

## Melanie Daneluk

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**From:** dan.rollert@westfraser.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 16, 2011 10:02 AM  
**To:** AENV Environmental Assessment  
**Cc:** Darren Tapp; jim.lelacheur@westfraser.com; lynn.bergeron@westfraser.com; Richard.Briand@westfraser.com  
**Subject:** Proposed Terms of Reference for Environmental Impact Assessment, Coal Valley Resources Inc. Robb Trend Project

**Attachments:** Robb Trend Letter.doc



Robb Trend  
Letter.doc (480 KB)

Please find attached Hinton Wood Products' comments regarding the Robb Trend Project. If you wish to discuss our concerns, please contact me directly at 780-865-8171.  
(See attached file: Robb Trend Letter.doc)

Dan Rollert, RPF  
Woodlands Manager  
Hinton Wood Products  
A Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.  
780-865-8171



**Hinton Wood Products**  
A Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.

Hinton Woodlands Division  
756 Switzer Dr.  
Hinton, Alberta  
T7V 0A2

Phone: 780-865-8553  
Fax: 780-865-8165

June 16, 2011

Director, Environmental Assessment,  
Regional Integration, Alberta Environment  
111 Twin Atria Bldg., 4999-98 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 2X3

Dear Sir or Madam:

**Re: Proposed Terms of Reference for Environmental Impact Assessment  
Coal Valley Resources Inc. - Robb Trend Project**

Hinton Wood Products, a division of West Fraser Mills Ltd. wishes to express its concern with the extensive coal mining activity that has taken place on our Forest Management Area (FMA) over the past 40 years with little or no reclaimed coal mined lands being returned to our FMA. When approved, these lands are removed from the West Fraser FMA, which has immediate impacts to our Company's business opportunities. These impacts can be best mitigated by limiting the area disturbed and minimizing the time until the lands are reclaimed and returned to the FMA.

We acknowledge the Alberta Government's interest in allowing coal mine expansion to take place in the Province as a vehicle to generate revenue and employment, however we ask that any further coal mine expansion proposed by Coal Valley Resources Inc. in the Robb Trend proposal be done in such a way that would require the company to carry out reclamation of these areas in a timely and progressive manner.

We would like to see a target set which requires all mined lands to be returned to our FMA in a reclaimed and reforested state within 20 years of mining. This will help minimize the impacts that coal mining is having on our land base and provide our Company with a suitable timber supply to support future forest operations in the Hinton area.

Sincerely,

Dan Rollert, RPF  
Hinton Wood Products  
A Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.

cc. Darren Tapp, Executive Director, Sustainable Resource Development

## Melanie Daneluk

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**From:** Didier Christine & Rick [rcdidier9@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 13, 2011 1:59 PM  
**To:** AENV Environmental Assessment  
**Cc:** \*LaFleur Les  
**Subject:** Letter of Concerns to the Robb Trend Project

**Attachments:** AB Env CVRI Letter June 2011.pdf; ATT492989.txt; RHPA Society Registration.pdf; ATT492990.txt



AB Env CVRI Letter June 2011.p (68 B) RHPA Society Registration.pdf .. (68 B)  
ATT492989.txt ATT492990.txt

Melanie Daneluk,

Our letter of concerns to the Robb Trend Project in PDF form as well as our Association information. If you need further information or clarification, please contact me. Please send me a notification this e-mail was received.

Thank you,

Christine Didier  
President  
Robb Hamlet Preservation Association  
780-794-2299  
rcdidier@gmail.com

Box 8  
Robb, Alberta  
ToE 1X0

June 9, 2011

Director, Environmental Assessment  
Regional Integration  
Alberta Environment  
111 Twin Atria Bldg.  
4999-98 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T6B 2X3

To Whom it May Concern:

RE: Initial Concerns and Reservations Regarding The Robb Trend Project Submission of public input by Robb Hamlet Preservation Association on the Draft Terms of Reference for the Robb Trend Project per Alberta Environment Ref #.....

The Robb Hamlet Preservation Association (RHPA) was formed in July, 2010 by property owners of the Hamlet of Robb to give a voice to all residents, property owners and visitors to our area who are concerned with keeping a life style we enjoy and maintaining our outdoor activities. Although Robb itself is a small community, there are many people who cherish our historic town and its surroundings and spend time in the immediate area. RHPA is their voice. The mandate of the RHPA is to provide for the recreation of the members and to promote and afford opportunity for friendly and social activities by creating a greenbelt/buffer zone around the Hamlet of Robb, and to be notified as to the intensions of the natural resource based development in the proximity of the Hamlet of Robb.

Many concerns have surfaced with regard to the Robb Trend Project Proposal as it has been presented to the RHPA. These concerns, which we will address individually, warrant careful consideration as there are many aspects included. Health and well-being, environmental issues, water issues, are all a crucial part of our proposal and we trust that you will take all of our concerns into consideration before granting approval on a project as invasive and environmentally hazardous as the very extensive Robb Trend Project.

Thank you,

Christine Didier  
President  
Robb Hamlet Preservation Association  
780-794-2299

**SUBMISSION OF PUBLIC INPUT BY ROBB HAMLET  
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION ON THE DRAFT TERMS OF  
REFERENCE FOR THE ROBB TREND PROJECT PER ALBERTA  
ENVIRONMENT REF #.....**

**INITIAL CONCERNS and RESERVATIONS**

With our mandate in mind, we would like to express our concerns with Coal Valley Resources Inc. proposing an open mine pit less than one (1) kilometer from our hamlet's east and west boundaries. People regularly use up to five (5) kilometers around the hamlet for various types of recreation and would like to continue to do so. We require a 5 km environmental buffer zone open to full public recreation use.

**Health and Well-Being:**

The Robb Trend Project as proposed would bring CVRI mining within a kilometer of our homes. Air quality will certainly be affected as the coal dust and dirt created through blasting and extraction of coal is carried by the winds into our community where it will infiltrate our properties and homes; people with lung problems, asthma, and allergies suffering the worst affect. This problem is amplified in today's age where more and more children have severe allergies and asthma and many already require puffers to breathe. With the air pollution created through mining, playing out-of-doors on their own property or riding their bikes in town could pose a very realistic hardship or impossibility.

The planet of late has been experiencing very severe changes in weather patterns. Winds blow at hurricane force and often from directions that until now were not "normal". This will have a profound effect on the amount of pollution our town will be subjected to. A five (5) kilometer buffer zone would not eliminate these pollution hazards but would certainly help to minimize them.

Quiet blasting would minimize the noise pollution in the area. The buffer zone would likely eliminate noise made from equipment which runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year!

**Recreation and Lifestyle:**

Our rivers and creeks are a huge source of recreation for residents and

tourists alike, enjoying the outdoors and camping with activities like hiking, fishing, swimming, canoeing and kayaking. Previous problems with the mine in the Pembina, Little Pembina, and Embarras rivers should not be allowed to recur. The Athabasca area water shed will be disrupted changing spawning areas and local fishing holes.

People have moved to and settled in Robb for a variety of reasons. Some chose to retire here where they could spend their leisure time enjoying the extraordinary terrain which surrounds the Hamlet of Robb – hunting, fishing, hiking, taking nature walks, biking, quadding, canoeing, skid-dooing, bird watching, berry picking. Some have chosen to have summer homes here where they can enjoy the out-of-doors activities provided by such a local. Others living here are trappers, and outfitters. The encroaching Robb Trend Project will jeopardize all of these. The recreational areas around Robb have already felt the impact of lumber, gas/oil, and mining industries. We need to protect some of the environment around our town to maintain the very reason why people are here and still come here. Many of the mine workers live in Robb. After a hard days work, they too, would prefer to look out their windows and see surrounding beauty; sit on their decks, relax, breathe in fresh mountain air without choking on coal dust and without hearing the roar of industry. If the Robb Trend Project as set out is approved, the quality of life and living in our town will diminish greatly, depriving all of us of the wondrous living we have come to cherish, respect, and expect.

You can not uproot the entire environment with a shallow promise that once you are finished it will be reclaimed (however long that takes) and expect that this intrusion on nature will not take a huge toll on the animal and plant life it disturbs and disrupts. We are not demanding that mining be terminated, but we fully expect that our existence in its entirety not be yanked out from under us. Give us some air to breathe, some land to cherish, some quality of life.

### **Water Wells:**

A major concern for everyone in Robb is not only the total loss of water in our wells, but the change in quality and quantity as well as the increase in minerals and sediment such as sand and coal particulate. Residents are already finding an increase in these particles. Therefore, ground and surface water quality and quantity will have to be guaranteed by the mine and the province. The penalties and consequences understood fully by all parties.

## **Splitting of RTP into Two Projects:**

The Robb trend should be split into two (2) projects; Robb East and Robb West, with highway 47 and the Hamlet of Robb dividing the two projects. Each of these should require separate applications and environmental impact assessments. Previous applications have been split east and west of the highway corridor as in the Yellowhead and Mercoal West trends.

Mining coal east of Robb has been in the public domain for many years and has been reluctantly accepted by many of the residents and property owners. Mining west of Robb, however, does not have any of the same acceptance and has only been in the public domain since October 2010 when first mentioned in a CVRI newsletter. Splitting the project allows time to evaluate the co-operation and co-ordination between regulators, mine management and concerned citizens before placing a major coal mine immediately upwind and on two sides of the community. Physical mining west of Robb is not planned until 2027 and does not require approval at this time or even in the near future. In fact, many of the people who will be affected by Robb West Trend are not old enough to go to school and some not even born yet.

## **Reclamation:**

Reluctant acceptance seems to be based on the assurance that the mine will get the coal, reclaim the land and get out. Reclamation times and cost will have to be reconsidered based on the fact not one square inch of mine leased land has been returned reclaimed to the province since the mine in question began over forty (40) years ago. This will definitely affect hamlet property values in the future and is not acceptable. Reclamation should be prompt and proficient and returned in parcels for public use on a guaranteed time schedule within 5 years of the completion of mining phases, not delayed until the completion of a complete mine trend.

## **Impact on Flora and Fauna:**

In the area that will be disturbed and affected by the Robb Trend Project there lives an abundance of animals that will suffer a huge impact on their habitat. A few years ago grizzly bear hunting (by draw) was discontinued and studies were done because of the concern that grizzlies could become an endangered species due to their dwindling numbers. It was of major concern that these majestic animals be left as undisturbed as possible.

Well, the Robb Trend Project (RTP) is cutting through prime grizzly territory and subsequently pushing the bears closer to Robb. If a reasonable buffer zone is not left around our town, we will continue to see more and more bears coming into the hamlet in search of food. We need to preserve, if not all, at least some of their feeding areas that are adjacent to town. Huckleberries flourish on the hills surrounding Robb and are not only a food source for bears but are also enjoyed by people of the area. Huckleberries grow in very few areas of North America and the massive mining that has already taken place has depleted the huckleberry grounds extensively. A buffer zone around Robb would provide a natural food source for bears and they would not have to scavenge our local dump and townsite in search of alternative foods. As it is, we have several grizzlies who enter the town (usually just passing through) on their quest for berries and none of us wishes for this to become a stopping point for them in their quest for the huckleberries. We feel that a buffer zone would provide them with an area large enough to prevent them from living within town boundaries.

Bears are only one species of many that live adjacent to our hamlet. There are ungulates, felines, canines and smaller animals. No one wants to have these animals vanish from the area, being chased out because of mining. The buffer zone would act as a sanctuary for these animals. One of the draws to Robb is its proximity to wild-life and the thrill one derives from seeing wild animals whilst skiddooing, quadding, hiking or mountain biking. The funding for our community is through such activities as the Quad Rally where upwards of 600 quad enthusiasts come for their annual Poker Rally. Why do they come to Robb ..... because the surrounding area is astoundingly beautiful and one can experience a oneness with nature here. Without a buffer zone to surround Robb, that is gone in a heart-beat. Coal dust and mountainous machines are not a tourist draw. A buffer zone would maintain this attraction to Robb and we could still thrive as the beautiful little town sitting in a scenic valley in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

It is not uncommon to see sandhill cranes, Canada geese, grey owls, eagles (bald and golden) and herons in and around Robb. These beautiful birds would also benefit from a buffer zone around Robb. They add to the quality of life here. We want them to remain. We do not want to bring mining to a halt, but we don't think we should have to sacrifice our entire life style, living in a coal-dust-filled, naked environment so that the coal industry can extract every morsel of coal from every crevasse in our immediate area. What we are seeking is to maintain our life-style and the quality of life we now have.



## **Underground Fires:**

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development currently monitors underground fires in the old mines around Robb. If these seams are opened to air, it will fuel the fire, similar to opening the damper on a stove or fireplace, and could start a major forest fire with devastating consequences to our properties and residents. Once again, the severity of today's weather causes further concern for this possibility. We cannot close our eyes to what happened in Slave Lake, Alberta. We certainly do not want to be next.

## **Property Values:**

We feel our property values will be greatly decreased with a visible, audible, open-pit mine operating less than one (1) short kilometer, both east and west, of our hamlet boundaries. We will lose all our selling points – recreation will be jeopardized with NO TRESPASSING signs lining our forests, beauty will be limited if not eliminated. With CVRI's past history in reclamation, we may have to live with that mine in our back yard for 30 plus years!

Christine Didier  
President  
Robb Hamlet Preservation Association  
780-794-2299  
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cc: Les LaFleur, P. Eng.  
Manager, CVRI Robb Trend Project