

Windy Craggy 676048  
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# Mine plan seen facing scrutiny

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A huge copper mine proposed for the Tatshenshini River valley in northern British Columbia appears headed for a full environmental review by the federal government.

Environmentalists hope an Environmental Assessment Review Panel will close down the proposed Windy Craggy mine in the same way the process stopped a \$1.3-billion pulp mill proposal on the Athabasca River last March.

"We are confident that under full scrutiny this mine will fail," said Paul George, director of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee.

The mine is already under provincial review, and applying the federal process will subject the \$400-million project to a level of rigorous, time-consuming scrutiny.

Geddes Resources Ltd. president Gerald Harper said he would welcome an EARP hearing because it would give his company the chance to prove its case in an impartial

## Environmentalists hope review will thwart B.C. copper project

forum.

"This is the first major mining prospect in B.C. since the recession. This is a high-profile project and we have to do it correctly," said Harper. "I would welcome (EARP) rather than end up with a grey area."

Harper said the company is confident it can address all environmental concerns.

Environmentalists, however, say the process will kill the Windy Craggy mine either by bringing to light unacceptable acid mine drainage problems, or by stalling the project until it no longer makes financial sense.

The mine is projected as profitable on copper prices in the 80- to 90-cent per pound range.

Copper prices were at \$1.60 a

pound last year, but had tumbled to \$1.08 by January.

Metals analysts predict copper will continue dropping — to 90 cents this year and 80 cents in 1991.

Doug Haagenson, manager of administration for Geddes, agreed one of the major concerns is the price of copper.

"Certainly we're aware of the various prices and fluctuations. We have done our economic evaluations . . . before construction starts we will do full-blown economic and engineering studies."

Geddes has based its plans on what it expects to be bottom end prices, and the company predicts copper will be on the rise by the mid-'90s.

Haagenson said the company

would like to proceed with development as soon as possible.

"Our concern (with the timing) is strictly financial," he said. "The longer it takes, the more it costs."

Geddes has already spent two years and \$4 million on studies.

"We'd like their decisions quickly. As soon as is practicable," said Haagenson.

Several federal and provincial agencies are reviewing the Windy Craggy stage one environmental and socio-economic impact assessment. A final decision on whether an EARP will be demanded can't be made until the review is completed.

Norm Ringstad, acting chairman of the provincial mine development steering committee, said the initial assessment of the Windy Craggy project will be completed this month and "kicked back to the proponent in early June."

Ringstad said his discussions with the federal government, however, suggest the project will go to EARP.