



# HELP STOP EXPLORATORY DRILLING NEAR MOUNT ST. HELENS

## The Basic Facts:

- Ascot Resources Inc. has applied for permission from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to conduct exploratory drilling on approximately 900 acres of land, 217 acres of which they own a 50% interest in. This area is in the Green River valley below Goat Mountain, which lies just 12 miles north and east of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. The company is seeking to find a valuable deposit to potentially mine copper, gold and molybdenum.



**Goat Mountain and Mt. Rainier as seen from the Mt. Margaret backcountry - by Darryl Lloyd**

- The area under consideration for this mine was obtained by the USFS from the Trust for Public Land, in part using Land and Water Conservation Funds, for the purposes of recreation and conservation and for the protection of the Green River. The land was obtained to “aid in the preservation of the integrity of the Green River prior to entering the National Volcanic Monument, and will also aid in the preservation of the scenic beauty of this area which is to become an important Monument portal.” Exploratory drilling and mining are not compatible with this purpose.
- The area is close to the Tumwater Inventoried Roadless Area, an area intended for protection under the 2001 Roadless Rule. It is unclear at this time whether the Roadless Rule would prevent mining should that become the case. The area is also home to Ryan Lake, Quartz Big Trees and other important historic sites.

## Water Quality & Human Health Impacts:

- The Green River is less than one mile from the drilling location. The Green River is an extremely valuable human resource. The Green River eventually flows into the Cowlitz River where it is withdrawn for agricultural and municipal water supplies.
- The Green River is habitat for listed salmon and steelhead. Any toxic releases or sediment from road ways could significantly harm and potentially destroy fish populations. At least 3 miles of reconstructed road is expected for this drilling operation. Sediment from this construction and the road activity could add smothering sediment to area streams and rivers.
- Ascot intends to use up to and potentially more than 5,000 gallons of water per day. They intend to pump water from an abandoned drill hole not to exceed the maximum allowed limit of 5,000 gallons a day without a Washington State Department of Ecology water permit. Should they need more water they intend to drive in water trucks to deliver excess water for the drilling.
  - Fresh water is a significant human resource and should be considered extremely valuable. The drilling proposed by Ascot is not compatible with the use of the area and will negatively impact the water supply.

- Ascot will be including additives to the water during drilling operations, which could potentially leak out of the sump into the environment.
- Ascot may need to bring in water adding stress to our already burdened national forest road system.
- The bedrock in the Green River valley is such that when it is exposed to air and water during mining a chemical process called acid mine drainage could occur, leaching sulfuric acid and other highly toxic substances into surrounding water bodies. Once this chemical process begins, it can last for thousands of years and could cost many millions of dollars to manage.
  - Acidic water with copper levels that exceeded state water quality standards has already been documented in 2002 by the Department of Ecology both upstream and downstream of the Polar Star Mine that operated in the early 1900's in this same area. Any potential mine and potential drilling could lead to an elevated risk of acid mine drainage for the area and pollution of our clean water.
- Potential mine development could result in either a large open pit mine or an underground mine. Goat Mountain would be destroyed by an open pit mine. Underground mining would result in surface rock collapsing in on the mine, damaging surface features such as ancient forests and changing the flow of surface streams and ground water. Either approach could result in a mine that penetrates so deep that it impacts the ground water, altering the flow—potentially dewatering popular lakes and streams in the area, impacting both humans and wildlife.

### **Recreation & Other Impacts:**



**Admiring the view of Mount St. Helens from atop Goat Mountain**

- Exploratory drilling and a potential a mine in the Green River valley would impact recreation destinations such as the Goat Mountain Trail and the Green River Horse Camp, a popular destination for backcountry horse enthusiasts and hunters. In close proximity are popular ancient forest hikes and mountain lakes and excellent hunting and fishing opportunities.
- Other impacts from the exploratory drilling include direct impact to wildlife and birds from noise, dust, lights and increased traffic on the roadways.

### **Socioeconomic Impacts:**

- Mount St. Helens is an economic driver for Southwest Washington and is far more valuable for employment opportunities as a tourist destination than as a potential drilling location. Ascot's proposed drilling in this area is predicted to employ only 18 people for approximately a 6 month period. Ascot CFO Robert Evans was quoted as stating that Canadian citizens would get about a third of those 18 jobs.

### **How to Help:**

Please write a comment letter and help us save Mount St. Helens from this short-sighted drilling effort. Every voice counts and yours should be heard on this issue. Comments will be accepted by the BLM through July 31<sup>st</sup> at the following website:

[BLM\\_OR\\_Prospecting\\_EA@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_OR_Prospecting_EA@blm.gov) (Note: an underscore (\_) must be placed in each blank space.)