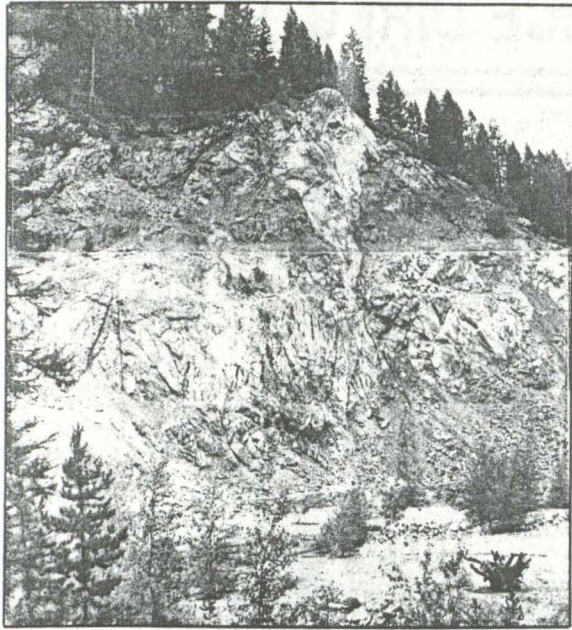


# Forest, Private Partnerships To Work At Old Lime Quarry; Sumpter Side of Elkhorns



Marble Open Pit Mine

## History Of Project

### Marble Creek Quarry

Location: On the south side of Marble Creek on the east side of Elkhorn Ridge, 12 mi. west of Wing siding, Baker Valley. This site is partially on private land and partially on the National Forest.

Owner: Blue Mountain Lime Company. The deposit consists of two blocks of Crystalline limestone about 400 ft. apart and enclosed in argillite and chert of the Elkhorn Ridge Argillite.

The limestone in this original quarry is cut by a large mafic dike that made obtaining a clean product somewhat difficult. For that reason, in 1963, this quarry was deactivated, and the Baboon Creek quarry was opened to provide limestone for the plant at Wing, via the steep Marble Creek forest road.

### BABOON CREEK QUARRY

Location: The Baboon Creek deposit is about three miles by steep mountain road west of the Marble Creek Quarry. Most of the product was trucked to the plant at Wing over a longer route of about 38 miles down the Sumpter side, thence into Baker Valley.

Owner: Blue Mountain Lime Company

The outcrop area is hook shaped, more than 4,000 ft. long and up to 1,200 ft. wide. It extends from Baboon Creek westward to Lake Creek. The quarry lies between 6,000 and 6,500 ft. elevation in the east end of the exposure adjacent to Baboon Creek. The quarry is one of two

(see Marble Creek Quarry) that were developed and operated by Chemical Lime Company during 1958-1971. The Baboon Creek quarry was activated in 1963 and operated until 1971, when the plant and quarries closed. The associated rocks are mainly argillite and chert.

### LIME QUARRY RESTORATION PROJECT

Baker Ranger District is currently working in a partnership with Blue Mountain Lime Company, Inc. the City of Baker, Baker County, Sumpter Valley Railroad and Sumpter Dredge State Park. The partnership began when a new Plan of Operation for mining at the Marble and Baboon Creek quarries was approved by Chuck Ernst, Baker District Ranger.

The two quarries had been mined historically, with the last mining operation shutting down several years before the Forest Service had any surface mining regulations in effect. At the time, there were no requirements for reclamation. Hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of lime rock had been pushed over the quarry benches and this lime had heavily impacted Marble Creek and Baboon Creek.

Cliff Looney, president of Blue Mountain Lime Company, Inc., Jan Alexander, Baker Ranger District Minerals Technician, and other District Resource Specialists worked together on a restoration plan which is included in the approved Plan of Operation.

The restoration plan was designed to improve water quality and riparian health in Marble and Baboon Creeks. The restoration work will stabilize stockpiles that are eroding, remove lime from riparian areas, clean up quarry sites, improve roads and remove hazards to public safety.

### Chemical Grade Lime

This quarry operation produced and contains chemical grade lime as compared with cement lime, one reason for so much reject lime rock operations.

Some of the restoration activities in the plan were the responsibility of Blue Mountain Lime, other activities were to be carried out under a contract administered by the Forest Service. Lone Pine Construction Company, of Baker City, has the Forest Service contract.

### City-County Benefit

Word was out about the project, and Kim Lethlean, a Baker City employee, saw an opportunity for the City to obtain lime to bed the municipal pipeline which supplies water to Baker. The City offered to remove lime from the Marble Creek quarry using their backhoe and dump truck.

Lyle Chadwick, assistant County Roadmaster, offered to remove a large quantity of lime rock to use on County roads. The County had a grader, cat, loader, backhoe and trucks. In addition to removing lime, Lyle offered to improve the Marble Creek road and also help bench the pit for stabilization. Cliff Looney agreed to donate the lime rock to the City and County.

Jim Lethlean, Kim's brother, and a volunteer with both the Sumpter Valley Railroad and Dredge State Park, interested in the historic crane and shovel at the Baboon quarry. Jim offered to arrange to haul these for display at the two parks. Blue Mountain Lime was receptive to removal of this equipment since the company could no longer use it in mining.

### Railroad Benefits

The Sumpter Valley Railroad and Sumpter Dredge State Park were also interested in limestone for the parking lots and paths at the two parks. The Railroad offered their loader to help with loading the lime. Dale Hoopes, president of Lone Pine Construction, volunteered to haul the equipment, without cost, for the Railroad and State Parks.

At the Marble Creek quarry, while Lone Pine's equipment worked at stabilization and the

County and the City were hauling lime rock, more people became involved.

The huge bins at the quarry had become unsafe due to dry rot in the timbers. Dale Hoopes took the bins down, Mike Upmyer and his family began cutting up the bins and removing them for scrap and Vern Golar began cleaning up the site and reclaiming the timbers.

In addition, Ken Helgerson, a County employee, took on the job of reclaiming the heavily impacted tributary to Marble Creek. Lone Pine Construction had already removed over 20 feet of lime from the streambed. Now Ken constructed a channel, placed instream rock and wood structures and recontoured the banks.

### Resource Available Again

The Lone Pine had stabilized the Marble Creek quarry and completed stockpiling of lime rock from the creek and the hillsides, the equipment was moved to the Baboon quarry. The City and County were left to complete pit stabilization when they were finished hauling rock for the season. At Baboon, surface run-off was diverted from both

the lower and upper limestone piles, roads were improved, limestone was removed from areas where it was washing into Baboon Creek each year, the steep limestone piles were benched, and where possible, lime rock was excavated and hauled off.

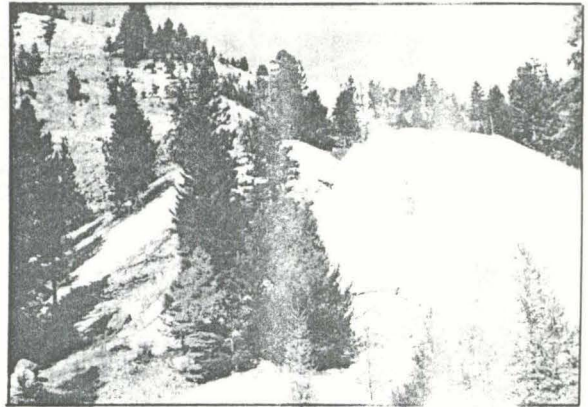
Dale and his employees, Leonard Kenworthy, Mike Valentine and John Scott put in many long days on the project. Their enthusiasm for seeing the project through to completion and their expertise with heavy equipment meant a lot more work was accomplished for the money spent.

### Mine Can Be Re-Opened

"The Blue Mountain Lime Restoration project could never have happened without the participation of so many concerned people."

Marble and Baboon Creeks will now begin to mend, portions of the quarries will be revegetated, the remaining lime piles will be stable, the two quarries will be safe and the quarries will be ready for future mining operations.

"But when mining begins again, work will be conducted without degrading the environment and reclamation will be an important part of the mining plan," said Angelica Johnson, public affairs assistant for the Baker Ranger District.



Baboon Open Pit Mine

Booth Photo. Courtesy: Forest Service