In the last 20 years, the East Kootenay fields have produced more thermal coal. The East Kootenay Coalfields is one of several coal regions in British Columbia, including the Groundhog and Peace River fields in the north, these fields occur in ancient sedimentary basins. Extending along the north-south trended structural grains of the Rocky Mountain Front Ranges, the Elk River and Flathead Coalfields, the East Kootenay Coalfields includes these fields: Fording, Crowsnest, and Elk River.

The Elk River Coalfield is one of several coalfields in the east that occur over the extent of southeast British Columbia, including the Groundhog and Peace River fields in the north, these fields occur in ancient sedimentary basins. Extending along the north-south trended structural grains of the Rocky Mountain Front Ranges. The Elk River Coalfield produces coal from multiple seams in the Mist Mountain Formation. Most coals in the Mist Mountain Formation are low- to medium-volatile bituminous (thermal coal) but coal beds occur throughout the unit. Seams are locally thickened by tectonic repetition and sea-level change. These seams can have cumulative thicknesses of more than 150 meters, but locally some may exceed 300 meters. Depending on locale, coal sections are locally thickened in thrust faults and overstep depositional unconformities.

The history of mining in the East Kootenay region is closely associated with the discovery of coal in the area. The first coal was mined in the area in the 1890s, and production continued into the 1950s. In 1947, the Fording River mine opened near the town of Michel in 1947 to produce coke for smelters in the Kootenay and Boundary areas. Between 1898 and 1902, the Crowsnest Pass to Kingsgate natural gas pipeline was built along the route of the Past producing coke mine. Between 1960 and 1965, the government of Canada renewed interest in the high-quality coking coal deposits in southeast British Columbia. In 1969, the government of Canada authorized the construction of a second major coking coal mine in southeast British Columbia. In 1974, the government of Canada authorized the construction of a third major coking coal mine in southeast British Columbia. In 1977, the government of Canada authorized the construction of a fourth major coking coal mine in southeast British Columbia. In 1980, all five mines consolidated as the Elk Creek townsite in background.

For further information
Visit the British Columbia Geological Survey website to access:
- Coal Title
- Coal seams
- MINFILE
- Mineral Tenure Map

Visit British Columbia Geological Survey Publications Catalogue
www.empgov.bc.ca/Mining/Garcia/CoalPage/default.asp

The coal
Most coal seams in the Mist Mountain Formation are low- to medium-volatile bituminous coal, and contain 20-30% carbon by mass. High volatile A bituminous coals exist in the Groundhog and Peace River fields. These coals occur over the extent of southeast British Columbia, including the Groundhog and Peace River fields in the north, these fields occur in ancient sedimentary basins. Extending along the north-south trended structural grains of the Rocky Mountain Front Ranges. The Elk River Coalfield produces coal from multiple seams in the Mist Mountain Formation. Most coals in the Mist Mountain Formation are low- to medium-volatile bituminous (thermal coal) but coal beds occur throughout the unit. Seams are locally thickened by tectonic repetition and sea-level change. These seams can have cumulative thicknesses of more than 150 meters, but locally some may exceed 300 meters. Depending on locale, coal sections are locally thickened in thrust faults and overstep depositional unconformities. Since 2008, Teck Coal Limited has been the operator and primary owner of all Elk River coal mines. These mines produce about 75% of Canada’s total annual coal exports.

Exploration in the East Kootenay Coalfields
Thermal coal exploration is taking place in the Elkview area in the Crowsnest Coalfield.

Exploration spending, Smithf, Canadian
Since 2008, Teck Coal Limited has been the operator and primary owner of all Elk River coal mines. These mines produce about 75% of Canada’s total annual coal exports.

References


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