



Why NOT Wilderness?: A plea for wild places in the Canadian West

Dave Sheppard

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It is a common perception that Canada is mostly wilderness. Perhaps this was true 150 years ago. Perhaps it was true 50 years ago. But today, this is no longer the case. Led by the logging, mining, and oil and gas industries, we are losing the Canadian wilderness at an astonishing rate of which the massive strip mining of the Alberta Tar Sands is the best-known recent example. The Tar Sands gold rush exemplifies a depressing failure of values by Canadian governments, both provincial and federal - a failure to value the protection of wilderness, wildlife, and wild places. Unlike the United States, Canada has no National Wilderness Act and only feeble environmental legislation overall. As a result, some species - woodland caribou, foothills grizzly bears, burrowing owls, and sage grouse come immediately to mind - are on the verge of extirpation in Canada. Why NOT Wilderness? urges Canada and Canadians to legislate a comprehensive program of wilderness protection before it is too late.



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