LINCOLN COUNTY LOVES THE KOOTENAI RIVER

GET THE FACTS ABOUT CANADIAN MINING POLLUTION IN LAKE KOOCANUSA
British Columbia's Elk River Drainage upstream from Lake Koocanusa is a major coal mining area. Heavy metal pollution -- particularly Selenium -- leaches from the waste rock dumps near those mines. Even small levels of Selenium can be toxic to fish and other water life. Selenium builds up in the river ecosystem -- and is nearly impossible to remove. It's far better to prevent pollution than try to clean it up later.

This graph shows the steady increase in selenium concentrations in BC's Elk River downstream of Teck coal mines from 1984-2014. The red line indicates the BC threshold for selenium. Selenium concentrations above the number 2 are considered harmful to fish and aquatic life. The Elk River is a tributary of the Kootenai River.

Even as Selenium levels build in the Kootenai, British Columbia is rapidly expanding its coal mining operations -- with no proven technology to protect water downstream.

Selenium levels are increasing in the tissue of fish caught in Lake Koocanusa.

Selenium in water flowing into the United States at the border is increasing and has at times exceeded levels considered healthy for aquatic life by fish and wildlife experts.

Selenium levels in the water coming from the mines and in the Elk River greatly exceed recognized Canadian health standards.

Canadian scientists have found young fish downstream of mines with twisted spines and deformed gills, and fish eggs that don't hatch — classic signs of Selenium pollution.

The one experimental water treatment facility located below a BC coal mine was making selenium pollution more toxic. Mine officials have asked to shut down the plant while they work on the problem. Meanwhile, four coal mines have been permitted to expand without a working treatment plan.

In spite of these problems, BC has approved significant expansion of four Elk Valley coal mines with no proven or foreseeable plan in place to safeguard American waters.
The Kootenai River is a precious resource for the families and visitors of Lincoln County. Full disclosure of any potential degradation should be required. Pollution of this magnificent natural resource would be catastrophic and impact our area as an attractive place for investment.

- TINA OLIPHANT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KOOTENAI RIVER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

We know that Selenium leaching from coal mining operations is an increasing pollutant in the Kootenai River downstream of the coal mines in the Elk River watershed, and that coal mining is the most important economic resource in Southeastern BC. We need to know the long-term implications of continued coal mining on the Kootenai River.

- MIKE ROONEY, PRESIDENT
KOOTENAI VALLEY CHAPTER MONTANA TROUT UNLIMITED

Libby is a vibrant community with deeply committed people who are building a future based on our abundant natural resources, scenic beauty, and clean water. The Selenium pollution of the Kootenai River is a growing concern for us. We must understand this problem and address it head-on.

- SARAH SORENSEN AND KRISTIN SMITH, CO-OWNERS
CABINET MOUNTAIN BREWING COMPANY

As a fishing guide on the Elk River in BC, I want to see the fishery improve in my lifetime. That's why I'm committed to finding a lasting solution that benefits Canadians and our downstream neighbors.

- PAUL SAMYCIA, OWNER
ELK RIVER GUIDING COMPANY

THE LAY OF THE LAND
Below is a map showing Idaho, NW Montana and SE British Columbia with arrows showing the flow of the Kootenai River.
Lincoln County and northwestern Montana love and depend on the Kootenai River. Canadian pollution is increasing. We need to speak up for the future of our families, community, local recreationist use, the river, and our economic development opportunities.

YOUR VOICE COUNTS.
Urge the Lincoln County Commissioners and Governor Bullock to work together to defend America’s clean water.
Mark Peck (406) 283-2317 • Jerry Bennett (406) 283-2319 • Mike Cole (406) 283-2318

Paid for by Montana conservationists, sportsmen and business owners.

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