

Top 10 Reasons Why Tatshenshini-Alsek Was Protected

Tatshenshini-Alsek is a globally important wilderness area, which was threatened by the proposed Windy Craggy copper mine. Given that the mine had the potential to cause massive and perpetual environmental damage, in both Canada and the United States, the campaign to preserve Tatshenshini was of vital importance.

The key points in the campaign were:

1. Tatshenshini-Alsek's spectacular scenic, wildlife, biodiversity, and recreation preservation values are acknowledged to be of top world significance. This significance has been acknowledged by the United Nations (UNESCO), the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the U.S. Congress, and the BC Ministry of Environment and Parks.
2. Preservation of Tatshenshini-Alsek would protect the heartland of, and therefore completing, the largest international preserve in the world. Tatshenshini-Alsek and the cluster of surrounding World Heritage Sites and National Parks in Canada and the United States would be large enough to guarantee the survival of the grizzly in North America and the rare glacier bear in Canada.
3. Canadian, U.S. and British Columbia government agencies, including the recently completed BC Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) Report, have repeatedly confirmed that the proposed Windy Craggy project threatened to cause massive and permanent acid mine drainage and heavy metal pollution which could have devastated U.S.-Canada fisheries worth US\$50 million/year.
4. Since the proposed Windy Craggy mine would have been located in the most active earthquake zone in North America, severe and devastating acid mine drainage impacts were likely.
5. As the CORE report states, wilderness and mining could not have co-existed in Tatshenshini-Alsek, since road access into Windy Craggy would be required in perpetuity to prevent tailings dams failures and the subsequent release of acid and heavy metals.
6. Permitting the development of the Windy Craggy mine would have contravened four international treaties to which Canada is signatory. For example, since Glacier Bay National Park (down-stream in Alaska) is a World Heritage Site, the World Heritage Convention applies. This convention states "a nation will not undertake any action which might directly or indirectly threaten another nation's World Heritage Site."
7. The United States had a veto on the proposed Windy Craggy development, since the port site would have been located in Alaska. U.S. opposition was intense from the Administration (including Vice President Gore), numerous federal agencies, and the U.S. Congress.
8. Windy Craggy had already received four years of exhaustive review by agencies in Canada and the United States. To prolong the process even more would have only proved costly, and internationally embarrassing.
9. Preservation of Tatshenshini-Alsek Park protected North America's Wildest River, a recommended World Heritage Site, and complete the world's largest transboundary "Global Biodiversity Preserve".
10. The decisions to protect Tatshenshini-Alsek Park is one which benefits not only our generation but future generations as well. The government of British Columbia was offered the chance to bestow a globally irreplaceable wilderness, wildlife, and biodiversity treasure, or to pass on a legacy of potential environmental destruction instead. The decision was clear...