

Canada: the ugly truth

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Canada is said to be one of the Earth's most breathtaking countries.

Even though Canada is pretty on the outside, this country has a ugly truth hidden behind its beauty. Canada has many environmental issues that can greatly affect the people and wildlife of the region. Canada has many natural resources. But if not treated properly, they are harmed or used up. This is happening to the Great Lakes. Shared by Canada and the US, the Great Lakes are used for fishing and hydroelectric power.

In the 1970's the Great Lakes were used for a waste dumping ground for factories. It didn't take long for Canada and the US to realize that this illegal dumping was increasing phosphorus, a chemical used in many everyday items like toothpaste and fertilizer. The chemical caused what is known as an algal bloom, a sudden increase in algae growth that can kill all other plants and animals in the area. To put a stop to the illegal and dangerous dumping, the US and Canada both signed the Great Lakes Quality Agreement, which makes sure no animals or people are harmed by the previously polluted and dangerous water and also reduced the amount of human waste that is dumped in that area. It was signed by both countries in 1971 and renewed in 2002. The Canadian Shield, the area of land that surrounds the Hudson Bay, is full of one of Canada's most valuable resources, minerals.

Almost 2 million Canadian citizens make their living in mining. Even though some people believe that the reward is bigger than the risk of mining, mining can destroy an area's environment. Due to the blasting of rock and soil, slag, leftover rock from mining, is just dumped in any place that is available. This carelessness can result in the spew of Sulfur Dioxide into Canada's air,

causing acid rain and killing plants and animal life. The pollution of the natural resources can be deadly to the people of the metropolitan area of Canada.

This area is Canada's most populated, putting hundreds of people at risk.

The government has placed many rules and criteria on mining so they can keep fish and people safe without hurting the very important industry.

Another one of Canada's natural resources is timber. Timber is used for lumber, plywood and many different types of paper. But the resources are being over-used. The country is losing the benefits to the forest such as oxygen and wildlife that uses the trees as food or homes.

Clear-cutting is the process of a logging company coming in and clearing a whole area, leaving it barren. This can reduce water quality for that given area. Without anything to hold the soil down, the dirt can move freely and can cause erosion. The loss of animal habitat is also very substantial. The government is seeing the effects of this and becoming involved.

Millions of seeds are planted every year so more trees will grow. Billions of dollars have been spent for upkeep and protection of these resources. The logging industry also spends large amounts of money to keep the animals who live in these forests safe and protected. Canada, like many countries, has environmental issues. But many programs have been put in place by the Canadian government and the amount of new damage to the environment is steadily decreasing with each day and there are also programs to try to reverse the damage already caused to Canada. I believe all countries could learn from Canada's mistakes and use some of the programs and prevention steps that Canada has taken to help improve their environment.