

## Highland Valley Copper Mine

SITE #050201

GC1TXPX

Written & Researched by Christine Whitehead

### SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Logan Lake, VOK 1W0

Parking: N 50°30.414'

W 121°00.913'

Geocache Location: N 50°30.404'

W 121°01.194'

Accuracy: 5 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0640405;

North 5596846 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,374 m./4,507 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1.5

Terrain difficulty: 2.5

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1962

Ownership: Private Property

Access: • Gravel Road

• Seasonal

• Vehicle accessible

• *Detailed access information on next page.*

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society  
P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0  
Tel: 1-877-453-9467

email: [info@exploregoldcountry.com](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

For more site pages go to:

[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

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**H**ighland Valley Copper Mine is one of the largest open pit copper mining and concentrating operations in the world. The size of the operation laid out below you is astonishing to a first time viewer; it is said that astronauts can use the Valley pit to mark their place in space, as it is one of earth's features visible on a clear day.

The history of Highland Valley Copper dates back to 1962, with the commissioning of the Bethlehem Copper Mine (on the north side of the highway). The official opening of the Bethlehem Mine on February 1, 1963 brought new prosperity to Ashcroft, 43 km to the west, where many of the employees lived.

Japan's Sumitomo Metal Mining Company Ltd. put up 5.5 million dollars to develop the mine, after being convinced by Herman (Spud) Heustis to invest in the project. Heustis became convinced that the mine would be a viable operation after prospect-

ing in the area and investigating abandoned claims. New Brunswick born Heustis, a well-respected businessman with significant connections and vision, was a major force in the successful opening of the first low-grade high volume open pit copper mine in Canada. One of the three Bethlehem pits was named Heustis.

The Bethlehem Mine sites were followed by discovery of the Lornex ore body in 1963. Stripping of the Lornex deposit began in 1970 and the milling of





*One of the massive trucks that haul the ore.*

the ore commenced in 1972. The Municipality of Logan Lake was constructed and incorporated in 1970 to accommodate the growing workforce at Lornex. In 1964 the Valley deposit was discovered; however, stripping of waste rock was not initiated until 1982.

Today, the Highland Valley Copper operation is the largest open pit copper mine in Canada, employing more than 1,000 people. Owned by Teck Cominco and Highmont Mining Company, this site produces 1% of the world's copper and 1.5% of the world's molybdenum.

In 2008, Highland Valley Copper produced 254 million pounds of copper from 334,000 tonnes of copper sulphide concentrate and 3,800 tonnes of molybdenum sulphide concentrates, containing 4.2 million pounds of molybdenum. Because the ore bodies only average 0.38% copper a total of more than 86.9 million metric tonnes of rock is mined, of which 44.9 million dry metric tonnes of ore is milled.

Copper concentrate is transported in bulk trucks 43 km to the rail yard at Ashcroft, then by rail to North Vancouver and finally by ship to overseas smelters. The molybdenum concentrate is packaged on site for shipment.

Highland Valley Copper has an active environmental management program covering waste management, land and water reclamation, as well as, site decommissioning. At the end of 2007, approximately 2,292 hectares, out of a total disturbed area of 6,181 hectares, had been re-vegetated.

Waste stripping for Highland Valley's 300 million dollar mine life extension is continuing with the pushback of the east wall in the Valley Pit. The pushback of the west wall is necessary to extend the mine life to 2019.

Upon closure, the mine is committed to reclaiming the land to a sustainable state, "equal to or better than what existed prior to mining, on a property average basis."

#### **Detailed access information:**

- From Logan Lake, travel west 18 km on Hwy #97C and turn onto Viewpoint Rd.
- From Ashcroft the mine is approx. 43 km east on Hwy #97C.
- Follow Bose Lake Rd. for about 2 km, before a left turn onto a dirt road.
- The mine is private property with no access, view from cache site & lookout.

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#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

(2007). Highland Valley Copper Mine, British Columbia, Canada. Retrieved February 12, 2009, from Mining Technology Web site: <http://www.mining-technology.com/projects/highland/>

Belton, B. second edition revised by Forster, H. (2002). *Bittersweet Oasis, a History of Ashcroft and District 1988-2002*, Ashcroft, BC: Village of Ashcroft.

*Highland Valley Copper: Information Package 2009*. (2009). Logan Lake, BC.