



# North Columbia Environmental Society

**River's At Risk Statement, November 19th, 2008**

In the Revelstoke area there are over 70 river or creek applications (that could be licensed) for independent private power projects. At present we have seen about 16 notices in our local paper. A recent NCES movie and speaker night with MLA Norm MacDonald saw 250 people come to learn about IPP's in our area. Further actions include more speakers, a petition and the collection and dissemination of personal narratives from local citizens regarding rivers at risk in our area. We are also contacting many other groups throughout the province that have knowledge and experience on this topic.

The most contentious application so far has been for the project on the Illecillewaet River. This is a major river, fed from the Illecillewaet glacier near Roger's Pass. It is an icon for our community and has major issues and impacts. In the mid 1980's, through public process this river was rehabilitated by the removal of an old dam to facilitate fish migration and compensation for fish habitat losses during the construction of the massive Revelstoke (major) dam on the Columbia River at Revelstoke. This river provides habitat for blue listed bull trout, cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, sturgeon and many other less known fish. As well several rafting and kayaking companies use this river for their boating businesses.

The Wood River north of Revelstoke is also in the midst of the IPP application process. The proponent has major plans, comparable in scope to the Ashlu River in Squamish. A 5 km long penstock, long transmission wire distance from the upper Wood River to at least Mica and possibly to the Goldstream (well over a hundred kilometers), as well as pristine habitat already conserved for caribou and other threatened species through a land use planning process that has taken many years to complete. Local citizens, interest groups, recreation groups and industry that was involved in this caribou management plan are alarmed by this lack of recognition for these existing plans.

With the sheer number of creeks, cumulative impact is a major issue. An individual IPP footprint may seem small, but in total they add up to hundreds of kilometers of transmission lines crisscrossing our region. Many of these areas are already in land use plans for mountain caribou and other threatened species which have taken years of work to negotiate among many stakeholders.

From an official standpoint the North Columbia Environmental Society, we are asking the provincial government to do two things. Firstly we would like the premier, Minister Neufeld, and/or Minister Penner to come to Revelstoke and hold a public meeting to discuss the whole policy framework around Independent Power Projects, secondly, we would like a complete moratorium on all IPP applications and projects already underway. We would like this moratorium in place until local stakeholder and cumulative impact assessments are in place.