

**Re: Energy Resources Conservation Board hearing of Petro-Canada's application to build a pipeline through an unfragmented watershed region of Kananaskis Country**

**Wednesday, December 17, 2008**

**EXPERT TESTIMONY SUMMARY**

**The following are among experts who have reviewed Petro-Canada's Environmental Impact Assessment for the area and have testified at the hearing in High River, AB.**

**Lorne Fitch.** Provincial Riparian Specialist, Cows and Fish, Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society and Adjunct Professor, University of Calgary

"There are only two areas left in the foothills of Southern Alberta from the border with Montana to the Bow River that are of sufficient size and biological integrity – that is, without roads and other industrial fragmentation – where we can see what the world was like before we started the massive changes that have happened to the rest of it.

"One is the Whaleback, which has been made a Heritage Rangeland (by the Alberta government) to keep it in a pristine and unfragmented state.

"The other is this area – the Headwaters Region for Willow Creek and Pekisko Creek. The pipeline would mean the loss of this area."

***Key Conclusion.***

"The route selected by Petro-Canada has a number of serious implications to fish and wildlife resources, which no amount of planning, design and mitigation will cure. Losses of habitat integrity with fragmentation, increased human access, sediment addition and cumulative effects will persist over the length of the project, to the detriment of fish and wildlife resources. That condition, as a consequence of Petro-Canada's proposal, would not be in the public interest."

**David Mayhood,** Aquatic Ecologist, Consulting Biologist & President FWR Freshwater Research Limited, Calgary

"The pipeline is being put in absolutely the very worst possible area if we're concerned about the survival of the native cutthroat trout, which is a threatened species. It is going as far up in the watershed as you can, the last and final refuge of this threatened species."

***Key Conclusion.***

“The true risks of Petro-Canada’s proposed project are:

1. Some, possibly all, of the habitats for the several high-value remnant native cutthroat stocks will be damaged or the stocks themselves will be eliminated during construction, operation, maintenance or decommissioning of the well and pipeline system.
2. The native cutthroat stock at highest risk by far . . . is that in North Twin Creek.
3. All other fish populations and aquatic habitats are at serious risk because Petro-Canada does not understand their value, how they work or simply didn’t look at them.

At the very least, the company should find a new, less environmentally risky route for getting its gas to market.

**Cheryl Bradley**, Botanist, environmental consultant and recipient of an Alberta Wilderness Defenders Award in 2007.

“Petro-Canada has identified several risks regarding soil and vegetation, including:

- 40% of terrain is unstable;
- 40% of the pipeline route is at risk for ripping or blasting bedrock;
- much of the area is at risk of water erosion;
- 80% of the terrain is at risk of compaction and rutting;
- and 60% is not good soil for reclamation. T

These are significant challenges and we don’t fully understand the impact of this project.”

***Key conclusion.***

“Intuitively, one would expect that constructing the trunk line along existing linear developments (i.e. Hwy 940 or HWY 541) and across cultivated land will have significantly less environmental impact compared to the proposed trunk line route which is through a relatively pristine large block of public land. Baseline information and adequate assessment of the alternatives with respect to costs and benefits are not provided in the materials available for review; hence informed comment on the relative implications of alternative routes including relative impacts on vegetation and soils and is not possible.

Full assessment of alternatives would be important information for the Board to consider in its determination if the project, as proposed, is appropriate and in the public interest.”