

NEWSLETTER



The Cougar Pit Coal Project Proposal

Environmental Assessment Office

July 1996

Number 1

THE COUGAR PIT COAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

Fording Coal Ltd. (the proponent) has applied for a project approval certificate under the *Environmental Assessment Act* for the Cougar Pit Coal Project. The application is for development of the Cougar South and Main Pits and the West Spoil waste dump at the existing Fording Coal Greenhills Mine located north-east of Elkford, B.C. The proposed long range mine plan will extend the life of the mine by approximately 15 years.

As part of the environmental assessment of the Cougar Pit Coal Project, the proponent has prepared and submitted a detailed impact assessment (project report) which assesses the potential effects of the project and presents strategies for mitigating these effects. The Environmental Assessment Office accepted the project report for review on May 21, 1996.

BACKGROUND

In October 1994, the proponent submitted a 'prospectus' for the project under the former Mine Development Assessment Process. The prospectus was reviewed by government agencies and public comment was also invited. The proponent held public open houses in November 1994 to present the proposal to the public.

Based on the issues and concerns identified during the review of the prospectus, the government prepared terms of reference for a detailed assessment report. The terms of reference set out the studies and information necessary to address the concerns raised, and were presented to the proponent in May 1995.

On June 30, 1995, the *Mine Development Assessment Act* and process was replaced by the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The review of the Cougar Pit project was transitioned to the new process at the "Awaiting Project Report" stage. In November 1995, Environmental Assessment Office staff met with the proponent to discuss the requirements of the new Act and to ensure that the detailed report which was being developed would meet the requirements of the new environmental assessment process.

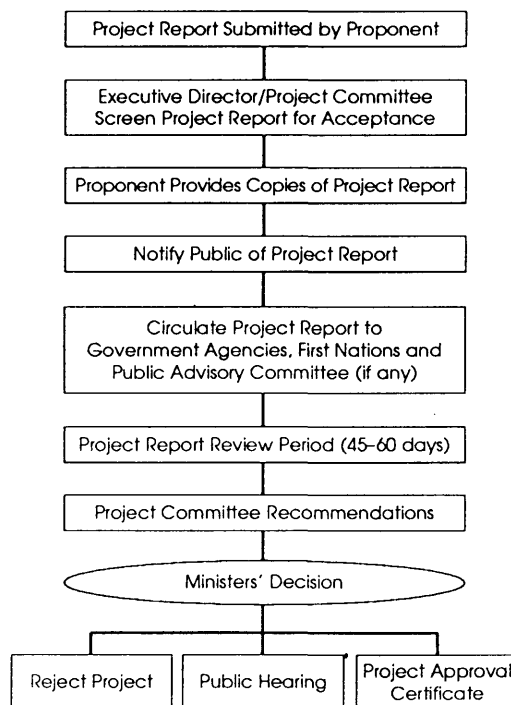
In late April 1996, the proponent submitted the project report to government for review. The document was accepted for review on May 21, 1996.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The *Environmental Assessment Act* establishes a single review process which is balanced, comprehensive and consistent, with clear legislated timelines to provide certainty for project developers. The process set out in the Act is designed to ensure an open, neutrally administered evaluation of the key policy and technical issues associated with the potential impacts of proposed developments. The process includes substantial opportunities for public and First Nations involvement at each stage of the review.

Ultimately, the decision to approve or reject the Cougar Pit proposal, or to require a public hearing, will be a joint decision of the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks and the Minister of Employment and Investment (the "Responsible Minister"). If the project eventually requires a formal public hearing, the decision to approve or reject the project(s) would be made by Cabinet.

The Cougar Pit project is in the "project report" review stage of the environmental assessment process, as shown in the flow chart below. The report is available for public, government agency and First Nations review. At the end of the review process, recommendations will be made by the Project Committee to the ministers on whether or not to issue a project approval certificate, or to send the project to a public hearing.



- Project report submitted on April 22, 1996
- Screened and accepted for review on May 21, 1996.
- Copies received on May 30, 1996.
- Notice given on May 31, 1996.
- Circulated May 31, 1996.
- 60-day review period from June 13 to August 13, 1996.
- Recommendations due to ministers by October 25, 1996.
- Ministers' decision by December 8, 1996

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENT ON THE PROJECT REPORT REQUESTED

The proponent has submitted its project report in support of the project proposal. The project report includes information on the project history, conceptual development plans, potential environmental, socio-economic, cultural, heritage and health impacts of the project, and describes strategies to avoid or reduce these impacts to acceptable levels.

Public comment is invited on the project report to ensure that public views on the adequacy of the proponent's effects assessment and impact management proposals are taken into account in the review of the project.

The project report may be viewed at the Environmental Assessment Office Project Registry at 1st Floor, 836 Yates Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8V 1X4, ((604) 356-7441, or at Project Registry satellite repositories in the following communities:

Elkford Public Library,
816 Michel Rd., Elkford

Sparwood Public Library,
110 Pine Ave., Sparwood

Fernie Public Library,
592-3rd Ave., Fernie

Cranbrook Public Library,
20 - 17th Ave., Cranbrook

In order to be considered as part of the project report review, all public comments on the project report must be received by August 13, 1996. All public and agency submissions will be available to the general public through the EAO Project Registry as originally submitted and required by the *Environmental Assessment Act*. If your submission does not indicate that you wish your address to be treated in confidence, your name and address will be filed in full on the EAO Project Registry. All comments received by August 13, 1996 will be considered as part of the review. Comments should be forwarded to:

Norm Ringstad, Chair
Cougar Pit Project Committee
Environmental Assessment Office
2nd Floor-836 Yates Street
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4
Telephone: 356-7481
Fax: 387-2208

THE PROJECT COMMITTEE

The Environmental Assessment Act (section 9(2)) enables the establishment of a Project Committee which reviews projects as specified. Representation on the committee is open to government agencies that have jurisdictional or policy-based interests in the review of specific projects. This includes provincial government ministries and agencies, the federal government, any municipality or regional district in the vicinity of the project or in which the project is located; any First Nation whose traditional territory includes the site of the project or is in the vicinity of the project; and any of B.C.'s neighboring jurisdictions in the vicinity of the project.

A Project Committee has been established to review the Cougar Pit proposal. The committee is chaired by Norm Ringstad, Project Assessment Director of the EA Office. Invitations to sit on the committee were forwarded to various provincial, federal, and local government agencies and First Nations. The following have agreed to have representatives sit on the Project Committee:

Cougar Pit Project Committee

Provincial Ministries

Ministry of Employment and Investment
Ministry of Environment, Land & Parks
Ministry of Health

Local Government

District of Elkford

First Nations

Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Council
Tobacco Plains Indian Band

PUBLIC
CONSULTATION

The proponent held an open house in Elkford in November 1994 to identify public concerns with the proposal as presented in a prospectus under the former Mine Development Assessment Process. Another round of open houses was held in Elkford on June 24 and 25, 1996 to present the results of the studies conducted to address concerns identified at the first open house and in the prospectus review. This was followed up with a June 25th public meeting to give people an opportunity to ask questions and raise additional concerns.

The proponent has also given a number of presentations to local interest groups, local councils, chambers of commerce, rod and gun clubs, suppliers and contractors, and teachers. A presentation has also been offered to condo owners at the ski hill in Elkford. A meeting with key local stakeholders and individuals was also held June 6th to get their advice on the format and approach for the open houses and the public meeting.

The public meeting resulted in a number of questions being raised by the public and those questions are summarized in this newsletter. Where possible, answers to the questions have also been provided. Issues raised by the public will be considered in the overall project review.

NEXT STEPS

Following the end of the public review period (August 13, 1996), the Project Committee will have 70 days to complete its review and prepare conclusions and recommendations that will be provided to ministers for a decision. During this time, any concerns raised by government agencies and the public will be assessed and the company may be asked to provide additional information or to conduct further studies and assessments to address the concerns.

Project certification will normally be recommended by the Project Committee if all policy-type issues have been resolved, and all technical issues have been addressed. If certain issues remain unresolved or if the Project Committee cannot agree on a recommendation, it may instead decide to present various possible decision options, together with an analysis of their pros and cons, for ministers to consider. In making a decision, ministers will consider the potential benefits of the project, as well as the potential adverse effects.

FUTURE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Once the public review period for the project report has ended, the Project Committee will consider the concerns raised by the public. The Project Committee may hold further public consultation in the early fall to advise on the results of the government's review of the project, and to discuss and address any outstanding issues. The timing and format of these events will be determined based on concerns raised by the public. Future newsletters may also be published to keep people informed about the review of the project and to advise on any upcoming public consultation events.

Copies of government, First Nations and public comments on the project will be sent to the Project Registry and the public libraries noted above, when they are received by the Environmental Assessment Office. The public is encouraged to read the project report and the government comments on the project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to receive updates on the Cougar Pit Coal project review and/or general information on the environmental assessment process, please fill in the information form below and send it to:

Environmental Assessment Office Project Registry
1st Floor, 836 Yates Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
Telephone (604) 356-7441 Facsimile (604) 356-7440

I would like to be on the mailing list for the review of the Cougar Pit Coal Project

Name _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone # _____ Fax # _____

E-Mail Address: _____

- Check the box if you wish to receive updates on the ***Cougar Pit Coal Project Proposal***
- Check the box if you wish to receive more information on the ***environmental assessment process***
- Please check if you wish to be taken off our existing mailing list and return this form with your mailing label.

** If our records of your current address are incorrect, please send in your address label with any corrections.*

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS RAISED AND PROPONENT RESPONSES GIVEN AT THE COUGAR PIT PUBLIC MEETING *Held June 25, 1996, Elkford, B.C.*

How can the proponent's economic rationale for the West Dump be assessed for accuracy if the data used in the assessment is not released by the company because it is considered proprietary information?

The information was presented in the Project Report. Some detailed financial and economic data is considered confidential to protect the company's competitive advantage.

How is this proposal any different than the one previously put forward by Westar?

This proposal has a three lift spoil design at a lower elevation, which reduces the visual impacts. The original proposal included only a single lift.

Is Elkford represented on the Project Committee?

Yes.

Can the citizens have a referendum on this proposal?

The District does not have the ability to hold a referendum. Public support or opposition in principle is only one of the factors that will be considered by the Ministers when they make their decision, so a referendum would not decide whether the project gets approved.

What is being done about the problem with dustfall?

The company's studies show that dustfall is not a problem. Dustfall is well below the objectives set out by government. The company modeled the expansion and found that the increase in dust would be less than 1%. Details on these studies are found in the Project Report documents.

Will dustfall be monitored to identify if it exceeds permitted levels? If there are exceedances can the company be fined?

Yes. The company is being required to monitor several air quality indicators. If they exceed the objectives, government can force the company to take actions to correct the problem.

Is government doing anything about a national energy strategy for coal produced power?

There is no national strategy being developed by the federal government. Also, the coal produced at the mine is used for steel manufacturing and is not used to produce thermal power.

Is Fording predicting future coal prices in their assessment and what are they?

The studies are based on current prices, adjusted for inflation.

What happens if the price of coal drops and the mine closes half way through the mine life? Is the town stuck with no jobs and half the spoil completed?

The company has paid very large reclamation bonds to government. If there was a shutdown these bonds would be used to finish reclaiming the spoil.

How much does the company pay in taxes to the District and what are the spin-off benefits to the Elk Valley?

The company pays approximately 46% of Elkford's tax base. The mine would pay about \$425 Million in direct income and would spend about \$400 Million in the Elk Valley over 15 years.

What % of Greenhills employees in Elkford own or rent their homes?

The company estimates that only a very small number of employees rent houses in Elkford but actually live elsewhere. 28% of the Greenhills employees reside in Elkford.

People can't speak their real concerns because they are employees of Fording and their bosses are at the meeting.

If people are not comfortable speaking their concerns at the meeting they can send their comments directly to the Environmental Assessment Office by August 13, 1996. If they request that their names and addresses remain confidential, they will not appear on the Public Registry.

What will happen to property values when the West Spoil is started?

The company estimates that property values will not be affected by the proposal. If the mine closed down, the company estimates that housing values would fall about 20%.

What logging will take place on the ridge? How can the public find out?

The company owns the property from the 1500m elevation up and Crestbrook Forest Industries has the rights to those trees. The property below that elevation is owned by Crestbrook. Crestbrook submits logging plans each year which can be reviewed by the public.

How long can the company spoil before they have to start logging?

The spoiling would start in the year 2006 and the logging will have to begin about 3 years before that. Only 139 ha of the 400 ha spoil area is treed.

How much of the spoil is visible and how much is below the ridge?

A good portion of the spoil will be below the ridge. The spoiling will start at the bottom and then work back up the ridge and it will be reclaimed as they move along.

Will the sound of trucks backing up be heard in town?

Noise studies were done. Under certain conditions it may be possible to hear some noise in town, but it will be below the background noise levels that already exist so it would not likely be noticeable.

What can be done to eliminate the dust caused by the operation?

The company estimates that 70% of dust comes from the haul road activity. They have trucks which water the roads to keep dust down and more trucks can be obtained if necessary. The three lift design of the spoil also minimizes dust levels. Other dust suppression measures can be implemented such as crushed and rock surfacing of roads.

As the ridge is lowered will more dust come over from the Fording River operation?

The predominant winds are easterly so it is not likely that dust would come over towards Elkford. Larger particulates would also fall out well before the town is reached.

Has the company studied the effects of exhaust from the trucks?

Studies were done at Fording River. MEI also did an on site study of that issue in terms of worker health and safety.

How long is the spoil access road and will it be a fill or cut road?

The road will extend down to the lower berm of the spoil. It will be a fill road. It would start construction in about 2006.

Are the air samplers automatic?

Yes. They run every 6 days for 24 hours at a time. One Hi-Vol sampler ran every day for a year whenever there was a north wind and the other ran every day for a year whenever there was a south wind.

Are there any measurements of earth tremors or seismic tremors as a result of moving and blasting rock?

Fording gets calls from the government when they carry out blasting because the government monitors seismic activity and needs to confirm when blasting occurred. The company is not aware of any tremors ever being caused by mine operations. Also the Elk Valley is the lowest risk area in the province for seismic activity.

What would the price of coal have to be to make it economic to spoil on the east side of the ridge?

The company doesn't know the exact number. However, because long range planning has to occur, they must develop plans using current prices and cannot wait to see what happens to the price of coal.

If the company gets an approval, can they apply later to change the plan?

Yes. They can apply for changes. However government would carefully review the proposed change and would invite public involvement. Any changes would be examined in consideration of what happened during the environmental assessment review process.

What guarantee is there that the company won't apply for an exemption to go back to the single lift option later on?

There is no guarantee, but because of the public concern about the mine, they would not likely get approval for a change unless it improved the design to further reduce any impacts. The single lift option would not likely do that.

What is the chance of early closure if the long range plan is not approved?

The company would mine out what reserves are known to be there and may close early.

How long will the mine last if the long range plan is approved?

With the long range plan the mine would operate for about 25 years, as opposed to 10 years with currently approved operations.

Will Fording compensate people for a loss of property values as a result of visual impacts?

No.

Is there a back up plan for those few days when the wind blows the wrong way and there are dust problems?

The company does not know right now exactly what they might do on those days, but they will do everything they can to minimize dust.

NEWSLETTER

The Cougar Pit Coal Project P R O P O S A L

Greenhills

Environmental
Assessment Office



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

February 1997

Number 2

SUMMARY

Fording Coal Ltd. (the "Proponent") has made an application for a project approval certificate under the *Environmental Assessment Act* for the Cougar Pit Coal Project. The application is for development of the Cougar South and Main Pits and the West Spoil waste dump at the existing Fording Coal Greenhills Operation located northeast of Elkford, B.C. The proposed long range mine plan will extend the life of the Greenhills Mine by approximately 15 years.

As part of the environmental assessment of the Cougar Pit Coal Project, in May 1996 the Proponent prepared and submitted a detailed impact assessment (Project Report). This report assessed the potential effects of the project and presented strategies for mitigating these effects. The Project Report was made available for public review and comments were requested by August 13, 1996. Twenty-eight submissions were received from the public on the Project Report, 14 in support and 14 that raised concerns. In their review of the Project Report, and the issues raised by the public, the Ministries of Health and Environment Lands and Parks, and the Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Council identified several issues that required further assessment by the Proponent.

In November 1996, an Addendum to the Project Report was submitted in response to the concerns and issues identified during the review period. The Addendum was made available for public review and comments were requested by December 20, 1996. Three submissions were received from the public on the Addendum Report, one in support, and two identifying continued concerns. The Ministries of Health and Environment, Lands and Parks, and the Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Council also reviewed the addendum to assess how well their concerns had been addressed.

The Project Report, the Addendum Report, and copies of government, First Nations and public submissions on both documents may be viewed at the Environmental Assessment Office Project Registry at 1st Floor, 836 Yates Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8V 1X4, (250) 356-7441, or at Project Registry Satellite Repositories in the following communities:

Elkford Public Library

816 Michel Rd.

Sparwood Public Library

110 Pine Ave.

Fernie Public Library

592-3rd Ave.

Cranbrook Public Library

20-17th Ave. North

The Project Committee's task in reviewing the Proponent's application is to ensure that the application has identified and adequately described the potential effects of the project, including all significant potential adverse effects, and that the application sets out practical means of preventing or reducing to an acceptable level all significant adverse effects of the project. Once the Committee is satisfied that these requirements have been addressed, it may recommend that the project be referred to ministers for a decision.

The ministry or agency with the mandate for each issue identified during the review was assigned responsibility to review the issue and the Proponent's response to the issue, and to advise the Committee on whether or not the issue had been adequately addressed. The main

THE COUGA PIT COAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

concerns raised by the public, the proponent's response to the issues, and the results of the government's review of the issues are described below.

ISSUE	PROPONENT'S RESPONSE	REVIEW AGENCY / PROJECT COMMITTEE RESPONSE
<p>DUSTFALL IN ELKFORD Concerns were raised that the development of the West Spoil will increase the amount of dustfall that occurs in the Town of Elkford and the surrounding area.</p>	<p>The presence of coal in particulate filters may be used as a relative indication of the current Greenhills Mine contribution to TSP and PM10 levels in Elkford. Coal particulates make up a very small proportion of the dust that is found in Elkford, and most of the dust likely comes from other sources such as wood burning stoves and road dust. Rock dust from overburden at the mine site is also not expected to be a major source of dust affecting Elkford. The expansion of the Greenhills Mine is not expected to contribute to any significant increase in dust, or in coal as a component of the dust that occurs in Elkford.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks is satisfied that, based on predictions from modeling results, the proposed West Spoil is not expected to contribute significantly to dustfall in Elkford. The Proponent's commitment to continue the use of dust suppression methods at the mine, continue the ambient PM 10 monitoring program in the community and make the results available to the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks and the public should address concerns with dustfall.</p>
<p>HAZE Concerns were raised that the development of the West Spoil will contribute to the occurrence of haze in the Elk Valley, particularly as visible from Elkford.</p>	<p>A study of haze conditions in October 1996 concluded that haze does not appear to be associated with mine operations and is most likely a result of wood smoke. Haze conditions are not expected to be affected by the proposed mine operations.</p>	<p>Based on its review of the air quality addendum, the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks agrees with the prediction from the Proponent that haze is not likely to be a problem with the West Spoil, however, further visual monitoring of the origin and extent of haze episodes, by the proponent, is recommended to confirm the October 1996 results.</p>
<p>PM₁₀¹ Concerns were raised about the potential for increased dust to have health impacts on the community. The Ministry of Health also had questions about the potential for the mine expansion to contribute to PM₁₀ levels, which in turn might affect health in the local area.</p>	<p>The Proponent assessed the amount of PM₁₀ in the area, and the contribution of PM₁₀ by the Greenhills Mine. The study concludes that there may be minor increased concentrations of PM₁₀ in Elkford but concentrations would still be well within the MELP objective of 50 µg/m³ and the use of dust suppression will keep concentrations below the objective.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks agrees with the prediction of PM₁₀ from the West Spoil. On the basis of the analysis, the Ministry of Health is also satisfied that PM₁₀ from this project poses no significant health risk. The air quality monitoring agreed to by the proponent will ensure PM₁₀ levels are properly monitored and mitigation measures can be implemented if a problem develops in the future.</p>
<p>IMPACTS ON RECREATION/TOURISM Some concerns were raised by the public that the project would impact on tourism activities.</p>	<p>The Project Report stated that the project will not affect tourism in the area.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture agrees that tourism is not expected to be negatively affected by the project. The main tourism in the area is snowmobiling and hunting and these activities are not dependent on the view from town, so visual impacts of the West Spoil will also not affect tourism.</p>
<p>The public raised concerns that the west spoil would impact on the ability to pursue recreational activities on the east slope of the valley</p>	<p>The Project Report states that recreational activities are not presently permitted on Fording property, for safety reasons, and the extent of these restrictions will not change as a result of the proposed project. So there will be no change to the present ability to carry out recreational activities in this area.</p>	<p>The Project Committee is satisfied that the project will not impact the current ability to pursue recreational activities on the east slope of the valley.</p>
<p>INCREASED NOISE Some concerns were raised that the noise of the expanded mining operation would be audible in Elkford.</p>	<p>In the Project Report, the studies indicated that noise is not expected to increase significantly as a result of the project. Any noise that may be heard in Elkford would be below background noise levels, even in the worst case.</p>	<p>The Committee reviewed the Noise Impact Assessment included in the Project Report and is satisfied that there will not be significant noise impacts in town as a result of the project.</p>

¹ PM₁₀ is suspended particulate matter that is smaller than 10 microns in diameter. Because of their small size these particulates can travel farther than larger ones, which would fall out of the air due to gravity. Particulates of this very small size can enter the lungs of people exposed to the material and, depending on the dose, may result in health impacts.

T H E C O U G A R P I T C O A L P R O J E C T P R O P O S A L

<p>EFFECTS ON PROPERTY VALUES Some members of the public raised a concern that the proposed West Spoil would negatively affect property values.</p>	<p>In the Project Report, the Proponent stated that it is not possible to predict what may happen to property values, however, the project will contribute to long term economic stability in the community.</p>	<p>The Project Committee discussed the issue and agreed that there are two different views among the public on this issue. There aren't any studies or additional work the proponent could do to resolve the question and there isn't any way to predict what will happen. The Project Committee is satisfied that the issue has been considered and there are not any measures that can be implemented to manage the issue.</p>
<p>SPOIL STABILITY Concerns were raised about the stability of the spoil design and the potential for spoil failures.</p>	<p>The Project Report provided a geotechnical report which concluded that the spoil would not pose a significant risk for failure.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Employment and Investment's geotechnical engineers reviewed the spoil plan and were satisfied that the spoil has been designed so that the risk of spoil failure is very low and it is not a concern.</p>
<p>VISUAL IMPACTS The most significant visual impact will be the establishment of the West Spoil on the western side of the Greenhills Ridge, in view of Elkford.</p>	<p>The West Spoil has been designed with three tiers and it would be built progressively, starting with the bottom tier. As each tier is constructed reclamation would also begin and would proceed progressively. Most of the bottom tier would be behind a ridgeline and would not be visible from Elkford. The spoil will also be contoured to provide a more diverse topographic structure and to allow for enhanced reclamation to minimize visual disturbance. Mitigation measures should ensure the negative visual impacts of the final spoil are minimized.</p>	<p>In its review the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism and Culture noted that visual modification of the landscape is not unusual in resource based communities and the acceptability of projects varies, based on the community's orientation to the project and its contribution to the local economy relative to other economic sectors. The Project Committee is satisfied that the proponent proposes to carry out reasonable measures to minimize the visual impacts of the West Spoil.</p>
<p>IMPACTS TO WILDLIFE Concerns were raised about the potential impacts to grizzly bears and other wildlife. Concern was also raised about cumulative impacts of all development in the Elk Valley on wildlife.</p>	<p>The Project Report outlines the potential effects to wildlife, which are mainly to elk, deer and moose, and the measures that will be implemented to minimize any impacts both during mining and after reclamation. The net effects are expected to be minimal, and will be positive for some species such as bighorn sheep.</p>	<p>Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks fish and wildlife staff have reviewed the studies and proposed wildlife mitigation measures, and also considered the concerns of the public. The Ministry is satisfied that negative effects to wildlife will be minimized providing the proposed reclamation activities are implemented successfully, and monitoring of results will be required.</p>
<p>LOCATION OF THE WEST SPOIL Concerns were raised that the proponent should be required to spoil on the east side of the Greenhills ridge, outside of the Elk Valley.</p>	<p>The Project Report includes an analysis of the East Spoil vs. the proposed West Spoil and concludes that moving all of the waste material to the East Spoil would add an additional \$154.8 million to the project cost.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Employment and Investment undertook an independent review of the proponent's analysis and concluded that the results of that analysis are reasonable. The Project Committee is satisfied that the additional costs of spoiling on the East Side are large enough to make that option unreasonable.</p>
<p>CUMULATIVE EFFECTS Concerns were raised about the potential for this project to combine with the effects of other development activities in the Elk Valley to cause cumulative impacts on air quality, water quality and wildlife.</p>	<p>The proponent is participating with MELP and other coal mines in an ongoing assessment of selenium levels in the Elk River. This assessment extends beyond the review of the Cougar Pit project and the Project Committee is satisfied that the issue will be appropriately addressed in that forum.</p> <p>The proponent identified the potential effects of the project on air quality and wildlife, and the Project Committee did not identify any further data collection as necessary.</p>	<p>Although the concerns about potential cumulative impacts are real concerns, the Project Committee is limited in its mandate to looking at the impacts of the Greenhills Cougar Pit project, and can only require the proponent to collect project specific data related to the potential cumulative impacts of the project. The potential impacts are not expected to be significant, provided the proposed mitigation measures are carried out. The Project Committee does not find it reasonable to require the proponent to gather data about the cumulative effects of other activities in the Elk Valley, such as logging, because the proponent is not responsible for those activities. However, this is an important issue that will continue to be raised in future project reviews. Efforts to find an appropriate way to address potential cumulative effects in a comprehensive manner, involving all parties, will have to continue.</p>

NEXT STEPS

Following the end of the formal public review period on August 13, 1996, the Project Committee had 70 days to complete its review and prepare conclusions and recommendations to be provided to ministers for a decision. As a result of the need for the company to carry out additional work and prepare the Addendum Report, the 70 day time limit had to be extended to allow for the additional information to be submitted and reviewed before the Committee's recommendations are finalized and forwarded to ministers. The Committee's recommendations are now expected to be forwarded to ministers by the end of February 1997, after further public consultation has been completed.

AIR QUALITY OPEN HOUSE

As a result of the public submissions on the Cougar Pit project, the Project Committee has decided to hold an open house to deal specifically with the issues surrounding dust and its potential effects on air quality. This workshop will take place on February 18, 1997 in the Elkford Pool—Library Complex.

Air quality is the most significant concern that has been identified by the public and the Project Committee would like to have an opportunity to discuss the issue and the Committee conclusions with the public. The open house will take place from 2:00 pm to 10:00 p.m. and will provide information on the results of the additional air quality work carried out by the proponent, as well as the government's review of the information. A brief presentation summarizing the results of the air quality impact assessment and review, for those people who have remaining questions, will take place at 4:00 p.m. and again at 8:00 p.m. The presentation and the open house will provide an opportunity for interested persons to ask questions and discuss air quality issues with the company's consultants and the government's technical experts. Although the focus will be on air quality, the Project Committee will also answer other questions about the review of the project.

Anyone with an interest in the review of the project is welcome to attend the open house and discuss the issue further in that forum.

DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 1997
 LOCATION: Multi-Purpose Room, Pool-Library Complex, Elkford, BC
 TIME: Open House from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m.
 Presentations on the Air Quality Impact Assessment Results at 4:00 p.m. and at 8:00 p.m.

Check the box if you wish to receive updates on the *Cougar Pit Coal Project Proposal*

Check the box if you wish to receive more information on the *environmental assessment process*

Please check if you wish to be taken off our existing mailing list and return this form with your mailing label.

* If our records of your current address are incorrect, please send in your address label with any corrections.

If you would like to receive updates on the Cougar Pit Coal Project or general information on the environmental assessment process, please fill in the information form below and send it to:

Environmental Assessment Office Project Registry
 1st Floor, 836 Yates Street, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
 T: (250) 356-7441 F: (250) 356-7440 <http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca>

Name _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone # _____ Fax # _____

E-Mail Address: _____