**A secret waterfall in an abandoned mine**

The Ashlu quartz veins were discovered in 1923 by F. Pykett and associates. In 1924, over 30 metres of underground development were completed. In May 1937, the Ashlu Gold Mining Syndicate set up a 23 tonne per day mill. It operated intermittently until October 1939 when the ore was depleted.

In 1947, Giant Mines & Metals explored the area as the M2-5 mineral claims. Since 1975, about 1000 metres of diamond drilling have been completed on the deposit. Osprey Mining and Exploration leased the property from 1979 to 1985 and carried out an extensive development program. In 1985, Tenquille Resources Ltd. acquired the property to carry out underground sampling. In 1988, Valentine Gold Corp. took an option on the property.

▲ Top: The mine portal. Middle: Cindy Hepting at the waterfall. Bottom: The rolling mill building.

Today, Ashlu Mines Inc. a privately held resource company based in Vancouver, BC, holds mineral tenures in the Ashlu Creek valley and the high mountains overlooking the creek. In 2016, an exploration program was completed by Ashlu Mines. It was dedicated to following up the results of the previous year in the Pokosha Trail area. That activity consisted of 12 field days in June, amounting to 137.5 hours of fieldwork. The total expenditure claimed for assessment totalled $13,222.38.

Over the years, the ore mined extracted gold, silver and copper. The mineralization is also known to contain copper, bismuth, tellurium and tungsten. And the story of Ashlu mine has not ended yet. Further development could take place in the future.

Mining is not the only activity that draws people to this area. Kayakers use the mine site as an entry point for paddling the Ashlu River. Experienced kayakers enjoy the thrill of dropping over the waterfalls and paddling through the emerald green waters in the canyon. Many have posted videos of their runs on YouTube.

***WARNING!*** *Remains of Sodium Cyanide have been found in the broken rock in the rolling mill building, DO NOT TOUCH IT. It could kill you. Sodium cyanide was mixed with the ore during the milling to remove the gold. Like other soluble cyanide salts, it is among the most rapidly acting of all known poisons. NaCN is a potent inhibitor of respiration, acting on mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase and hence blocking electron transport. This results in decreased oxidative metabolism and oxygen utilization. Lactic acidosis then occurs as a consequence of anaerobic metabolism. An oral dosage of the substance as small as 200–300 mg can be fatal.*

**HOW TO GET THERE** – Ashlu Mines are located about an hour out of Squamish. From Squamish drive towards Whistler and turn left onto Squamish Valley Road. The road transitions to a gravel road. Turn left onto Ashlu Road. You will drive over 2 bridges. Stay left at the first two forks and stay right. The road gets really rough at the last kilometre. There is a place to park at a fork in the road and walk up. You will get to a clearing where you will see a metal scrap yard now used at a shooting range. If you take the rod heading up the mountain you will find the main buildings. If you take a right and go across the creek you will find a trail. Follow this trail until you get to a fork. Take a right at the fork and head downhill. On this path you will find the main portal. Enter the portal and walk to the end of the first tunnel and you will see natural light. Climb the rocks and head out to the waterfall. To see the waterfall from another portal, take a right and follow the tunnel past some old rail tracks and out to the waterfall. Be sure to wear hiking shoes and a headlamp.

▲ Top: The mine portal. Middle: Cindy Hepting at the waterfall. Bottom: The rolling mill building.