

Fact Sheet Fish Lake – Teztan Biny

Fish Lake (Teztan Biny) and Little Fish Lake (Nabaš) are 2 pristine mountain lakes, located in the Chilcotin in BC, Canada. They are extremely good fishing lakes, teeming with rainbow trout. Taseko Mines plans to destroy these lakes and use them as toxic tailing ponds for the massive proposed Prosperity Gold-Copper Mine.

This will turn the watershed of both lakes into a gigantic industrial zone.

Fish Lake runs into Fish Creek, the Taseko River, Chilko River, the Chilcotin River and finally into the Fraser River. These are the big salmon run rivers in BC.

Why is this possible?

Traditionally, mining companies built their own tailings ponds but an amendment to the Fisheries Act in 2002 allowed four lakes and a creek, long since destroyed by mines, to be reclassified as “tailings impoundment areas.” Since then the federal government has reclassified up to twenty additional lakes as dumps. The proposed Prosperity Mine at Fish Lake would require the same reclassification to move forward.

- The B.C. government approved the mine through its environmental assessment process on January 18th, 2010 and the chiefs are awaiting word from the federal government’s equivalent body, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency . The Tsilqot'in National Government (TNG) has denounced this decision. The First Nations hold proven Aboriginal hunting and trapping rights in this area. The BC Government has rejected all of efforts by the First Nations to meet with them to set up a consultation process that would “work for our people and our communities. We’re very, very concerned and are demanding that the Canadian government drop this policy, stop allowing mining companies in this country to destroy clean lakes and ecosystems.”

For a list and map of activities and proposed activities in Canada about which there is active concern over an impact on the environment please follow this link:

<http://www.sentinelhotspots.ca/>

Taseko Mines Ltd. is proposing to construct an open-pit copper and gold mine in the heart of Tsilhqot'in Territory, 125 km west of Williams Lake BC. If the project were to proceed it would:

- drain the beautiful, culturally important and rainbow trout-filled (85,000 genetically unique rainbow) Teztan Biny (Fish Lake);
- destroy another rich trout fishing lake, Nabas (Little Fish Lake)
- eliminate cultural sites dating to at least 5,500 years ago;

- create an open pit 800 m deep and 1600 m in diameter;
- create 858 million tonnes of tailings and 358 million tons of waste rock;
- deposit waste in the Upper Fish Creek watershed eliminating the creek, Little Fish Lake and terrestrial habitat for grizzly bears;
- create a reservoir adjacent to the tailings impoundment in order to compensate for the permanent loss of fish habitat;
- put a permanent environmental liability in the headwaters of the Fish Creek, a tributary of the Taseko and Fraser Rivers;
- create up to 33 years of employment and economic development for the region, but...
- insert a crew of up to 800 miners into a small First Nations Community and put at risk their precarious recovery from years of government and residential school abuse
- jeopardize or destroy a wilderness lodge industry that requires untouched wilderness to function and thrive

What can I do to help?

Write to:

Honourable Blair Lekstrom - Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Blair.Lekstrom.MLA@leg.bc.ca

250 387-5896

Honourable Barry Penner Minister of the Environment

Barry.Penner@gov.bc.ca

Barry.Penner.MLA@leg.bc.ca

250 387-1187

Honourable Jim Prentice Minister of the Environment (Canada)

819-997-1441

Minister@ec.gc.ca

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

1-866-582-1884

613-957-0700

info@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

Greenpeace

WWF

What can I write?

- I am writing in protest of the BC government's recent approval of Taseko Mines Prosperity Project at Fish Lake and Little Fish Lake.
- Did the Environmental Assessment Office consider the First Nations who live there, the fish in the lake, and the wildlife surrounding the lake when they approved this?
- Was the potential negative impact on the BC major salmon run on the Fraser River taken into consideration?
- Fish Lake and Little Fish Lake run into the Fraser River, what do the people of Vancouver think of this?
- This ends the options for eco-tourism and wilderness tourism, as well as threatening existing lodges and the potential for similar enterprises by the First Nations as part of their survival strategy.
- Water is rapidly becoming one of the world's most precious resource. How can Canada and the province of BC justify the destruction of not only this lake but the water downstream?
- How is it possible that the Canadian government could think that it is environmentally OK to destroy a lake?
- it is a proven rights area, because a decision made in the Supreme Court of BC in 2007 granted rights First Nations to carry on traditional aboriginal subsistence activities in this region.
- There is also before the supreme court of BC a case to enforce those rights. Should it be successful it would prevent the destruction of these lakes. We need to wait for them to make this decision.
- Important Grizzly habitat will be destroyed in this area as well as moose, deer, beaver, cougar and other wildlife.
- The social and cultural implications for a small community, already with many problems due to post contact stress, of inserting up to five hundred miners in to the community in the form of the mining camp, are horrendous. Lock up your wives and children and your pets, too!

- An additional stress environmentally in the form of off duty miners on week-ends roaring around on dirt bikes, quads, and snowmobiles boggles the mind, too. Good bye Wild Horse Preserve. There will be no space for BC's wild horses in the Brittany Triangle.
- Ask the Canadian Government and the Provincial Government in BC to change their policies; it is unacceptable to pollute pristine lakes; clean water is the gold of the future and our most important resource.