



Press Release

Federal government's own report shows Teck Frontier mine would be disaster for at risk Wood Bison

Last month a federal government report assessed the Threatened Wood Bison species in Canada as facing imminent threats to their recovery. Once extending throughout the boreal forest from Alberta to the Yukon, Wood Bison now only represent a fraction of their historical numbers. The report found that immediate intervention is needed for populations to recover. In particular, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change looked at impacts faced by two herds in Alberta whose recovery was the most precarious.

One of the two herds was our Ronald Lake Wood Bison whose current herd range lies just south of Wood Buffalo National Park and directly in the footprint for the proposed Teck Resources Frontier oil sands mine, the largest oil sands mine ever proposed in Alberta. The proposed Frontier lease area overlaps with ***over a quarter*** of the Ronald Lake herd range. By the government's own report, construction of the mine poses an imminent threat to the recovery of the species.

"The project threatens the very existence of the Ronald Lake Wood Bison herd. Sacrificing their recovery for a mine is unacceptable," says Chief Gerry Cheezie of the Smith's Landing First Nation. Loss of the Ronald Lake herd would disproportionately impact Indigenous communities that have relied on the herd for generations.

Even the Panel tasked with evaluating the environmental impacts of the Teck Frontier mine state that the project "would have significant consequences for the herd and the asserted rights, use of lands and resources, and cultural practices of indigenous communities who are connected to the herd."

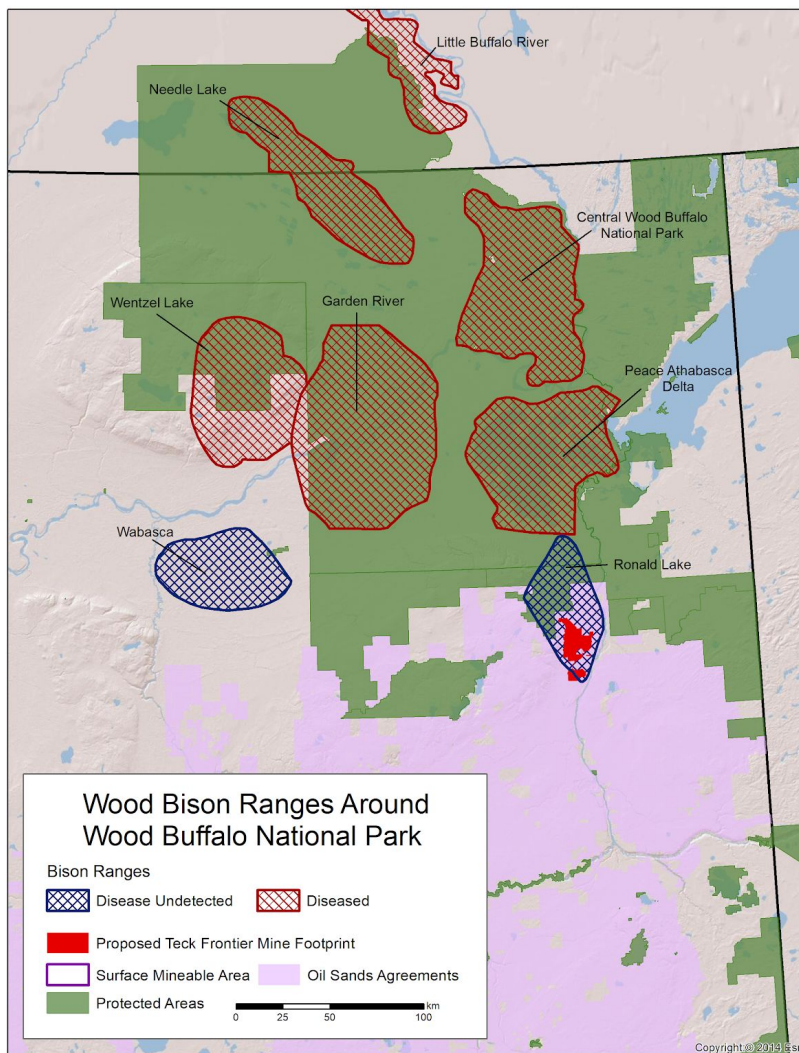
As a Threatened species listed on the Species At Risk Act, the federal government has a legal obligation to immediately address threats and take action to recover the species. The report identifies "range loss from proposed industrial activities" as an imminent threat to the recovery of the herd. Habitat loss is a primary threat to Wood Bison recovery, and the proposed project footprint will result in substantial loss of habitat for the herd, including a loss of roughly 14,000 hectares of wetlands.

The Ronald Lake herd is one of the last wild, disease-free populations in the province. Maintaining the herd as disease-free should be a priority for the federal government. If approved

and built, the Teck Frontier mine will likely trigger the herd to push farther north into areas of overlap with nearby diseased herds. If this happens, it is very likely the Ronald Lake herd would become diseased. This would be an irreversible impact.

With a decision on the Teck Frontier mine looming, due by February 28, 2020, approval by the federal government will be in immediate conflict with the obligations to Canadians to protect our species at risk.

Smith's Landing First Nation and CPAWS are calling on the public to let our Cabinet Ministers know that rejection of the Teck Frontier mine is necessary to protect Threatened Wood Bison and our natural heritage. You can send a letter to the Cabinet Ministers using this letter template here: bit.ly/RejectFrontier.



Map of Wood Bison herd ranges in and around Wood Buffalo National Park, with disease-free herds highlighted blue. The proposed Teck Frontier footprint is in red. (credit: CPAWS NAB)

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