



PRESS CUTTING

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Rambler Metals Presses On Towards Feasibility

By Alastair Ford

The scoping study at [Rambler](#)'s Ming mine is now complete. On to the pre-feasibility stage, as a more detailed mining plan for the eventual 4,000 tonnes per day underground operation that's envisaged is now being devised by SRK. Thus far, the plan is to produce a copper concentrate with gold and silver credits, over a life of mine of 12 years. Some of the more potent zones have produced recoveries of over 98 per cent, although metallurgical work as conducted by SGS Lakefield did throw up some issues with other areas of the mine, and [Rambler](#) will now look at optimizing the recovery circuits in response to those findings. Full details won't go into the public domain, however, as the scoping study was conducted on the basis of an historic resource not compliant with 43-101 standards, and can thus legally only be regarded as "conceptual" in nature.

Still, there's a resource estimate in the market now, and there'll be another one out later this year. Overall the [Rambler](#) property is currently known to contain nearly 230,000 tonnes of contained copper, nearly 150,000 ounces of gold, over 400,000 ounces of silver, and just under 7,500 tonnes of zinc. That's enough to be getting on with, and even if the lawyers have laid down that the scoping study is only "conceptual" at this stage, they won't have any such scruples by the time the pre-feasibility study comes in. On current plans, the Ming mine should be re-commissioned by the second quarter of 2010.

If that timetable is kept to, it will represent some pretty fast work from George Ogilvie and his team. They've already pumped out 230 million gallons of water from this old property, and have emptied it down to 2,300 vertical feet. The bottom is at 2,700 vertical feet, so there's not long to go now. In any case it's not necessary to have the mine completely drained to commence work. At the higher levels the company is already putting services like water and electrical power back on stream. And come July, says George Ogilvie, "we'll actually start breaking some ground". So, another minor milestone reached.

The shares have also hit a milestone recently: a twelve month low of just under 50p. The announcement of the favourable results of the scoping study put a bit of life back into them: they currently trade at 54.5p, but there's no getting away from the fact that [Rambler](#) is a little bit out of favour. Why this is remains somewhat mysterious. George Ogilvie suspects that there are lingering concerns about the company's ability to raise enough money to get mining, when the bankable feasibility eventually gets delivered. But that can only be part of the problem because it's well known that Harry Dobson is a key backer of [Rambler](#), and Harry certainly knows how

to lay his hands on a bob or two when he puts his mind to it. The credit crunch has certainly depressed appetites, but what [Rambler](#)'s really suffering from is the development blues. It never got a huge re-rating when it took over the [Rambler](#) property, because as an old mine, the discovery was already there. No big new numbers to gee up the markets, though obviously news that a 43-101 resource really is in place is helpful. So the customary dip between discovery and production is, in a way, even more pronounced.

Nonetheless, George Ogilvie reckons that [Rambler](#) remains very well positioned. "I'm very bullish about copper", he says. "These highs we've seen in copper are going to continue for about two to three years. Long term there's likely to be less demand, but also less supply." That's because a lot of the new orebodies coming on stream aren't as high grade as existing mines, and because they're also deeper and harder to access. Mining at the [Rambler](#) property will also be deep, but Mr Ogilvie highlights that "we do have areas where we have extremely high grades". The next resource upgrade should tell us a lot more.