

Tahltan activists block Red Chris mine site



Photo of blockade set up this afternoon at the access point of the Red Chris mine.

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A group of First Nations protestors has set up a blockade at the access to Imperial Metals' Red Chris mine.

The mine, which is scheduled to open this year, has raised concern because the design of its earthen-damed tailings pond is the same as the one at the Mount Polley mine near Williams Lake, also operated by Imperial, which broke open under pressure in August, spilling toxic material and sediment into nearby lakes.

The Red Chris mine is located about 80 kilometres south of Dease Lake on Tahltan territory and is focused on gold and copper extraction.

This most recent action was undertaken by the Tahltan activist group called the Klabona Keepers, as well as a group that calls themselves Grandmothers Fireplace.

The demonstration is happening "at the entrance of Imperial Metals Red Chris Mine to gather the Indigenous and settler communities to unite, and in one voice demand action," says a Klabona Keepers press release, adding that a symbolic fire of protest was lit.

"This fire is lit under the collective jurisdictions of all Nations connected by the water and the salmon and has been lit to halt the Red Chris Imperial Metals mine operations until further notice out of concern for their community of Iskut, which is located only 18 km away from the mine site," the release continues.

"The Imperial Metals Red Chris mine's storage facility in Tahltan territory is much larger and uses the same structure and technology as the Mount Polley Mine and so it is not a question of if, but when the storage facility would breach and destroy yet another integral salmon-bearing watershed, the Stikine River of the Tahltan territory ... The Klabona Keepers and the Secwepemc [Grandmothers Fireplace] are exercising their natural law, and asserting their jurisdiction to regulate industry in their own Territories," says the release.

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