

News Release

New book questions Shells' green image

For Immediate Release

November 16, 2002

Pincher Creek, Alberta - The Castle–Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC) is proud to be the local voice announcing the release of the new book: *Riding the Dragon: Royal Dutch Shell and the Fossil Fuel Fire* by Jack Doyle. The book reveals Shells' ongoing socially and environmentally neglectful practices despite the companies "green" makeover.

Royal Dutch Shell is spending millions of dollars to create a public image that it is a socially and environmentally responsible oil company, but the truth is that world's second largest oil company remains one of biggest global environmental violators; according to Jack Doyle, author of the new book. The book was released November 14, 2002 in North America and is now available online at www.shellfacts.com.

Here in Alberta, as chapter 11 of the book describes, Shell continues to push for the development of dangerous sour gas wells in the Castle Wilderness– a beautiful wilderness that holds the highest levels of biological diversity of any unprotect area in Alberta. While a slick advertising campaign: (www.shell.ca/code/values/action/protect.pdf) professes Shells' commitment to endangered species; the company continues to push industrial development in the ecologically sensitive Castle Wilderness and thereby threatening endangered wildlife.

Shell, the Energy and Utilities Board, and environmental groups agree that sour gas wells in the Castle Wilderness compromise a fragile and valuable ecosystem. Shells' own Environmental Assessment acknowledges that biological thresholds for some species in the area have been surpassed. The EUB concurs in their Decision 2000-17. Regardless, the development of sour gas wells, and the associated roads, power lines and pipelines continues; all to the detriment of the ecosystem.

"Do we need to wait until a member of the public dies before we reconsider sour gas production?" asks Jeffrey Emmett, Executive Director of the CCWC. "Workers in Alberta have died from sour gas exposure and the health of many Albertans has seriously and irreversibly suffered. Wildlife and cattle have died and become sick because of sour gas. Polluting the Castle Wilderness with toxic gases is a bad investment; the enormous natural value of the area is being lost to heat swimming pools in the eastern United States. To quote Shells' own advertising: "ignoring endangered species can be very costly. Lasting environmental damage and public outrage are the real business consequences of forgetting the small and vulnerable." Shell is not practicing what their ad campaign preaches in the Castle Wilderness." said Emmett.

The Castle–Crown Wilderness Coalition hopes that the book *Riding the Dragon: Royal Dutch Shell and the Fossil Fuel Fire* will raise public awareness about Shells' unsustainable practices in the Castle Wilderness.


The CCWC is an environmental group based in Pincher Creek that is dedicated to the establishment, restoration and environmental protection of the Castle Wilderness. For more information about the group and its campaign please see www.ccwc.ab.ca and www.castlewilderness.ca .

For more information contact: Jeffrey Emmett, Executive Director, CCWC, phone **403-627-5059**.

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NEWS RELEASE

Wilderness Coalition mounts legal challenge to ski resort development in Westcastle Valley.

October 21, 2002, Pincher Creek, Alberta: The Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC), based in Pincher Creek, has filed an Originating Notice in the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta for a Judicial Review of the Alberta Government's decision not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the residential and ski terrain expansion in the Westcastle Valley, in southwestern Alberta, proposed by Castle Mountain Resort Inc. [\(Click here to download the Originating Notice\)](#) 

Castle Mountain Resort Inc. is proposing to expand its ski terrain from the present Gravenstafel Mountain to the adjacent Haig Ridge and to develop a residential town site of 225 housing units at the base of the ski hill.

"All evidence points to the conclusion that this resort expansion will have profound, permanent, irreversible and detrimental environmental consequences for the Westcastle and adjoining Southcastle valleys," stated James Tweedie, CCWC's Conservation Director. "The government appears to be ignoring the evidence presented ten years ago when this sort of expansion was first contemplated, as well as more recent evidence from its own staff and evidence presented by Parks Canada with respect to the potential wildlife impacts on Waterton Lakes National Park."

The substance of CCWC's case against the Director of Regulatory Assurance, Ms. Jillian Flett, of Alberta Environment, and Environment Minister Lorne Taylor is that the Director committed an error of law in her decision not to require an Environmental Impact Assessment since the proposed activity would qualify as a mandatory activity for such an EIA under Alberta's Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (AEPEA), and that the Minister failed to exercise jurisdictional discretion to uphold the purposes of the EIA provisions of AEPEA.

"We have good environmental laws on the books in Alberta, but this is another example where the public has to rely on a citizens' group to ensure that the government lives up to its responsibilities," said Jeffrey Emmett, CCWC's Executive Director.

For more information contact:

Jeffrey Emmett, Executive Director, CCWC, phone: 403-627-5059

Website: www.castlewilderness.ca

Background Information

In contravention of an earlier ruling by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), recent government decisions could allow for an extensive expansion of the existing ski hill operation and residential development at Castle Mountain Resort, without any environmental assessment.

Castle Mountain Resort (CMR) is located 35 km west of Pincher Creek, in the Westcastle Valley, part of the Castle Wilderness. The area is adjacent to Waterton Lakes National Park and is part of the Waterton-Glacier International Biosphere Reserve. The Park itself has been designated a World Heritage Site. In 1993, the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) reviewed a similar development proposal for the Westcastle Ski Hill. After reviewing a full environmental assessment carried out at the time, the Board made it a binding condition that an expansion of the ski resort in the Westcastle Valley could only proceed if protection of the surrounding public lands was first secured through the designation of the Waterton-Castle Wildland Recreation Area (WCWRA). The Board stated furthermore that the WCWRA be established whether or not the development proceeded. The current development proposed by Castle Mountain Resort Inc. is similar to the 1993 proposal, but no environmental assessment has been required.

"The proposed resort expansion and additional residential development will close the door on a key international wildlife corridor for wolves and grizzly bears and threatens the water quality for all downstream users," says James Tweedie, Conservation Director with the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC).

"CMR's incremental approach to development is unacceptable in this sensitive area. Either the binding conditions by the NRCB for a Wildland Recreation Area are immediately implemented, or approval for the proposed development must be denied," says Tamaini Snaith of the Alberta Wilderness Association.

In May the CCWC was informed by Ms. Jillian Flett, Director of Regulatory Assurance, Alberta Environment, that no EIA would be required.

The CCWC then wrote to the Hon. Lorne Taylor, Minister for Alberta Environment, in June requesting that he exercise his discretionary jurisdiction in this matter, under Section 47 of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.

This request had the endorsement of the Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Calgary-Banff Chapter), Trout Unlimited Canada (Alberta Council), the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, the Sierra Club - Chinook Chapter, and the Mountain Parks Watershed Alliance.

In a letter dated July 24, Minister Lorne Taylor refused the request to order an Environmental Impact Assessment.

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

America's Gas Tank – The Castle Wilderness Falls Victim to the Energy Demands of our Neighbor to the South.

October 16, 2002, Calgary, Alberta: The Natural Resources Defense Council (USA), and the Sierra Club of Canada are releasing their report "America's Gas Tank- The High Cost of Canada's Oil and Gas Export Strategy" today. (This report can be accessed at: www.nrdc.org/land/use/gastank/contents.asp or [here](#)).

The document cites the Castle Wilderness of southwestern Alberta as one example of how the oil and gas industry feeds America's ever-increasing appetite for oil and gas at the expense of Canada's wilderness.

Canada is the single largest supplier of oil and gas to the US. Increasingly, these natural resources are extracted from ecologically important wilderness areas such as the Castle Wilderness.

The Castle Wilderness (1,000km²) located just north of Waterton Lakes National Park is recognized as having some of the highest diversity of animal and plant species in Alberta. The area also provides critical movement corridors for large carnivores moving through the US and the southern Canadian Rocky Mountains.

For more than four decades, Shell Canada has exploited this wilderness for its natural gas reserves. A large system of sour gas pipelines, over 50 sour gas wells, numerous pipeline facilities, and an extensive network of service roads have severely impacted the ecological health of this region.

Large-scale clear-cut logging, ski resort development, residential housing development, and excessive off-road vehicle use all add to the detrimental effects of the petroleum industry.

"The entire Castle Wilderness requires immediate legislated protection under a provincial Wildland Park designation, including an ecologically sound management plan and extensive restoration" says Jeffrey Emmett, Executive Director of the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition. Emmett continues, "If this region does not receive effective protection soon, an irreversible decline in the health of this wilderness will occur."

Wilderness tourism opportunities that would benefit the entire region will be jeopardized unless these "high-impact" activities are curtailed. With the gas reserves now approaching depletion, a protected Castle Wilderness would provide a significant long-term economic and social asset for the region.

"We are calling on Shell Canada to fulfill its social and environmental responsibilities, and publicly support our protection proposal for the Castle Wilderness." says Brian Pincott, spokesperson for the Chinook Group, Sierra Club of Canada.

For more information contact:

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For further information about the report released today contact:

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Proposed resort expansion threatens wildlife and water quality in the Castle Wilderness

June 12, 2002 -For immediate release

Flying in the face of an earlier ruling by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), recent government decisions could allow an extensive expansion of the ski hill and residential development on Castle Mountain, without any environmental assessment.

Castle Mountain Resort (CMR) is located 35 km west of Pincher Creek, in the Westcastle Valley, in the Castle Wilderness. The area is adjacent to Waterton Lakes National Park and is part of the Waterton-Glacier International Biosphere Reserve. The Park itself has been designated a World Heritage Site. In 1993, the NRCB reviewed a similar development proposal for the Westcastle Ski Hill. After reviewing a full environmental assessment, the Board ruled that an expansion of the ski resort could only proceed if protection of the surrounding public lands was first secured through the designation of the Waterton-Castle Wildland Recreation Area (WCWRA). The Board stated furthermore that the WCWRA be established *whether or not* the development proceeded. The current development proposed by Castle Mountain Resort Inc. is similar to the 1993 proposal, but no environmental assessment has been required.

"The proposed resort expansion and additional residential development will close the door on a key international wildlife corridor for wolves and grizzly bears and threatens the water quality for all downstream users", says James Tweedie, Conservation Director with the Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition (CCWC).

"CMR's incremental approach to development is unacceptable in this critical area. Either the binding conditions by the NRCB for a Wildland Recreation Area are immediately implemented, or approval for the proposed development must be denied," says Tamaini Snaith of the Alberta Wilderness Association.

The CCWC has written to the Hon. Lorne Taylor, Minister for Alberta Environment, requesting his intervention in this matter. This request has the endorsement of the Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Calgary-Banff Chapter), Trout Unlimited Canada (Alberta Council), the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, the Sierra Club - Chinook Chapter, and the Mountain Parks Watershed Alliance.

"It now rests in the Environment Minister's hands", says Tweedie. "Minister Taylor can prevent an environmental tragedy in a region of global ecological significance. He can do that by convincing his Cabinet colleagues to uphold the conditions of the NRCB Decision and establish the Castle Wildland."

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For more information: James Tweedie, Castle Crown Wilderness Coalition (403) 628-2422

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