



Alberta Wilderness Association **A Day of Action - *Defending our Eastern Slopes***

The Eastern Slopes are the backbone of Alberta's wilderness. They encompass the vital headwaters of the North Saskatchewan, South Saskatchewan, Red Deer and Oldman rivers, provide essential habitat for wildlife and species at risk, and support the recreational pursuits and livelihoods of many. Applications and plans for coal mining exploration and development threaten the ecological integrity of Alberta's Eastern Slopes.

Hearings on Benga Mining's application for a metallurgical coal strip mine on Grassy Mountain 7 km north of Blairmore in the Crowsnest Pass will begin on October 27th. A Joint Review Panel (federal and provincial) will recommend whether this open-pit mining operation should proceed or not.

- Rescinding Alberta's Coal Policy (1976) coupled with incomplete land-use framework plans, and an expedited regulatory approvals process that limits public engagement puts our Eastern Slopes and the related ecosystems at great risk.
- Open-pit strip mining smashes ecosystems; it dramatically fragments the landscape, destroys habitat, and displaces wildlife.
 - Pollution will be intensive and extensive. Effluent will pollute waterbodies; non-point source pollution (leached contaminants from tailing ponds and waste rock piles) will compound this damage.
 - Already threatened Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout will be further compromised. Selenium poisoning from strip mining operations is known to cause body deformities and reproductive failure in fish.
- The Joint Review Panel decision will be precedent setting. AWA believes the Grassy Mountain Mine Project must be denied.

On **October 27, 2020** call or email federal **Minister Wilkinson**. If you can't call or email, please write him a letter. Let him know you are concerned. Please copy AWA in your correspondence, or drop us a note to say you called.

Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
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Coal Leases and Westslope Cutthroat Trout Critical Habitat along the Eastern Slopes

