



SIERRA
CLUB
BC

One Earth • One Chance

304-733 Johnson St.
Victoria, BC V8W 3C7

T (250) 386-5255
F (250) 386-4453

E info@sierraclub.bc.ca
W www.sierraclub.bc.ca

Back in Black: The Dirty World of Coal in B.C.

New coal mine planned for Vancouver Island

Coal was one of Vancouver Island's earliest industries, and now it is making a dubious come-back. A new coal mine called "Raven" is proposed near Fanny Bay in the scenic Comox Valley. The Raven mine would:

- remove 44 million tonnes of coal (2.2 million tonnes a year for 20 years).
- create 700,000 tonnes of slag and pollutants each year.
- construct a toxic tailings pond over the fish-bearing Cowie Creek.
- potentially contaminate aquifers that provide household drinking water.
- threaten Baynes Sound, one of the world's richest oyster beds.

Compliance Coal Corporation plans to truck out the coal – in 42-tonne trucks – past Fanny Bay along Highway 4 to Port Alberni, where the coal will be loaded onto ships bound for Asia. Since the mine will operate around the clock, that means 96 noisy coal trucks will drive the route every 24 hours. That's 672 coal trucks each week!

New Coal Mines in B.C.

The Raven mine is one of eight new coal mines slated for B.C. By comparison, B.C. currently has nine coal mines in operation. The lion's share of B.C.'s coal comes from five sprawling coal mines in the East Kootenay's Elk Valley that export to Asia. Coal is shipped by rail to the Tsawwassen Deltaport, where the huge black



An aerial photograph of mountaintop removal coal mining in the Elk Valley, B.C., shows its devastating environmental impact.

piles are clearly visible from the ferry.

Coal companies are eager to invest in B.C. because the provincial government promotes our province as "open for business" when it comes to mining. New provincial mining

Don't We Need Coal to Make Steel?

Most B.C. coal is metallurgical (coking) coal used to make steel. The Quinsam coal mine near Campbell River produces lower-grade thermal coal, which is shipped to China to burn for energy. Some B.C. coal mines produce both thermal and coking coal.

We can reduce the global need for steel by:

- recycling steel; this requires only electricity from hydro or other sources
- reducing consumption
- dedicating resources to search for new ways to make steel that are more climate-friendly



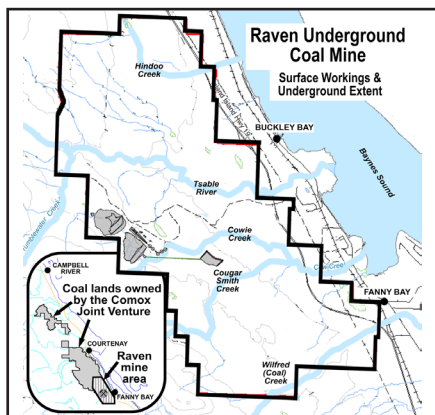
SIERRA CLUB BC

One Earth • One Chance

304-733 Johnson St.
Victoria, BC V8W 3C7

T (250) 386-5255
F (250) 386-4453

E info@sierraclub.bc.ca
W www.sierraclub.bc.ca



A map of the Comox Valley showing the proposed mine (above). Mountain goats roam the wildlife-rich Flathead (right).



Photo: Joe Riis © iLCP

subsidies, construction of new roads to make remote mining areas more accessible, and a promise to streamline environmental assessments all add up to make B.C. a destination hotspot for mining companies.

Coal is a dirty business – and not just because of hazardous coal dust created whenever coal is mined or transported. If inhaled, coal dust can cause asthma, black lung disease and other respiratory ailments. People who live next to coal production sites have a higher risk of developing hypertension and lung, cardiopulmonary and kidney disease.

Hot and Dirty

Coal is the worst fossil fuel offender when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions. It releases massive amounts of carbon dioxide when burned for power or steel-making. Carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming. In 2008, B.C.'s coal exports generated more than 55 million tonnes of carbon dioxide—almost as much carbon dioxide as the province's total official greenhouse gas emissions in 2007. Surprisingly, we do not count emissions generated by burning B.C. coal overseas as

part of B.C.'s carbon footprint!

We need to ask why B.C. plans to dig an unprecedented amount of coal out of the ground at the very same time that we aim to slash our greenhouse gas emissions. Is our vision for Vancouver Island one of unsightly coal mines running along the island's spine from Fanny Bay to Campbell River? Or should we invest in creating green jobs that have a low carbon footprint, are healthy for communities and won't vanish in 20 years' time?

A Coal Victory in the Flathead

The Flathead River Valley, tucked into B.C.'s southeast corner, was slated for mountaintop removal coal mining and other industrial development. One proposal under consideration by the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office involved destroying a Rocky Mountain to remove 40 million tonnes of coal. The company behind the project, Cline Mining Corp., planned to dump 300 million tonnes of slag and pollutants into Foisey Creek, a headwaters stream of the Flathead River identified by scientists as critical habitat for threatened bull trout. In February 2010, following

a campaign by Sierra Club BC and other groups, the B.C. government announced a ban on mining in the Flathead. Only weeks later, Sierra Club BC learned that plans are afoot for a new coal mine in the proposed Flathead Wildlife Management Area. That mine, owned by a Chinese company called Centerpoint Resources, is slated for an area adjacent to the Flathead Valley that provides key habitat and connectivity for grizzlies and other species travelling up and down the Rocky Mountains.

The Flathead's astonishing wildlife will remain under threat until the B.C. government agrees to: 1) a Wildlife Management Area in the Flathead River Valley and adjoining habitat that prohibits new coal mines, and 2) a National Park in the southeastern one-third of the valley, to expand the Waterton-Glacier World Heritage Site into B.C.

Canada is famous for our Rocky Mountain landscape and the wildlife that depend on these spectacular peaks and valleys for shelter and food. Destroying our scenic Rocky Mountains to dig out carbon-spewing coal just doesn't make sense.