



## French's Farm

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray  
 154 Russell Senate Office Building  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
 511 Hart Senate Office Building  
 United States Senate  
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Marie Gluesenkamp Perez  
 1431 Longworth House Office Building  
 U.S. House of Representatives  
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Murray and Cantwell and Representative Marie Gluesenkamp Perez:

The undersigned 42 conservation, recreation, and wildlife organizations as well as local businesses, elected officials, and other concerned interests are writing to urge you to support the Green River Valley Alliance in their efforts to secure a mineral withdrawal in the Green River Valley located in the shadow of Mount St. Helens to protect this important landscape from the threat of mining.

For over 15 years, Ascot Resources Ltd., a Canadian mining company, has been seeking permits to conduct exploratory drilling for copper, gold, and molybdenum in the Green River Valley bordering the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Time and time again, the proposal has been met with local opposition related to concerns about environmental, cultural, and economic impacts to southwest Washington.

The Green River Valley is beloved by many for its scenic views, its remote and peaceful location, and for its boundless outdoor recreation opportunities. People visit from around the region and the world to enjoy world-class hiking, mountain biking, backcountry horseback riding, fishing, hunting, botanizing, foraging, and more - helping to fuel the local economy in the process. The Green River Trail, Goat Mountain Trail, & Green River Horse Camp, all frequently used by outdoor enthusiasts, would likely be destroyed or rendered inaccessible if a mine were to be constructed here.

The Green River is eligible to be a Wild & Scenic River candidate, in part due to the fact that it is a designated gene bank river for wild steelhead, offering critical spawning and rearing habitat for this iconic species. The river also provides fresh drinking water to tens of thousands living in downstream communities around Kelso and Castle Rock as it flows into the North Fork Toutle River and then the Cowlitz River.

The proximity of the Green River Valley and Mount St. Helens creates other concerns for public health as well. The risk of nearby volcanic activity increases the likelihood of potential mining-related accidents, such as a tailings pond breach, which would contaminate the Green River with toxic mining wastewater, devastate plants and wildlife in the area, and pollute this source of fresh drinking water for downstream communities.

Economically, there could also be negative impacts on tourism and outdoor recreation. It is estimated that roughly 61% of all jobs in the communities here along US Highway 12 rely on the outdoor recreation industry and a number of related industries such as hospitality, retail, and food services. While the Green River Valley is fairly remote, the construction of a massive open-pit mine just outside of the National Volcanic Monument would likely decrease the number of visitors to that part of the forest. At the same time, the mining industry is increasingly becoming more automated meaning that any local jobs created would likely be few and far between and these short-term gains would likely come at the cost of long term environmental and economic consequences.

This landscape is also culturally and spiritually significant to the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. Mount St. Helens (Lawetlat'la) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property of both Tribes due to its significance in traditional beliefs and cultural identity. Both the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and the Yakama Nation strongly oppose proposed mining efforts in this area because of impacts on their tribal treaty rights and lifeways.

**We are asking you to support the Green River Valley Alliance in their efforts to secure a legislative mineral withdrawal for the Green River Valley.** This designation would end the threat of mining by prohibiting mineral extraction within the boundaries of the roughly 46,000 acre withdrawal area. This designation would not impose any additional restrictions on other activities allowed in the area such as recreation, trail maintenance, or timber harvesting.

The construction of an open-pit mine neighboring Mount St. Helens would be disastrous for the environment, put public health at risk, and would devastate outdoor recreation opportunities. With your support on Capitol Hill, we will secure a mineral withdrawal, put a stop to this mine, and permanently protect this beautiful and vitally important part of Washington. You would be supporting our vision of the future where the Green River Valley by Mount St. Helens is able to continue to inspire and be enjoyed for future generations. Together, we will ensure that the Green River Valley remains #NoPlaceForAMine!

We have a great opportunity to work together in support of the people, wildlife, and natural beauty of our region. **We urge you to champion a legislative mineral withdrawal through Congress that provides permanent protections for the landscape and benefits wildlife, recreation, Indigenous communities, water, and the local economies and communities of people and businesses across southwest Washington and the entire Pacific Northwest.**

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

Molly Whitney  
Executive Director  
Cascade Forest Conservancy

Andy Enser  
Owner  
Mountain Goat Tattoo LLC (Longview, WA)

Tom Uniack  
Executive Director  
Washington Wild

Chuck Cheshire  
President  
Vancouver Wildlife League

Jamie Erdman  
Owner  
Thatcher's Coffee (Vancouver, WA)

Valerie Alexander  
Owner  
Coyote Ridge Ranch (La Center, WA)

James Owen  
Owner  
Raintree Nursery & Packwood Station  
(Packwood, WA)

Betsy Robblee  
Conservation & Advocacy Director  
The Mountaineers

Penny Mabie  
Owner  
Definitely Mabie Consulting LLC

Laurie Kerr  
Leader, Cascade Volcanoes Chapter  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Megan Birzell  
Washington State Director  
The Wilderness Society

Dave Wertz  
Science and Conservation Director  
Conservation Northwest

Andrea Imler  
Advocacy Director  
Washington Trails Association

Susan Saul  
Conservation Chair  
Vancouver Audubon Society

Jennie Mastaler  
Co-owner  
Octopi Ink (Washougal, WA)

Joseph Bogaard  
Executive Director  
Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition

Luisa De Paiva  
President  
Monet Vineyards (Brush Prairie, WA)

Kim McDonald  
Founder  
Fish Not Gold

Peter Bahls  
Executive Director  
Northwest Watershed Institute

Susan Jane M. Brown  
Wildlands Program Director & Staff Attorney  
Western Environmental Law Center

Don Freeman  
Conservation Chair  
South Sound fly Fishers (Olympia, WA)

J. Michelle Swope  
Washington Regional Coordinator  
Native Fish Society

Sarah Dyrdahl  
Northwest Regional Director  
American Rivers

Roberta Sue Church  
Attorney  
Attorney at Law (Chehalis, WA)

Denis Tuzinovic  
Patagonia Seattle Enviro Programs  
Manager  
Patagonia Seattle

Keyna Bugner / Rebecca Chaney  
Board President / Conservation Chair  
Washington Native Plant Society

Dave Swank  
Conservation Director  
Clark-Skamania Flyfishers (Vancouver, WA)

Bryan Wray  
President  
Compass Coffee Roasting (Vancouver, WA)

Pat Hesselgesser  
Chair  
Washington Council of Trout Unlimited

Yvonne Kraus  
Executive Director  
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance

Amanda Parrish  
Executive Director  
The Lands Council

Theresa and Richard Albert  
Owners  
Carson Ridge Luxury Cabins (Carson, WA)

Brian Strumke  
Owner  
Stillwater Artisanal (Grand Mound, WA)

Kevin and Meghann Quinn  
Co-Owners  
Bale Breaker Brewing Company (Yakima, WA)

Larry Brandt  
Conservation Chair  
Willapa Hills Audubon Society (Grays River, WA)

Michael Morrison  
Board Chair  
Pacific Rivers

Pete Clagett  
Owner  
Camas Bike & Sport (Camas, WA)

Danny Percich  
Owner/Farmer  
Full Plate Farm (Ridgefield, WA)

Ben Everett  
Race Director  
Evergreen Gravel Racing (Olympia, WA)

Dean Finnerty  
Manager  
Wild Steelheaders United

Claire West & Matt Kotwasinski  
Owners  
French's Farm (Lyle, WA)

Matt Little  
Conservation Policy Chair  
Washington Backcountry Hunters & Anglers