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**Group lobbying for K-Country protection**

By Justin Brisbane  
 Justin@Canmoreleader.com  
 Wednesday November 07, 2007

Albertans angered by alleged clear-cutting in Kananaskis Country are presenting a petition to the legislature asking for the creation of a new park to protect 4,400 square kilometres of land.

Save Kananaskis, a not-for-profit group, held a rally in Calgary last Friday to lobby the government to stop logging in the Northeastern region of Kananaskis Country – a region that includes Elbow River and Sibbald.

About 100 protesters congregated in downtown Calgary on Nov. 2 for the event, and announced that NDP environment critic David Eggan would present a petition with 1,200 names in the legislature this week asking for the region to be protected.

Save Kananaskis spokesperson Doug Sephton said the group started working to change the area into protected parkland in 2006 in reaction to the Spray Lakes Sawmills detailed forest management plan, which sought to perform block cutting in the area.

The Northeastern section of Kananaskis Country contains the foothills that lead to the Rocky Mountains and numerous rivers and streams.

However on July 30, the provincial government approved sections of the land for commercial logging.

Logging began in September.

According to Sephton, the protesters are concerned logging will affect the local water supply, recreational opportunities and natural habitat.

"Moose will be most heavily affected, but there are lots of animals that frequent the area," Sephton said.

The area also provides a great deal of recreation opportunities in the area, Sephton said.

"There are many people from Canmore who recreate in the area."

The protesters also said logging will damage commercial opportunities in the area.

"Hikers don't want to travel through clear cut forests," said Sephton.

After the rally, Sephton said this is a fight the group won't give up on.

"We're going to fight this to the bitter end," Sephton said.

The group has also launched a website in order to gain support for the push for a park.

About 56 per cent of Kananaskis Country is protected by parkland.

The 4,400 square kilometre area was designated as a multi-use area in 1976 under the Peter Lougheed government, to ensure the area could be used for both commercial and recreational activities.

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