

Glacier National Park

Cabin Creek Mine is a proposed surface coal mine located 6 miles north of Glacier National Park on a tributary to the North Fork of the Flathead River in British Columbia, Canada. Based on evaluations of the NPS, the State of Montana, and EPA, it is believed that construction, operation, and post-mine reclamation of the Cabin Creek Mine represent a significant threat to the water quality and quantity of the North Fork of the Flathead River, the western boundary of Glacier National Park. Similarly, the mine represents a very real threat to the bull trout fishery in the Flathead River Basin, since 15 percent of the spawning habitat for bull trout in the entire basin is in the immediate vicinity of the mine.

Based on these concerns, a reference on the Cabin Creek Mine was submitted by the United States and Canada to the International Joint Commission (IJC) in February 1985. This reference called for the IJC to investigate the potential transboundary water impacts of the Cabin Creek Mine under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. In order to assess these concerns, the IJC established the Flathead River International Study Board to investigate the potential impacts of the proposed Cabin Creek Mine on water quality and quantity in the Flathead River Basin and also to assess the effects of the mine on fisheries and water uses in the Basin. The NPS is represented on the study board and on a number of the technical committees which have been established to evaluate various transboundary water effects of the mine. In the course of the study, effects on the waters and fisheries of Glacier National Park will be evaluated and effects on Glacier's special designations (e.g., Biosphere Reserve and nominated World Heritage Site) will also be assessed. The present schedule calls for the study board to submit a report to the IJC by the end of December 1986.

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