

# WANTED



The sweeping Crown of the Continent view across the thrust-faulted Rock Creek watershed looks westward toward the Livingstone Range. Within this Serengeti-like landscape, herds of elk traverse rare rough fescue grasslands, and pure-strain westslope cutthroat trout, a threatened species, cling to a small fraction of their former range. Thousands of golden eagles—the world's greatest concentration—migrate through this same wind-whipped, topographically tortured land each year, and it's known around the world to sailplane pilots as Canada's supreme soaring site.

## Warren Buffett—a billionaire with a soul

**The vision:** Explore a dynamic opportunity to craft a futuristic dream region using the power and persuasiveness of your wealth. Create, on an iconic Crown of the Continent landscape, an economic environment that is anchored in an ever-cascading stream of prosperity, cultural charm and natural history splendor.

*You can:*

- Launch a stunning and enduring legacy—a world-class, emblem-region located in the heart and soul of the Canadian Rockies;
- Create a land-use model that is dynamic in its ability to grow geotourism without threatening the quality of life that drives this growth;
- Inject aesthetic value and ecological integrity in a profound, compelling and illuminating way;
- Influence governments (nationally and internationally) by demonstrating economic success and viability;
- Spread a sense-of-place landscape ethic into—and far beyond—the river valleys, forests and peaks of Canada's Rocky Mountain front ranges;
- Save a viewscape that is drop-dead gorgeous;
- Unleash the power of sacred peaks and places;
- Unveil an untapped storehouse of natural capital virtue and wealth;
- Inject rigor and substance into the concept of a sustainable community and landscape;
- Prove what many already know—the landscape of southwestern Alberta is worth billions ... **IF** it can be saved.

**The foundation:** the picturesque, stunningly beautiful, steeped-in-history headwaters of the Oldman Watershed. It's nestled within the scenic landscape between Banff and Waterton Lakes national parks. The Oldman Watershed, a virtual unknown, is lost in the unstudied land between known places.

**This headwaters landscape has profound socio-economic worth. Its virtues include:**

- A sunny location on the eastern flanks of Crowsnest Pass, the lowest (by far) Rocky Mountain pass between New Mexico and Jasper National Park;
- The spectacular Castle, Crowsnest and Oldman river valleys, home to hundreds of prehistoric archaeological sites that bookmark a storied past. This landscape harbors one of the world's greatest concentrations of vision quest sites;
- The compelling and ominous shadow of Turtle Mountain, a landmark peak overlooking Alberta's three worst disasters (the 1914 Hillcrest Mine Disaster, the 1903 Frank Slide and the 1910 Bellevue Mine Explosion);
- The spectacular backdrop of the Flathead Range, the High Rock Range and the knife-edged Livingstone Range;
- A wealth of fossils from the Age of Dinosaurs. Black Beauty, a gorgeous T. rex, leads the emerging parade;
- A captivating, wind-sculpted, wind-tortured forest of ancient bonsais, trees with tenacious roots anchored in bedrock. Endangered limber and whitebark pines comprise the photogenic core of this haunting, evocative forest;
- An internationally-known trout fishery with year-round hatches and heavy-bodied fish;
- Canada's largest caving complex. The mountains hold a stunning array of karst features. Among named caves are The Booming Ice Chasm, Gargantua and The Glittering Ice Palace;
- Giant springs and rumors of hidden treasure;
- A storied and tumultuous past (bootlegging, shootouts and train robberies);
- The world's largest concentration of golden eagles. Thousands of these majestic birds of prey and countless additional raptors fly south along the crest of the Livingstone Range each autumn. Each spring the eagles return;
- A North American showcase for wildlife abundance and diversity. This is a landscape inhabited by deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, cougars and grizzlies;
- The knockdown force of a legendary wind. This is the birthplace of the chinook, the snow-eater. Sailplane pilots ride this turbulent river of wind into the stratosphere—it's Canada's premier soaring site.

**The problem:** AltaLink, the latest threat to this largely unprotected landscape, proposes to have the people of Alberta spend \$750 million to string high-voltage transmission lines across paradise. The project, deemed unnecessary by many reviewers, would degrade an internationally revered treasure.

The majority of the populace, unaware of the land's intrinsic geotourism worth, is largely blind to its potential, unable to articulate and plan its future. Development tends to be piecemeal and counter to the core values of sense-of-place integrity. External forces exacerbate this situation. The public lands that define the core of this drop-dead-gorgeous landscape continue to be degraded by multiple impacts inflicted by overlapping abuses.

- The future of this region is now threatened by the very qualities that drive growth. Overnight, this inspirational viewscape has become North America's most at-risk landscape.
- Society isn't managing this stunning wealth of natural capital, nor is it safeguarding and protecting this vital resource.
- Good decisions are predicated on good understanding, and good understanding is predicated on good information. Society, lacking solid information and driven by the prospect of instant personal gain at the expense of long term revenue, confronts overwhelming challenges in making good decisions.
- Money talks, but money without honor, veracity and a full-spectrum vision will continue to erode the foundation of natural capital.

**Please act today. Support aesthetic and ecological integrity on its last frontier.**

To explore this vision, please contact:

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