



## Highway 3 Island Ridge Wildlife Overpass and Fencing Transportation and Economic Corridors (TEC)

**Transportation and Economic Corridors' (TEC) mandate is to provide all 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 between Sentinel and the border with B.C., along with a purpose-built wildlife crossing between Crownsnest Lake and Island Lake. TEC has retained WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) to complete the design and construction supervision for this project.**

### Where we are now

The project team has completed preliminary design work for the crossing structure and wildlife exclusion fencing. This included reviewing the 7-km stretch of highway and selecting the optimal location for the crossing and preliminary layout for the wildlife exclusion fencing, including jump-outs (to allow animals to escape from the highway) and wildlife guards (at each access to the highway). Based on the target wildlife species in the area (e.g., bighorn sheep, elk, grizzly bear, and moose), the proposed location of the overpass was determined using existing wildlife movement data and wildlife surveys, landscape characteristics, existing human developments, and identified animal-vehicle collision (AVC) records through the Alberta Wildlife Watch Program, and an overpass structure was selected as the most appropriate crossing structure type.

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.

The feedback received will help the project team to complete the design of the crossing and wildlife exclusion fencing before proceeding to construction.

The project team values collaboration amongst all the stakeholders to plan and deliver this project successfully.

### Benefits of the wildlife overpass and exclusion fencing

Wildlife overpasses and exclusion fences are designed to protect humans and wildlife alike. Some of the benefits include the following:

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



*Figure 1 Bighorn Sheep*

### Support for the wildlife overpass and fencing

The Government of Alberta has allocated \$15 million over three (3) years to mitigate AVCs on provincial highways to improve safety for 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 agencies (Wildlife Stewardship) with input from academia and environmental non-governmental organizations.

## Wildlife overpass

The wildlife overpass will be located between the existing bridge over Crowsnest Creek and the access to the Graymont Summit lime plant, east of the access to the Island Lake Provincial Recreation Area north of the highway.

The new Island Ridge wildlife overpass will provide a safe location for wildlife to cross over Highway 3 without risk of injury or death. The existing highway impacts wildlife populations and movement.

Existing crossing locations (such as the Emerald Lake Bridge, and the CPKC Railway Bridge) will be evaluated for opportunities to improve wildlife usage.

## Wildlife exclusion fence

The wildlife exclusion fence will extend for 7-km along both sides of the highway from the B.C. border to the Crowsnest River Bridge, immediately east of Sentinel.

The fence has been designed to guide wildlife to existing safe crossing opportunities along Highway 3. Over time, this will enhance habitat connectivity for wildlife populations and biodiversity that would otherwise be disconnected by major roadways.

**This project is expected to reduce AVCs by up to 80%, reducing the road-related mortality of local wildlife populations, and is expected to improve herd health.**

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



Figure 2 Wildlife Exclusion Fencing

## Wildlife jump-outs

One-way escape 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 fencing), the jump-outs give them the ability to escape the highway zone and return to the safety of the habitat side of the fencing. The jump-outs are designed so that the animals can easily exit, but not readily enter the exclusion zone.

Jump-outs and other animal safety considerations have been incorporated into the design of the wildlife exclusion fence.



Figure 3 Jump-out

## Stay informed about the project

To speak with a project team member about the Highway 3 Island Ridge wildlife crossing and wildlife exclusion fence project, email the project team at: [islandridgewildlife@wsp.com](mailto:islandridgewildlife@wsp.com)