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# HIGHWAY 93S WILDLIFE CROSSING PROJECT

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK



## Improving safety for people and wildlife

Wildlife-vehicle collisions along Highway 93 South in Kootenay National Park are a growing hazard for motorists and animals. Parks Canada is exploring ways to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and keep habitat connected within Kootenay National Park through the use of wildlife exclusion fencing and underpass crossing structures. Parks Canada has received federal Action on the Ground funds to begin this project on a portion of the highway. Reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions will improve human safety and help sustain healthy wildlife populations.

### People are at risk

Our goal is to increase motorist safety by reducing the risk of wildlife-vehicle collisions. These collisions put motorists at risk of injury or death. Even when people aren't physically hurt in a wildlife collision, the experience can be traumatic and expensive.

### Animals are being killed or injured

From 2000 to 2009, park staff recorded over 400 large animal deaths along the highway through Kootenay. Many more wildlife-vehicle collisions are unreported.

The most commonly killed animals are white-tailed deer, an important prey species for wolves and cougar. Rare or sensitive species such as wolf and grizzly bear are also being affected.

The loss of individual animals through highway mortality undermines healthy wildlife populations and alters predator-prey dynamics.

### Habitat is becoming disconnected

Wildlife needs to be able to move safely across this busy highway to access habitat (food, mates and shelter), and to connect to other populations. Vehicle noise and habitat loss can make the highway area less attractive to wildlife with some animals becoming reluctant to cross or even approach a road.

Wildlife crossing structures are designed to connect vital habitats and allow safe movement of animals across the highway.

### We're developing a world class solution

Parks Canada is a world leader in the use of highway wildlife mitigations such as crossing structures and highway fencing. The Kootenay project will benefit from more than a dozen years of research on fencing and crossing structures along the Trans-Canada Highway in Banff National Park.

A proven way to reduce wildlife collisions is to block wildlife access to the highway and provide safe ways for them to cross. This approach works well in wildlife-vehicle collision hotspots.



Monitoring of wildlife crossings along the Trans-Canada Highway in Banff National Park shows that underpasses are well used by many large animals.



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## Other options we're exploring

Measures such as increased enforcement of speed zones and improved education initiatives, while not considered effective on their own, may be used to support other actions. Public education programs could help raise awareness about the issue. A targeted speed enforcement program could help address localized and seasonal problem areas.

Experimental Animal Detection Systems alert motorists when animals are on the roadway. These systems may be used at fence ends.



## Creating a unique solution

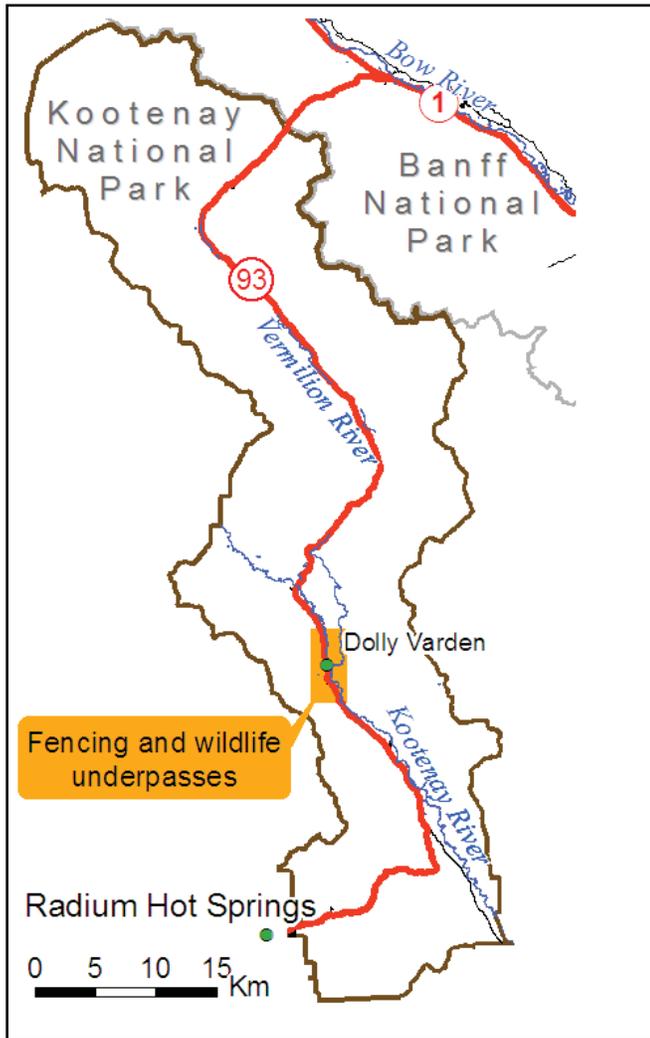
Parks Canada is using sound science and expert opinion to help determine the best options to improve motorist safety and sustain healthy wildlife populations. In 2008, a group of experts in road-wildlife interactions reviewed potential approaches for reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions within the park.

After considering their recommendations, funding was secured to enable fencing and wildlife underpasses within a priority section of the Highway 93 South. This section is located 35 km from the south gate of Kootenay National Park around the Dolly Varden picnic site. This area was chosen because it has a high number of wildlife-vehicle collisions due to a dense population of white-tailed deer.

A minimum of three km of fencing and one wildlife underpass will be established in the project. Construction is anticipated for 2012.

## Improved visitor experiences

The wildlife crossing project is part of a broader area planning initiative for Highway 93 South that will also yield improvements in visitor experience, learning opportunities, and ecological attributes.



## We'd like to hear from you

Your input will help us fine tune the project so that it works for motorists, park users and wildlife. Watch for opportunities to be involved over the winter of 2010/2011.

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## For more information contact:

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