



24959 ALOUETTE ROAD, MAPLE RIDGE, BC V4R 1R8

Tel: 604.467.6401 Fax: 604.467.6478

arms@alouetteriver.org

www.alouetteriver.org

Press Release

For Immediate Release

August 11, 2014

Maple Ridge

ARMS Urges BC Government For Public Inquiry Into Mt Polley Mine Disaster

The Alouette River Management Society (ARMS) was extremely shocked and saddened at the massive environmental disaster that is continuing to unfold in the Cariboo region after the Mt Polley mine tailings dam failed early Monday morning on the 5 August, 2014.

The potential consequences for fish, wildlife and people in the Cariboo region certainly looks dire. With 10 million cubic metres of waste water and 4.5 million cubic metres of metals-laden sands pouring out of the tailings pond and into the adjoining waterways including Hazeltine Creek, Polley Lake and Quesnel Lake, this ecosystem will likely be impacted negatively for many, many years to come. In addition, the Quesnel Lake system connects with the Fraser River which is expected to see an estimated 23 million in sockeye salmon come up in 2014 and with an estimated 2.3 million alone returning to the Quesnel Lake system. ARMS has been working with many groups including Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Environment, and Katzie First Nations over the past eight years to help bring sockeye salmon back to the Alouette River and hopefully one day up into the Alouette Lake reservoir through a fish ladder.

“What has happened at the Mt Polley tailings dam clearly illustrates that all resource development projects in British Columbia must have extremely high standards of environmental assessment prior to projects being approved” said Executive Director, Greta Borick-Cunningham, “and that project proponents and government are held accountable to the British Columbians for any environmental damage that these projects may incur now and in the future.”

Borick-Cunningham went on to say that “Without question it will take more money and resources invested in the relevant BC Government Ministries which process environmental assessment certificates and approvals, monitor these mining operations, and enforce any non-compliance with significant fines and revocation of licenses to operate.”

ARMS addressed a letter last week to BC Premier Christy Clark, Mines & Energy Minister Bill Bennett, Forests, Lands, & Natural Resource Operations Minister Steve Thomson and Minister for the Environment Mary Polak calling on the BC government to hold a public inquiry into the tailings pond breach as well as reassessing the current culture of self-regulation through qualified environmental professionals on similar projects.

Contact:

Communications Coordinator: voluncomm@alouetteriver.org

604 – 467 – 6401