

PROTECTING & RESTORING CONNECTIVITY

As more and more people visit and enjoy the Castle Wilderness, it is essential that fish and wildlife travel corridors be identified, protected from excessive human disturbance, and restored where necessary. Wildlife travel in the West Castle Valley, for example, is threatened by residential expansion at Castle Mountain Resort. Headwater populations of native cutthroat and bull trout are increasingly isolated from one another because the original connecting populations in the main Castle River and some other streams have been displaced by introduced rainbow, brook, and brown trout.



Wayne Lynch (source photo)



Map shows the extent of human encroachment on the Castle Wilderness—logging pre-1960 (pink) and later (red), natural gas wells (black dots), secondary (red) and other roads (black) and recreational development (purple).

Dave Sheppard

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Wilderness restoration? The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition invites you to join with us in discussing this important issue. Can we restore depleted species and habitats? Can we heal the watersheds by removing roads and restoring other disturbed places? What should happen to the public lands occupied by Shell Canada when the Waterton Gas Field is finally depleted? There is no better time to discuss these matters and establish a vision and commitment for the future of the Castle Wilderness.



For more information on restoration possibilities in the Castle Wilderness see the recent CCWC report *Bringing It Back: A Restoration Framework for the Castle Wilderness*, available on our website or from our office.

For discussion and further information, or to help with Castle restoration, contact:
Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition
Box 2621, Pincher Creek, Alberta T0K 1W0
403 627 5059 e-mail: office@ccwc.ab.ca web: www.ccwc.ab.ca

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Gordon Petersen (also clearcut cover inset)

Murray Anderson (cover & truck inset)

RESTORING THE CASTLE WILDERNESS

Good stewardship is not enough.

How can the wilderness survive with more cows, more logging, more skier-days, more off-road vehicles, more gas wells? Everyone seems to want more. To pass on a whole Castle Wilderness to future generations, we must protect the places that are left, restore fish and wildlife habitat, heal the wounds, and limit our short-term self-interests for the long-term good.



We must say what is really needed to protect and restore this earth we love We must look forward to the centuries ahead and imagine that the Earth can heal.

—Conservation Biologist Reed Noss

PROTECTING WHAT REMAINS

If we are to pass on the legacy of a wild Castle Wilderness, it is essential that we not only restore the parts that have been diminished, but protect those portions that have escaped human disruption. We need to identify the pristine streams and blocks of wilderness that remain, and set them apart from development. And we need to supplement and connect these pieces with restored, roadless wilderness habitat.

Wilderness is habitat, the very best habitat there is, for people and wildlife. As humans, we need wilderness as an escape and as an adventure, as tranquility and excitement. Wilderness means freedom for both bears and people. If we had designated wilderness close at hand in southwestern Alberta, it would no longer be so necessary for Albertans to seek wilderness in other jurisdictions, such as Montana and Colorado, where the value of wilderness is officially recognized.

RECLAIMING ROADS IS THE KEY

When there are too many roads, elk, grizzly bears, and other wildlife are prevented from fully using their habitat. In addition, abandoned forest roads are wounds that never heal—ongoing sources of floodwater, erosion, and sediment that reduce water quality and damage fish habitat. Reclaiming as many roads as possible will improve habitat for fish and wildlife, and increase their abundance.

RESTORING SPECIES DIVERSITY

Some Castle Wilderness species, such as the river otter, fisher, bison, swift fox, and peregrine falcon, have disappeared over time. Some others—mountain goats, grizzly bears, wolverines, lynx, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, to name a few—are depleted from their former numbers. Vision, commitment, and a comprehensive restoration plan can restore many or all of these missing or depleted species.

