STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
Central Region Office
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State Environmental Policy Act

Revised Mitigated Determination of NonSignificance

Date of Issuance: October 8, 2026

Lead Agency: Washington State Department of Ecology, Toxics Cleanup Program, Central Region Office

Agency Contact: John Zinza, john.zinza@ecy.wa.gov, 509-724-8268

Lead Agency File Number: Ecology Cleanup Site ID 4414; Facility Site ID 338

Applicant / Proponents: USDA Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Washington State Department of Ecology, consistent with the 2010 MDNS. The cleanup action is implemented by Rio Tinto on behalf of Intalco Aluminum Corporation, successor to the Howe Sound Mining Company.

Project Contacts: Rio Tinto, Roney Lima, 760-514-8146. USDA Forest Service, Molly Hansen, 509-306-5418.

Prior SEPA Threshold Determination Being Revised:

Mitigated Determination of NonSignificance (MDNS) for the Holden Mine Cleanup Plan, issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology on June 30, 2010 under WAC 197-11-340 and WAC 197-11-350, with a 30-day comment period closing July 30, 2010. Supporting environmental checklist dated June 2, 2010 and signed June 30, 2010. SEPA Register No. 201003516.

That determination remains in effect. It is revised by this document. The 2010 MDNS was issued for the Holden Mine Cleanup Plan and Remedial Action as a whole, and its supporting checklist described remedial construction in two phases, with Phase II construction anticipated after a five-year interval. Phase 2 is therefore part of the same proposal, and this document revises the existing determination for that proposal rather than making a new threshold determination. This Revised MDNS and the attached revised SEPA Environmental Checklist supersede the corresponding portions of the June 2, 2010 checklist; all other portions of the 2010 checklist and MDNS remain in effect. Phase 1 and Phase 2 as used in this document correspond to Phase I and Phase II in the 2010 checklist.

Description of Proposal:

The proposal is the Holden Mine Cleanup Plan and Remedial Action at the Holden Mine site, the same proposal covered by the 2010 MDNS. This Revised MDNS addresses Phase 2 of that action. The cleanup is being carried out under the joint authority of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), chapter 70.105D RCW and chapter 173-340 WAC, and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. § 9601 et seq. The USDA Forest Service is the lead federal agency for the cleanup, acting in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Ecology, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. Ecology is the SEPA lead agency under WAC 197-11-253. The cleanup action is being implemented by Rio Tinto on behalf of Intalco, successor to the Howe Sound Mining Company.

Phase 1 (completed). Phase 1 built the Mine Water Treatment Plant (MWTP), a subsurface groundwater barrier and collection system, 1500 Level Main Portal bulkheads, the Sludge Filter Cake Management Facility (SFCMF) on Tailings Pile 1, an on-site potable well and septic system, operations and maintenance housing, and the site road network, all of which are now in operation. Approximately 385,000 cubic yards of tailings and 134,000 cubic yards of waste rock were regraded, capped, and revegetated in 2017–2018, and a segment of Railroad Creek was relocated. Collected mine-impacted water is treated at the MWTP and discharged to Railroad Creek at Outfall 001 under an NPDES permit administered under CERCLA.

Phase 2 (this proposal). Phase 2 addresses mine-impacted groundwater along the toe of Tailings Piles 2 and 3 before it discharges to Railroad Creek. Phase 2 consists of a groundwater containment well network of 15 to 17 wells drilled to depths of 35 to 92 feet below ground surface. The network includes 4 wells installed during 2021 and 2022 pilot studies, and a subset of redundant wells so that containment is maintained if a primary well fails or is taken offline for maintenance. Intercepted groundwater will be routed through a conveyance system to a new single-story groundwater containment building of approximately 1,000 square feet and 13 feet in maximum height, then to the existing cleanout reservoir and the existing MWTP for treatment prior to discharge to Railroad Creek. The MWTP was designed during Phase 1 to accommodate Phase 2 flows. Supporting work includes limited roadway improvements for construction access, drilling pad preparation, a temporary construction access crossing of lower Copper Creek, and removal of the existing East Seeps collection structures, which will no longer be needed. Construction will occur over two consecutive construction seasons (approximately May through October of each year), beginning in a year not yet determined but anticipated within the next five years.

Proposal Location:

The cleanup site is in Chelan County, Washington, occupying portions of Sections 7, 8, 17, and 18, T31N, R17E, and Sections 12 and 13, T31N, R16E. The former mine is in the Railroad Creek valley approximately 10 miles upstream (west) of Lake Chelan on the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountains, within the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, with the Glacier Peak Wilderness bounding the Site to the west, north, and south. The former mine operations area covers approximately 125 acres. Phase 2 work is located along the toe of Tailings Piles 2 and 3, principally along the existing Jet Grout Road and Pioneer

Road. See Figure 4 (post-Phase 1 site features) and Figure 10 (Phase 2 remedial components) of the 2026 Phase 2 Proposed Plan.

Basis for Revising the Prior Determination

Ecology has modified its Mitigated Determination of NonSignificance issued June 30, 2010 for the Holden Mine Cleanup Plan and Remedial Action in consideration of the following changes to the proposal, new information, and modified analysis. A revised SEPA Environmental Checklist dated June 2026 is attached and provides the supporting analysis.

1. **Change in the Phase 2 remedial technology.** The environmental review supporting the prior determination contemplated that mine-impacted groundwater along the toe of Tailings Piles 2 and 3 would be intercepted by extension of the subsurface barrier wall and collection system. The Phase 2 Proposed Plan issued in June 2026 instead relies on a groundwater containment well network conveying flows to the existing MWTP. The function and performance objective of the remedy are unchanged: intercept mine-impacted groundwater and prevent its discharge to Railroad Creek.

2. **Completion of Phase 1 and a changed environmental baseline.** Phase 1 was constructed over seven construction seasons and is operating. Large areas of the Site were revegetated in 2017–2018; annual monitoring since 2018 shows these areas achieved or exceeded the Year 5 (2022) performance metrics and have continued robust growth and native species recruitment through the fall 2025 monitoring event. Phase 2 work will occur within areas already disturbed or constructed under Phase 1.

3. **Substantially reduced scale of ground disturbance.** Phase 2 is anticipated to generate approximately 4,000 cubic yards of excavated material and require approximately 4,900 cubic yards of fill, compared with the approximately 519,000 cubic yards of tailings and waste rock regraded under Phase 1. Phase 2 will remove less than 4 acres of vegetation planted under Phase 1. Construction will span two construction seasons rather than seven and will not close or significantly constrain Holden Village operations.

4. **No work in Railroad Creek or the Wetlands East of Tailings Pile 3.** Phase 2 includes no construction activity, dredging, or filling within Railroad Creek or the Wetlands East of Tailings Pile 3. In-water work is limited to a temporary construction access crossing of the lower portion of Copper Creek, involving approximately 240 cubic yards of imported coarse aggregate and common fill.

5. **New environmental information developed since 2010.** A Waters of the US and Wetlands Impact Assessment and Mitigation Plan (Confluence Environmental, 2019) confirmed the presence, boundaries, classification, and rating of 24 wetlands at the Site and established the Ordinary High Water Mark of Railroad Creek. Special-status species lists were updated using the WDFW Priority Habitats and Species database and the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation system. An Inadvertent Discovery Plan (Floyd|Snider, 2025) has been prepared. Additional supporting documents include the 2012 Record of Decision, the Phase 2 Remedial Action Proposal (Floyd|Snider and CDM Smith, 2023), the Performance Standards Verification Plan (2020), the

Phase 1 Operations and Maintenance Plan (2021), and annual compliance and O&M reports through 2025 and 2026.

6. **Revised environmental checklist.** The June 2, 2010 environmental checklist has been revised and updated for the Phase 2 Remedial Action. The revised checklist also responds to the checklist questions added to WAC 197-11-960 since 2010, including questions on drainage patterns, noxious weeds and invasive species, known and possible site contamination, working farm and forest lands, methods used to assess cultural and historic resources, and movement of agricultural and forest products.

Evaluation against the withdrawal criteria:

Ecology has evaluated the changes and new information described above against WAC **197-11-340**(3)(a) and WAC **197-11-600**(3)(b). The changes to the proposal are not substantial changes that make significant adverse environmental impacts likely. The new information does not indicate probable significant adverse environmental impacts, and the probable adverse impacts of Phase 2 as now proposed are within the range of impacts already analyzed in the 2010 checklist, which expressly contemplated a second phase of remedial construction. Withdrawal of the prior determination and a new threshold determination are therefore not required. Ecology is modifying the prior determination and issuing this Revised MDNS with the revised environmental checklist as supporting documentation.

Site access:

A landslide on December 10–11, 2025 damaged Forest Service Road 8301, and there is currently no vehicle access to the Site. Repair options are being assessed by Rio Tinto on behalf of Intalco, and the repair will be carried out by the USDA Forest Service as a separate project. Maintenance and repair of National Forest System roads is a Forest Service responsibility. The road serves year-round uses independent of Phase 2, including Holden Village operations, continuous operation of the Mine Water Treatment Plant by resident staff, and seasonal fuel and reagent deliveries by barge and truck; the repair would occur whether or not Phase 2 is implemented. The repair therefore has independent utility, is not a state or local agency action, and has not been evaluated as part of this proposal.

Determination

The Washington State Department of Ecology has reaffirmed that this proposal will not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW **43.21C.030**(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a revised environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency.

Pursuant to WAC **197-11-350**(3), the proposal has been clarified, changed, and conditioned to include the mitigation measures listed below to avoid, minimize, or compensate for probable adverse environmental impacts. These conditions are in addition to, and do not replace, the substantive requirements of applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) identified in the 2012 Record of Decision and the requirements of the MTCA and CERCLA cleanup process.

Mitigation Conditions

The following conditions apply to construction and operation of the Phase 2 Remedial Action. Additional mitigation measures described in the attached revised SEPA Environmental Checklist and in the 2026 Phase 2 Proposed Plan also apply.

1. **Erosion and sediment control.** All clearing, excavation, grading, trenching, drilling, and construction shall be performed in accordance with an approved construction Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes best management practices for erosion and sediment control, prepared consistent with Ecology requirements.

2. **Construction water management.** Water generated from well development, well drilling, or dewatering shall be contained, prevented from reaching Railroad Creek, and piped to the Mine Water Treatment Plant for treatment prior to discharge.

3. **Limits on in-water and wetland work.** No construction activity, excavation, dredging, or placement of fill shall occur within Railroad Creek or within the Wetlands East of Tailings Pile 3. In-water work is limited to construction, use, and removal of the temporary construction access crossing of the lower portion of Copper Creek.

4. **Wetland hydrology.** Where Phase 2 containment well pumping reduces water levels in the Wetlands East of Tailings Pile 3, seasonal flow mitigation shall be provided through the existing exfiltration trench at the edge of those wetlands, using surface water drainage routed from south of Tailings Pile 3, to the extent practicable. Wetland water levels shall be monitored and results reported to Ecology.

5. **Equipment in or near surface water.** Hydraulic and fuel systems on heavy equipment used for streambank or in-water work shall be inspected for leaks before use. Equipment used for in-water work shall use synthetic or vegetable-based biodegradable lubricants and hydraulic fluids. Equipment crossing Copper Creek shall be cleaned of oil, grease, and hydraulic fluid before the crossing.

6. **Spill prevention and response.** A spill prevention, control, and countermeasure (SPCC) plan shall be in place for construction and for continued Site operations. Oil and fuel spill containment supplies shall be maintained on site during construction and are subject to verification by the Forest Service and Ecology construction inspectors.

7. **Management of contaminated media.** Contaminated soils or tailings encountered during drilling or excavation shall be placed in the Sludge Filter Cake Management Facility on Tailings Pile 1.

8. **Air quality and dust control.** Water trucks shall be used to control dust generated by earthwork, drilling, and haul road traffic. Construction equipment, generators, and vehicles shall be regularly maintained, shall use low-sulfur diesel, and shall limit idling time, consistent with state air quality regulations.

9. **Noise — hours of work.** Construction activities shall be limited to daytime hours. No Phase 2 construction work shall occur at night.

10. **Noise — wildlife timing restriction.** Activities generating noise above ambient levels within one-quarter mile of suitable northern spotted owl nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat shall be

conducted outside the primary nesting season of March 1 through July 31, unless current surveys demonstrate that spotted owls are not present in the suitable habitat. Surveys shall be conducted and remain current consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Wenatchee National Forest as amended and other applicable ARARs.

11. **Endangered Species Act coordination.** Phase 2 shall not be implemented until the Forest Service has obtained a letter of concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the 2011 Biological Opinion issued for the project, which covered both phases of the remedial action.

12. **Revegetation and restoration.** Any Phase 1 revegetated area disturbed during Phase 2 construction, including areas on the tailings piles and at Dan's Camp, shall be restored in kind. Clean topsoil from trench and building excavations shall be reused as fill during Site restoration where practicable.

13. **Noxious weed prevention.** Forest Service weed prevention requirements shall be followed, including certification that equipment is free of weeds before mobilization to the Site, and inspection and approval of all imported gravel, fill, and borrow sources before use and transport. Where weeds of concern are present, materials shall be treated before transport and use.

14. **Cultural resources.** Ground-disturbing work shall be conducted in accordance with the Inadvertent Discovery Plan prepared for the project (Floyd|Snider, 2025), which governs the unanticipated discovery of cultural resources, human remains, and unanticipated effects on historic properties. Any proposed modification to historic structures or their immediately surrounding areas shall be reviewed by the Forest Service and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. Coordination with the Yakama Nation shall continue.

15. **Public access and recreation.** Site access restrictions, including closure of the Jet Grout Road and Pioneer Road and of trails on the tailings piles, shall be communicated in advance to the Forest Service and Holden Village, and signs shall be posted at all trail and road access points.

16. **Treated water discharge.** Discharge of treated water from the Mine Water Treatment Plant shall continue to comply with the NPDES permit administered under CERCLA, including effluent limits for total suspended solids, pH, iron, aluminum, copper, cadmium, lead, and zinc. The permit shall be renewed to reflect Phase 2 treatment conditions before Phase 2 flows are routed to the plant.

17. **Sanitation and potable water.** Worker housing shall be served by the existing potable well and the existing septic system, whose capacity was increased to 2,500 gallons in 2025. Potable water for the construction camp at Dan's Camp shall be imported by truck and waste generated at that camp shall be transported off site.

This information is available at: https://ecyaptcp/isis/CleanupSite/Index/4414

Attachment: Revised SEPA Environmental Checklist (WAC 197-11-960), Holden Mine Phase 2 Remedial Action, June 2026.

Comment Period and Procedure

☐ This Revised MDNS is issued under WAC **197-11-340**(2)(f) and does not include additional notice and comment.

☐ This Revised MDNS is issued after using the optional process in WAC **197-11-355**. There is no further comment period.

☒ This Revised MDNS is issued under WAC **197-11-340**(2); the lead agency will not act on this proposal for 14 days from the date of issuance. Consistent with WAC **197-11-259**(2), the SEPA comment period runs concurrently with the public comment period on the MTCA/CERCLA Phase 2 Proposed Plan, and one public notice announces the availability of both documents.

Comments must be submitted by: October 7, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.

Submit comments to: https://ecology.commentinput.com?id=eS7PYRD4k or by email to John Zinza at john.zinza@ecy.wa.gov

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Signature Date: 9/21/2026