

A Detailed History of the Faro Mine Complex

Prospector Al Kulan discovered and staked the Vangorda lead-zinc deposit in 1953. The property was optioned to Prospector Airways, and diamond drilling was carried out between 1953 and 1955. Kerr-Addison Mines Limited eventually acquired Prospector Airways, but interest in the property waned for a number of years because of depressed metal prices, declining metal markets and the remoteness of the area.

In 1962, Kerr-Addison resumed exploration in the Vangorda plateau area, and the Swim lead-zinc deposit, 8 km southeast of Vangorda, was discovered in 1963. At the same time, Dynasty Explorations, under the direction of Dr. Aaro Aho, commenced a detailed exploration program on several claim groups in the Faro area in 1964 and discovered the Faro lead-zinc deposit in 1965. Cyprus Anvil, a joint venture between Cyprus Mines (60%) and Dynasty (40%), was formed in December, 1965 to develop the Faro deposit.

Anvil Mining Corporation (later Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation) commenced open-pit mining operations on the Faro lead-zinc deposit in late 1969, at rates of up to 10 000 tonnes/day. The mine was officially opened on January 28, 1970 and stayed open until 1982.

In 1973, the Grum lead-zinc deposit was discovered by a joint venture between AEX Minerals and Kerr Addison while testing a gravity anomaly. Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation purchased the Grum property in 1979.

Concentrate production from the Faro deposit was halted in 1982 because of falling metal prices, low productivity, high operating costs and the added burden of the debt load brought about by expansion. Between June, 1983 and October, 1984, some open-pit waste stripping operations were carried out, but production ceased completely by the end of 1984.

The Anvil Range mineral assets of Cyprus Anvil, including the Grum and Grizzly deposits, were acquired in November, 1985 by a predecessor partnership of Curragh Inc. Curragh resumed operations at the Faro mine in the spring of 1986 and made its first shipment of concentrates in June, 1986. In 1989, development of the Vangorda Plateau was begun with stripping of the Grum and Vangorda deposits. Ore removal commenced at the Vangorda pit and supplemented the mill feed. Ore removal from the Grum pit continued, but was not significant.

Curragh carried out an extensive program of surface drilling on the Grum deposit to delineate reserves and obtain samples for metallurgical testing in preparation for production. Preparation of the Grum deposit for mining commenced in 1989.

In early 1990, an underground operation was initiated just southwest of the Faro pit from a portal in the pit. This operation closed in October, 1992 after mining 1.8 million tonnes of ore.

In 1991, Curragh began stripping the Grum deposit. As of October, 1991, the total waste requiring stripping from Grum was 193.2 million tonnes for a stripping ratio of 6.70:1. The ore reserves in the Faro pit were exhausted in August of 1992 and remnant ore was salvaged by early 1993.

In late 1992, sufficient stripping in the Grum open-pit had been done to expose the top of the Grum deposit and to extract some 15 000 tonnes of mineralization for testing in the Faro concentrator. After removing 21.4 million tonnes, Grum stripping was suspended in December, 1992.

All mining operations ceased in April, 1993 due to low metal prices. Curragh was forced into receivership by its creditors.

Anvil Range Mining formed in 1994 to acquire the Faro properties from the receiver for a purchase price of \$27 million. A nine-month pre-stripping and mill refurbishment program was carried out. Anvil Range Mining began concentrate production from the Grum open pit in August, 1995 and resumed production from the Vangorda open pit in September, 1995. The first concentrates were shipped from Skagway to Asia and Europe in September, 1995. The mining operation achieved commercial production on November 1, 1995.

By the end of 1996, the Vangorda pit was mined out, and mining operations were suspended because of low metal prices and other factors, including lower head grades, mechanical problems in the mill and lower metal recoveries which contributed to less than planned production. The mill continued to process low-grade stockpiles at 50% capacity until March 31, 1997.

In February, 1997, Anvil Range Mining Corp. announced the closing of a private placement of 4.1 million common shares for a total of \$9.4 million with Cominco. ARM also secured a \$15 million loan at 8.5% interest from its principal shareholder, Cominco, in July, 1997. The loan was advanced to ARM in two tranches.

Stripping of the Grum pit started in August, 1997. The mine reopened at full production in November, 1997 and operated until January 16, 1998, when Anvil Range announced that it planned to file for court protection from creditors. On April 21, 1998, an interim receiver was appointed to handle the company's assets and maintain the mine site.

HISTORICAL PRODUCTION

When operating in 1989, the Faro operations supplied 3% of the western world's zinc and 5% of its lead concentrates, making Curragh Resources, the operator at that time, the sixth largest zinc producer in the world.

Anvil Range Mining Corporation

Production for the 14 months ending on December 31, 1996 was 345 700 tonnes Zn concentrate and 186 000 tonnes Pb concentrate. From September, 1995 to December 31, 1996, ARM loaded 25 ships for a total of 383 000 dry metric tonnes Zn concentrates and 181 000 dry metric tonnes Pb concentrates. The concentrate tonnage equates to 566.9 million lb. (257.7 million kg) of payable metal. To produce this amount of concentrate, 28.8 million tonnes of waste and 4.5 million tonnes of ore were moved. The mill processed 4.8 million tonnes of ore, at an average head-grade of 5.14% for zinc and 3.04% for lead. Recoveries in the mill averaged 71.3% for zinc and 76.7 % for lead.

Concentrates were dried to approximately 7% moisture before being loaded into specially designed shipping containers for trucking to the port of Skagway, Alaska. The lead and zinc concentrates were loaded separately into pots which had a capacity of 11-12 tonnes of concentrate. Four pots could be carried on a tractor-trailer unit. Concentrates were transferred to a storage building prior to loading onto vessels for shipment to smelters in Europe and Japan.

Power for the Grum project, 22MW, was provided from the Whitehorse-Aishihik-Faro grid.

At its peak production, the Anvil Range mine site produced approximately 15% of the world's zinc and lead output and accounted for 20% of the Yukon's economy.