

## [33-car derailment in Tete-Jaune!](#)



**Rocky Mountain Goat** January 5, 2011

After a tense 33 hours, CN officials no doubt breathed a sigh of relief as cars once again passed through Tete-Jaune Tuesday morning.

The wreck blocked east-west rail traffic on Canadian National's northern line, for over a day, after 33 cars derailed 10 km west of Tete-Jaune Cache near Water Tower Hill.

As far as derailments are concerned, it was lucky. The Prince Rupert-bound train loaded with 113 cars of coal, was rounding a bend flanked by the Fraser River when the cars derailed and slid onto the higher bank Sunday night. Coal spilled on the ground, but not into the river, which lay on the other side of the track.

It is reported that Environment Canada officials have been onsite and confirmed the spilled coal poses no lasting threat to the ecosystem as it is cleaned up.

The wreck comes just months after Transport Canada delivered a critical report of CN's operations, citing safety concerns that could in many instances lead to a derailment if left unattended.

As of press time Tuesday, three dozen crew members were still at work cutting up the old train cars. The cause of the derailment was still unknown.

It could have been any number of rails defects including those that are weather-related, said one veteran employee of CN who was on-site on Monday. The last major derailment on that stretch of track occurred several years ago.

CN spokesperson Kelli Svenson says the train had set out from a coal mine and was westbound en route to Prince Rupert. The corporation reported no injuries due to the wreck. Crews would likely be working for several more days to fully clean up the mess and remove all the debris.

It costs the company millions of dollars for each day a track is out of commission.

Stranded Via Rail passengers at the McBride train station were picked up by a chartered bus early Monday to take them to Jasper, where trains were still running.

Once largely a company that serviced Canada, CN Rail now spans 16 U.S. states and eight provinces and has acquired \$8 billion in rail acquisitions in the past 15 years.

The company is worth \$30 billion up from \$2.2 billion when it was privatized in 1995. For the past 15 years, total returns to shareholders, including dividends, have been roughly 21 per cent annually.

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## Reader Feedback

1.  [John Kristensen](#) says:

[January 5, 2011 at 1:25 pm](#)

There have been so many CN derailments recently in both Canada and the United States, it's impossible to keep a count. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada continues to issue reports rapping CN's knuckles for its deteriorating safety record. Who can forget the CN derailment in 2005 that spilled 2 million litres of fuel and treating oil into Lake Wabamun near Edmonton, and the 2005 derailment near Squamish that decimated the Cheakamus River salmon population. There were 2 CN derailments only 3 months apart at their Scotford Rail Yard near Fort Saskatchewan in August and November, 2010. The list goes on....