



Highway 3 Iron Ridge Wildlife Crossing and Associated Wildlife Exclusion Fencing Project

Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors (TEC)

Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors' (TEC) mandate is to provide Albertans with a safe and efficient transportation system. To improve public and wildlife safety along the Highway 3 corridor west of Coleman, TEC is constructing wildlife exclusion fencing on both sides of the highway, along with a purpose-built wildlife crossing just west of Iron Ridge. TEC has retained DIALOG to complete the design and construction supervision of this project.

Where we are now

The Project team has completed the conceptual design phase for the crossing structure. This included reviewing potential crossing locations along a 7 km stretch of highway and selecting a crossing location and type. Based on the target wildlife species, the local topography, and constraints at the chosen project location an underpass was selected as the most appropriate crossing structure. An underpass allows the wildlife to walk safely under the highway.

The Project team is beginning engagement with local municipalities, Indigenous groups, and project stakeholders to share information about the project and gather input to inform the design.

Based on the feedback the Project team obtains they will proceed to complete the design of the wildlife crossing and wildlife exclusion fencing before proceeding to construction.



Figure 1 Wildlife Underpass

Benefits of wildlife exclusion fencing and crossing structures

Wildlife exclusion fences are designed to protect humans and wildlife alike, and function together with purpose-built crossing structures. Some of the benefits include the following:

- Protecting human and wildlife lives
- Reducing property damage
- Improving wildlife connectivity

Support for the project

The Government of Alberta has allocated \$15 million over three (3) years to mitigate **animal-vehicle collisions** (AVCs) on provincial highways to improve the safety of the travelling public.

To address AVCs, the Government of Alberta has implemented the [Alberta Wildlife Watch \(AWW\) Program](#), which aims to improve driver safety and reduce the impacts of highways on wildlife. AWW was developed in close collaboration with Federal (Parks Canada) and Provincial (Wildlife Stewardship) Governments with input from academia and environmental non-governmental organizations.



Figure 2 Migrating Ungulate Herd

Project location

The wildlife exclusion fence will extend along Highway 3 from the west end of Coleman (at the 77 Street underpass) to the Crowsnest River Bridge immediately east of Sentinel.

The wildlife crossing structure will be located approximately 200 m west of the existing pull-out at Iron Ridge just west of Coleman, and falls within the Jim Prentice Wildlife Corridor.

This project is expected to reduce AVCs by up to 80%, reducing the road related mortality of local wildlife.

Where the wildlife exclusion fencing crosses highway access points wildlife guards and / or gates will be installed to exclude wildlife while allowing vehicle access. These guards will be designed specifically to exclude wildlife from the highway and located to minimize noise impacts.

Enabling wildlife movement

This project will allow wildlife freer movement in the Crowsnest pass. The new Iron Ridge Wildlife Underpass will provide a safe new crossing location for wildlife to cross beneath Highway 3 without risk of injury or death. The existing highway negatively impacts wildlife populations and movement, and the wildlife underpass will provide a safe crossing location. The wildlife exclusion fencing will guide wildlife to the new underpass and to existing safe crossing locations along Highway 3. Existing crossing locations (such as the Crowsnest River Bridge) will be evaluated for opportunities to improve wildlife usage.

Finally, one-way structures (commonly referred to as jump-outs) will be installed along the fence line at appropriate locations. If wildlife enters the exclusion zone (i.e. the road side of the fences), the jump-outs give them the ability to escape the highway zone and return to the safety of the habitat side of the fences. The jump-outs are designed so that animals can easily exit, but not readily enter, the exclusion zone.



Figure 3 Jump-out

Stay informed about the project

To speak with a project team member about the Highway 3 Iron Ridge Wildlife Crossing and Associated Wildlife Exclusion Fencing project, please email the project team at: IronRidge@dialogdesign.ca