

# NEWS RELEASE

## Environmental Group Retains Controversial Activist to Lead Renewed Campaign to Protect the Threatened Castle Wilderness

**Calgary, November 17, 1999:** The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC) publicly announced today that it has retained the respected but often controversial environmental activist, Mike Sawyer, to lead its campaign to achieve legislative protection for the 740,000 hectares (1,850,000 acres) internationally significant wildland area known as the Castle Wilderness Area (Castle).

The Castle, located immediately north of the Waterton Lakes National Park in southwestern Alberta is unquestionably one of the most environmentally significant areas in the Rocky Mountains of Canada or the United States. Because of its location immediately north of Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park in Montana, the Castle also plays a critically important role in protecting transboundary wildlife species and the ecological integrity of both parks. The Castle has also been identified as being an especially important area within the Yellowstone to Yukon bioregion.

But the Castle is threatened. Prior to 1921 the area was part of Waterton Lakes National Park but was removed from the park at the request of the newly-formed Government of Alberta. Since then the area has been subject to wide-spread natural gas exploration and development, clear-cut logging and more recently, intensive recreational developments and all-season motorized vehicle use. The scars of past exploitation and current mismanagement by the Government of Alberta have seriously impaired the integrity of the Castle and are now directly threatening Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks.

Efforts have been ongoing for more than 20 years to have the area protected. In 1993, after an expensive and exhaustive public hearing into a proposed resort development, the Alberta Natural Resources Conservation Board recommended that much of the Castle be protected as a Wildland Recreation Area regardless of whether the proposed development proceeded or not. Even this was not enough to gain protection for the Castle. Today, the Castle remains unprotected while the ski area development proceeds.

"After years of working within the system, the CCWC is no longer prepared to tolerate the continued destruction of the Castle, an international treasure" said James Tweedie, President of the CCWC. "Its time that the Castle was protected. If it is not protected soon, the Castle may be lost forever" he said. "Mike Sawyer has been retained to lead the renewed campaign to protect the Castle in part because of his excellent qualifications and knowledge of the area, but mostly because the CCWC believes that his sometimes aggressive, always no-nonsense style will help us achieve protected status for the Castle" said Tweedie.

"I'm very pleased and honored to be working with the CCWC and other conservation organizations throughout Canada and United States on this campaign to protect the very important Castle wilderness", said Mike Sawyer. "The CCWC Board of Directors has directed that my immediate task is to develop a detailed campaign strategy for their approval", said Sawyer. "The strategy will certainly include several innovative approaches to encourage legislated protection for the Castle", he added. "I am optimistic that this is a campaign that we will win".

### **For more information contact:**

Mike Sawyer (403) 270-3455 (Calgary)

James Tweedie (403) 628-2422 (Pincher Creek)

[<Back to Press Releases](#)

[Map](#) | [About the Castle Wilderness](#) | [About the CCWC](#) | [Campaign Update](#) |

[Upcoming Events](#) | [Join Us](#) | [Links](#) | [Action Alert](#) | [Home](#) | [Press Releases](#) | [Reports and Documents](#) |  
[Newsletters](#)