south) and Tofino (13 km south); Ahousaht will get airborne dust, and probably Opitsat and Tofino as well
- shipping will have to go through deep channels around the north side of Flores Island, in pristine waters
- due to high rainfall and runoff, tailings pond is bound to overflow, despite a 50- to 80-metre-high enclosing dam

Additional updated info:

- Doublestar (which bought Catface mineral property from Falconbridge in 2001) tried for 6 years to get local Ahousaht First Nation to sign a Memorandum of Understanding re exploratory drilling, but was unsuccessful because Ahousaht community is so divided on the issue

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- in 2007, Doublestar was bought by Selkirk Metals Corp, also out of Vancouver
- in March 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding re exploration was signed between Selkirk Metals and Ahousaht Band Council, although hereditary chiefs were opposed
- in July 2008, BC Ministry of Mines approved Selkirk's application for exploratory drilling; Selkirk drilled 8 holes from July to September 2008
- in August 2009, BC Ministry of Mines approved additional exploratory drilling of 22 holes
- an August 2009 report, "Mineral Resource Estimate, Catface Copper Project" estimated that the Catface Cliff Zone deposit contains an "indicated resource" (i.e. proven) of 56.9 million tonnes averaging 0.4% copper, and an additional "inferred resource" (i.e. projected) of 262.4 million tonnes averaging 0.38% copper, for a total of 319.3 million tonnes of copper ore in Cliff Zone deposit
- in November 2009, Imperial Metals of Vancouver bought Selkirk Metals
- from May to September 2010, Imperial Metals drilled another 6 test holes
- in March 2013, the Memorandum of Understanding with Ahousaht regarding exploration expired and has not been renewed

Originally compiled September 2008
by Friends of Clayoquot Sound.
Updated December 2014

Map on following page by Wilderness Committee, based on SRK report.

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POTENTIAL CATFACE MINE

