



Dear {FIRST_NAME|Wilderness Defender},

AWA is asking you to help shine a light on a “science experiment” proposed for the headwaters of Alberta’s Castle that AWA believes to be misguided.

As we understand, by this fall a licence to clearcut 180 hectares of the upper Star Creek valley, just south of the Crowsnest Pass will be granted. The clearcutting will be completed as part of the Southern Rockies Watershed Project, spearheaded by Dr. Uldis Silins, a professor at the University of Alberta’s Forest Hydrology lab, Department of Renewable Resources.

The purpose behind the project is to conduct “research on the impacts of forest management strategies on watershed values in the eastern slopes headwaters region.” Simply put, the plan is to clearcut the slopes, while measuring water volumes in the creek to see whether this causes runoff levels to increase, in essence “creating” water.

The first question that comes to mind is whether this research is needed at all, especially since we already have a pretty good idea what the outcomes will be. This project closely mirrors a 2011 study done by John Pomeroy with the University of Saskatchewan’s Centre for Hydrology. That study, which had similar goals and scope, was conducted in Kananaskis Country’s Marmot Creek basin, barely 100 miles north of Star Creek. Yet Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) seem to believe it is time to run the experiment again.

This raises a second question: why? Given the history of logging along the southern Eastern Slopes, we believe the Alberta public has cause to be dubious of any rationale that is given for clearcutting these forests. Only eight months ago AESRD announced a halt to logging within the Castle, yet this adjacent project slated for the same sensitive ecosystem, pays no apparent heed to that announcement.

AWA believes Star Creek **should not be logged**. The natural and ecological values of the Castle have been recognized time and again, and they are why AESRD very appropriately halted logging there in the first place. An experiment such as this, which can be expected to tell us just what we already know, does nothing to change that principle.

We are asking you to help shine a light on this project, to alert those in charge that Albertans do not want to see clearcuts in the Castle, whatever the reason.

In This Issue:

Clearcutting in Upper Star Creek: the “Southern Rockies Watershed Project”

AWA

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We ask that you send your thoughts to those whose contact information follows below.

AWA appreciates being copied at snichols@abwild.ca on any correspondence that you send to the below parties.

For more background information on this project, please refer also to [Nigel Douglas' article](#) from the latest issue of AWA's journal, the *Wild Lands Advocate*. You may also wish to view [this advertisement](#) that appeared in the *Crowsnest Pass Herald* of May 21, 2013.

- Sean Nichols, Conservation Specialist

Please send your letters and correspondence to:

- Bruce Mayer
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- Your MLA. You can find appropriate contact information at the [Directory of Alberta MLAs](#).

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