

NEWS RELEASE

SHELL CANADA PROPOSES TO CLOSES MAJOR PUBLIC CAMPGROUND BECAUSE OF SOUR GAS RELATED PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS

December 20, 2000, Calgary, Alberta: The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC), a Pincher Creek-based environmental organization that is seeking protection for the 1,040 km² Castle Wilderness, has learned that Shell Canada Limited (Shell) is proposing to close the Castle Falls Recreation Area to public use for the entire 2001 summer season so they can drill a controversial level 4 critical sour gas well only 350 meters from the popular and heavily-used campground.

Shell has applied to the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB) for a licence to drill the sour gas well. In that application, Shell indicated that they expect the well to contain over 32 percent hydrogen sulphide (or sour gas). Hydrogen sulphide is a deadly toxin that can seriously injure or kill people in concentrations as low as 300 parts per million. On both environmental and public safety grounds, the CCWC has filed an objection to Shell's proposed well, and has requested that the AEUB schedule a public hearing to allow the public an opportunity to be heard. The proposed campground closure will be one of the issues debated at that hearing.

The CCWC position is that the closure of a major public campground, located on public land, specifically to accommodate Shell's private business interests is unacceptable. In fact, existing AEUB guidelines specify that a sour gas well like the one Shell is proposing must be "set back" from any public facility by at least 1500 meters. The AEUB has made it clear that the purpose underlying the 1.5 km setback requirement is so that the public can be safely evacuated in the event of an emergency. With Shell's well located only 350 meters from the popular campground, there would be no time in the event of an emergency to warn or evacuate members of the public who use the campground and the surrounding public lands.

Shell's solution to this evacuation problem is to simply "rent the entire campground during drilling to ensure no parties are present..." Not only is this approach contrary to the logic of the AEUB's setback requirement which contemplates that the proposed energy development must be moved to accommodate the continued use of "public facilities" rather than moving the "public facilities" to accommodate energy development, it also ignores that the management priority for the area around the campground, as stated in the Government of Alberta's *Castle River Integrated Resource Plan*, is on providing recreational opportunities and protecting wildlife habitat, not on oil and natural gas developments. Moreover, as a general point, the CCWC doesn't believe that private interests should be allowed to take precedence over the public interest on public lands.

"In light of these concerns, the CCWC believes that the AEUB should refuse to licence Shell's sour gas well." said Mike Sawyer, Campaign Coordinator for the CCWC. "If the AEUB allows Shell to drill its proposed well in such close proximity to the Castle Falls Campground, public safety would be seriously compromised" added Sawyer.

As a more practical matter, Shell cannot simply arrange its proposed shut-down with the Campground's private operator, as Shell suggests because the campground is located within the Castle Falls Recreation Area which is governed by the provincial Parks Act. By law, any restrictions on public use of that Area can only be authorized by the Minister of Environmental Protection. When CCWC contacted the Minister's representatives last week, they were unaware of Shell's proposal.

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NEWS RELEASE

Commission for environmental cooperation identifies castle wilderness as biologically significant and threatened

December 18, 2000, Calgary, Alberta: The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (NACEC), an international organization established pursuant to the North American Free Trade Agreement and based in Montreal, has released a report that identifies 14 regions that are the most biologically significant and most threatened in North America. The foothills and mountains of southwestern Alberta, including the proposed Castle Wilderness (the Castle), are included in the areas identified by the NACEC. The report was the result of the collaborative efforts of 21 of North America's leading ecologists who drew on their experience and knowledge to select and map out the regions identified as both most biologically significant and most threatened.

The Castle is located immediately adjacent to Waterton Lakes and Glacier National Parks and the US/Canada boundary and is a critically important part of the broader Yellowstone to Yukon region. The Castle has the greatest species diversity of any location in Alberta and has been recognized for its importance in maintaining the ecological integrity of the national parks and protecting threatened or endangered transboundary species like grizzly bears or wolves. However, the Castle, like much of Alberta's eastern slopes region, is under serious threat from burgeoning oil and natural gas developments, extensive forest harvesting and recreational developments, particularly the recreational use of off road vehicles.

The Castle once was part of Waterton Lakes National Park but was withdrawn from the park in 1921 and transferred to Province of Alberta. The region remained largely a wildlife sanctuary until the 1950s and has been identified by the Alberta Government as a potential candidate site for protection since the early 1980s. In a 1993 decision, Alberta's quasi-judicial Natural Resources Conservation Board concluded that the area was biologically significant, was threatened, and should be protected. The Alberta Government, pandering to the resource extractive industries that were exploiting the Castle, rejected that decision. Earlier this year, the federal Panel for Ecological Integrity also recognized that area was important and that the over-exploitation of the Castle was threatening Waterton Lakes National Park.

Ironically, the recognition of the Castle's importance by the NACEC comes at a time when the Alberta Government is in the final stages of implementing its protected area strategy, the so-called "Special Places 2000" initiative. Even though the Castle was first proposed for protection over 30 years ago, the region remains essentially unprotected. Although designated as a "Special Place" by the Alberta Government, that designation ensures the continuation of oil and gas development, forest harvesting, grazing, and recreational developments; all of the very activities that currently threaten the Castle are allowed. It's business as usual in the Castle.

"Clearly the Castle is biologically very important, not just within Alberta, but within the broader North American context", said Mike Sawyer, campaign coordinator for the Pincher Creek based Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC). "After over 100 years of history and in the face of compelling evidence indicating the great biological importance of this area, the Alberta Government has so-far failed to protect the area. This failure makes a mockery of the Government's Special Places program" added Sawyer.

Gordon Petersen, Past President of the CCWC, suggested that "Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta, should give the citizens of Alberta and, indeed, all the citizens of North America, a Christmas gift. Real protection for the

Castle."

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NEWS RELEASE

CASTLE-FLATHEAD GRIZZLY BEAR STUDY ANNOUNCED

December 15, 2000, Pincher Creek, Alberta: The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition announced today the first phase of what is expected to be a two-year study of grizzly bears and their habitat in southwestern Alberta and nearby southeastern British Columbia.

The proposed two-year study, which began in September, is being conducted for the Coalition by independent wildlife scientist Dr. Brian L. Horejsi of Calgary. Dr. Horejsi has 30 years of experience in wildlife research and environmental impact assessment, much of it on Alberta's eastern slopes and in British Columbia. He has published more than 40 scientific reports and papers on grizzly bears as well as elk, moose, caribou, and wild sheep. The most recent of these is "The Purcell Mountains Grizzly Bear: Cumulative Effects and the Proposed Jumbo Glacier Development."

The valleys of the Castle and Flathead North Fork lie immediately north and west of Glacier and Waterton Lakes National Parks. They are threatened by increasing industrial and recreational development. The goal of the Castle-Flathead study is to prepare a recovery plan for the grizzly bear population and the ecosystem it relies on. Dr. Horejsi will look at the extent of intact habitat, habitat degradation and fragmentation, and bear mortality, amongst other issues. Current Alberta-B.C. management practices and habitat standards for grizzly bears will be examined in light of those in place on nearby National Forests in the U.S. His report is expected to recommend conservation and habitat standards for southwest Alberta and southeast B.C., where an absence of standards has affected bears.

Included will be road density standards, standards for habitat security, and standards for roadless areas, all necessary for recovering or maintaining a viable grizzly bear population.

The Castle-Flathead constitutes a critical corridor for grizzly bears, wolves, and other wildlife that links the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park with Canadian national parks to the north (Banff, Jasper, Kootenay, Yoho). Maintaining or recovering this habitat connection is essential to the long-term survival of the internationally significant "Crown of the Continent" grizzly bear population.

Over the past 40 years, the Castle-Flathead has seen a huge increase in industrial use from logging, oil and gas exploration and extraction, and resort development, and ever-escalating recreational use, particularly from high-impact motorized activity. These activities have degraded habitat throughout the Castle-Flathead and have been particularly severe in the Castle region of southwest Alberta.

Human and industrial use of the Castle-Flathead has proceeded with little regard for the area's precious and endangered ecological values. Dr. Horejsi's study will ask, and we trust answer, the question "what do grizzly bears need to survive and thrive?" The standards recommended in phase two of the study, the recovery plan, will set the stage for future management and habitat restoration in the area. Start-up funding for the study has been provided by the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation of Calgary and the McLean Foundation of Toronto.

The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, based in Pincher Creek, Alberta, is a group of concerned citizens dedicated to the protection and restoration of a wild Castle in southwestern Alberta.

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NEWS RELEASE

FOREST MARKET CAMPAIGN COMES TO ALBERTA

AMERICAN COMPANIES ASKED TO STOP

BUYING LUMBER PRODUCED IN

SOUTHWESTERN ALBERTA

Calgary, October 26, 2000: The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC), an Alberta-based non-profit conservation organization that is seeking legislative protection for a 1040 km² (409 square mile) area of southwestern Alberta known as the Castle Wilderness (Castle), has written to 12 major United States-based lumber retailers and home builders asking that those companies stop purchasing wood products that are sourced from within either the Castle or the C5 Forest Management Area (C5 FMA), both located in southwestern Alberta.

The companies, including Home Depot, Lowe's, Menard, Inc., 84 Lumber, HomeBase, Lanoga, Wickes Lumber Company, Centex Homes, Ryland Group Inc., Kaufman and the Broad Home Corporation, have recently made public commitments to phase-out the purchase and use of wood products derived from endangered forests or forests of high conservation value. Those commitments were in response to years of efforts by British Columbia forest activists to use consumer market forces to influence forest harvesting practices on Canada's west coast. The CCWC request to the companies marks the first time the results of the west coast market campaign are being applied to forests outside of British Columbia.

"The CCWC is engaging in this market campaign because the evidence clearly indicates that while the forests of the Castle and the C5 FMA are of national and international conservation value, chronic mismanagement by the Alberta Government and over-harvesting by the forest industry are seriously threatening the integrity of these forests", said Mike Sawyer, Campaign Coordinator for the CCWC, adding that "our objective is to eliminate all commercial logging from the Castle".

The CCWC has specifically identified two Alberta-based logging companies, Atlas Lumber (Alberta) Ltd. of Crowsnest Pass, Alberta and Spray Lakes Sawmill (1980) Ltd. of Cochrane, Alberta that log in the Castle or the C5 FMA. The CCWC has met with both companies but neither would support the protection of the Castle nor expressed any willingness to significantly modify their current forest harvesting practices.

"The CCWC is asking Home Depot, Lowe's and the other United States-based lumber retailers and home builders who have made commitments to not use wood products from endangered or high conservation value forests to determine if they currently purchase dimensional lumber products from either Atlas Lumber or Spray Lakes Sawmills and if so, to stop purchasing wood products from these two companies", said Sawyer.

Sawyer indicated that CCWC intends to expand the market campaign to include Alberta-based or Canadian lumber retailers and home builders who sell products sourced from within the Castle or C5 FMA into the southern Alberta retail lumber market.

For more information contact:

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Or visit the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition website at www.ccwc.ab.ca

Sample letter attached

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NEWS RELEASE

Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition Adopts "Zero Tolerance" Policy

Calgary, August 10, 2000: The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition ("the CCWC"), a non-profit conservation organization based in Pincher Creek, Alberta, Canada, announced today that it has adopted a "Zero Tolerance" policy with respect to all new developments within the 1,000 km² proposed Castle Wilderness ("the Castle"). The Castle, located in southwestern Alberta, is unquestionably one of the most beautiful and environmentally significant areas in Alberta. Being adjacent to Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park in Montana, the Castle plays a critically important role in protecting endangered 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.

Despite nearly 30 years of citizen efforts to persuade the Government of Alberta to legislatively protect the Castle as a wilderness area, the Castle remains open for business. The natural gas rich Waterton gas field overlaps the Castle and as a result the area has been extensively developed by the oil and gas industry, particularly by Shell Canada Limited. Already over 140 wells have been drilled in the area and more are currently being proposed. The Castle's extensive old growth forests have also attracted the attention of the forest industry and large areas of the Castle have been subjected to wide-spread clear-cutting. Intensive recreational activity and developments are also seriously damaging the Castle.

Mike Sawyer, Campaign Coordinator for the CCWC, stated "The cumulative impacts of these past development activities has seriously compromised the ecological integrity of the Castle and, in turn, Waterton Lakes National Park. In the absence of any indication that the Alberta Government or industry are prepared to take the steps necessary to protect the Castle, the CCWC has no choice but to adopt a tough "Zero Tolerance" policy on any new threats to the region".

"CCWC's new policy will mean that the 350-member organization will vigorously oppose all new oil and gas, forestry, recreational and agricultural developments that are proposed within the Castle", said James Tweedie, President of the CCWC. "We are hopeful that this aggressive new policy will create an incentive for Government and industry to expeditiously move towards protecting the Castle Wilderness" added Tweedie.

The CCWC's position that the Castle is threatened is based on sound science and is supported by the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board ("AEUB") that, in a recent decision report, indicated that it has accepted that significant regional cumulative environmental impacts have occurred within the Castle and that the biological thresholds for some sensitive species (i.e. grizzly bear) may have been exceeded.

"The "Zero Tolerance" policy is in effect immediately", stated Mike Sawyer. "In fact, during the last week, the CCWC filed objections with the AEUB about three development applications that Shell Canada Limited currently has before the Board and has requested that public hearings be held before Shell's applications can be approved. Cumulative effects issues and public safety will be the focus of those hearings", said Sawyer.

Under its "Zero Tolerance" policy the CCWC will be initiating actions against the unsustainable forest harvesting activities of Atlas Lumber of the Crowsnest Pass, Alberta and Spray Lakes Sawmills of Cochrane Alberta. Any new on-hill housing developments at the Castle Mountain Resort, an existing ski hill development in the Castle, will also be challenged.

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NEWS RELEASE

Alberta's Subsidized Softwood Lumber Industry Threatens Environment and Canada-US Trade

Calgary, April 24, 2000: On Monday April 17, 2000, the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC), a non-profit conservation organization based in Pincher Creek, Alberta, Canada, filed a lengthy written submission with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) in Washington, D.C., regarding the Government of Alberta's softwood lumber practices and the future of the Canada/United States Softwood Lumber Agreement.

The CCWC submission to the USTR documents that the Government of Alberta's current softwood lumber practices are providing direct economic and indirect environmental subsidies to Alberta's softwood lumber industry. These subsidies, combined with poor environmental regulations in Alberta, have resulted in widespread environmental degradation of forested landscapes in that province. They have also allowed Alberta's softwood lumber industry to dramatically increase its production and exports of softwood lumber products into the United States softwood lumber markets over the past ten years. The CCWC submission reviewed various aspects of Alberta's softwood lumber practices and concluded that Alberta's public timber is not being sold at fair market value established through a competitive bidding system but that prices are administratively set by the Government at well below market value. The submission also documents that Alberta's annual revenues from the sale of public timber is chronically less than annual public expenditures to manage Alberta's forest for timber production. In a comparison of Alberta's administratively set timber price with what identical timber sold for under the competitive system used by the US Forest Service, the submission showed that Alberta softwood lumber producers paid only 12 to 26 percent of what US softwood lumber producers in Montana and Idaho paid for identical timber species. This discrepancy in timber pricing translates into an annual subsidy to Alberta's softwood lumber industry of approximately \$465 million USD.

The CCWC submission also documented a host of environmental problems related to Alberta's softwood lumber practices. For example, Alberta has no equivalent legislation to the United States *Endangered Species Act*, the *Forest Planning Act* or the *National Environmental Policy Act*. In the absence of equivalent environmental laws, Alberta's forests are being seriously impacted by the activities of Alberta's softwood lumber industry, while at the same time Alberta's softwood lumber industry escapes the economic costs associated with higher environmental standards like those in place in much of the United States. The CCWC submission asserts that these are costs that US softwood lumber producers would normally incur and therefore the low environmental standards in Alberta provide an additional, albeit indirect, economic subsidy to that province's softwood lumber industry.

The dual mandate of the CCWC is to (1) maintain and restore the ecological integrity of the proposed Castle Wilderness and (2) to have the Government of Alberta enact legislative protection for the Castle Wilderness. The 1000 km² (390 sq. miles) Castle Wilderness is located in southwestern Alberta adjacent to the Waterton Lakes-Glacier International Peace Park. It has been proposed for protection for over 27 years and during that time the extent and intensity of logging activity in the area has increased dramatically. To date, the government of Alberta has refused to protect the Castle primarily because its protection would result in the protection of valuable old-growth stands that are slated for harvest. The CCWC currently has over 400 individual members and 12 organizational members.

When asked why an Alberta-based conservation organization was entering the Softwood Lumber dispute, Mike Sawyer, Campaign Coordinator for the CCWC, said "It is our contention that having the United States and Canada find a permanent resolution to the Softwood Lumber Dispute will ultimately result in the Government of Alberta having to reform its softwood lumber practices. We believe that reform should result in the removal of the economic subsidies Alberta's softwood lumber industry has enjoyed and cause the creation of an effective legislative framework for ensuring that Alberta's forests are managed in an ecologically sustainable manner. It is with these goals in mind that the CCWC has made its submission to the USTR."

"Establishing a proper and adequate network of protected areas, which should include the proposed Castle Wilderness, would be a good first step towards that reform" added Sawyer.

Representatives of the CCWC are planning to travel to Washington, D.C. during the month of May to meet with United States legislators, as well as conservation and industry groups who may be interested in Alberta's softwood lumber practices.

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NOTE: The full text of CCWC submission to the United States Trade Representative can be found at www.ccwc.ab.ca/ccwcbref/ReportsandDocs.html/USTR_Submission.pdf

Background on the Canada-United States Softwood Lumber Dispute

The softwood lumber dispute has been ongoing since 1982 when the United States alleged that Canada's softwood lumber stumpage fees constituted an unfair trade subsidy. In 1985, the United States initiated another countervailing duty investigation of softwood lumber subsidies. Canada, concerned that they would lose the case, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the United States in late 1986. As part of the MOU, Canada agreed to self-impose a 15 percent export tax on softwood lumber exports to the United States from Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario on the understanding that if those provinces increased their stumpage fees, those increased fees could replace all or part of the 15 percent export tax.

By 1991, Canada gave notice that it intended to terminate the MOU in September 1991. In response the United States imposed a 15 percent import duty on Canadian softwood lumber. A subsequent investigation confirmed that Canada's stumpage policies constituted an unfair subsidy and the United States imposed a 6.51 percent import duty. In 1992, Canada appealed the import duty ruling to the Free Trade Agreement dispute settlement process. Canada won the appeal and in mid-1994 the United States was forced to return all duties collected (estimated to be \$C850 million). In late 1994, the United States threatened to amend its domestic trade legislation to address the softwood lumber issue and Canada agreed to enter into negotiations that resulted in the signing of the current Softwood Lumber Agreement (the Agreement). Under the Agreement, Canada agreed to impose an export quota that saw the first 14,700 million board feet exported at no fee, a quota of 650 million per MBF at \$50 US per MBF and a higher quota of \$100 US per MBF on exports beyond 15.35 million MBF.

The Softwood Lumber Agreement expires in March 2001. The United States softwood lumber industry remains dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the current Agreement at modifying Canadian softwood lumber exports to the United States. Additionally, United States conservation organizations have recently charged that the United States Government had failed to properly follow the provisions of the *National Environmental Policy Act* when it originally entered into the Agreement. These arguments focus primarily on the potential impacts of the Agreement on transboundary wildlife species in Canada (i.e. in the Castle Wilderness). The effect of that case has been to broaden the softwood lumber debate from a purely economic and international trade issue to also include environmental issues. In March 2000,

the Office of the United States Trade Representative requested public comments on the economic and environmental aspects of Canada's softwood lumber practices.

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