

GOAT RIVER LISTED AMONG MOST ENDANGERED – AGAIN!

The Goat River, a tributary of the Fraser River located 35 km west of McBride, is again among British Columbia's top five endangered rivers according to a list released Saturday by the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC (ORC).

"The Endangered Rivers List highlights the many threats confronting our waterways while also illustrating the need to better care for our rivers," notes Mark Angelo, Chair of the ORC's Endangered Rivers Committee.

Since 1994, the fate of the Goat River has been strongly contested. McBride Forest Industries has already started developing the 35,000-hectare area of the upper Goat and plans to log more than 12,000 truckloads of timber in the next few years. Current plans include building a logging road in the channel of the salmon-bearing Goat River itself, a river noted for its pristine water quality.

The Fraser Headwaters Alliance (FHA), a grassroots conservation group based in the Robson Valley, is leading a campaign to gain full protection for the upper Goat. Logging will negatively affect the watershed's fish and wildlife populations and sever critical wildlife corridors between Kakwa and Bowron Lake Provincial Parks. The Goat is home to Chinook salmon, grizzly bears, and 'red-listed' mountain caribou—a species in dramatic decline, and now considered more endangered than the black rhino. Recent work has confirmed the presence of yet another vital, but fragile component of the Goat River ecosystem: more endangered bull trout than are found in most other upper Fraser tributaries.

FHA is also concerned about the impact of logging on the Historic Goat River Trail, an 1886 gold rush route that is fast becoming a premier eco-tourism destination, partly because it connects with the world-renowned Bowron Lake Provincial Park.

"The Goat is one of the last remaining undeveloped watersheds in the headwaters of the Fraser," says FHA President Roy Howard. "The rarity of undeveloped watersheds in the upper Fraser, in combination with the Goat River's rich and unique wildlife and heritage values, justifies full protection. We call upon the Government of BC to permanently remove the Goat from the Endangered Rivers list by granting protected status for the watershed of the upper Goat River."

The Goat received special mention as part of the Fraser River, which was listed in fifth place. This is the third year that the Goat has received this distinction by ORC, whose release is available at <http://www.orcbc.ca> More information on the effort to protect the upper Goat River watershed can be found at <http://www.savethegoat.ca>

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