

Highway 3 Sulphur Springs Wildlife Fencing

Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors (TEC)

Alberta 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 east of Coleman, TEC is constructing wildlife exclusion fencing from the east end of Coleman to west of Frank. TEC has retained WSP Canada Inc. (WSP) to complete the design and construction supervision for this project.

Where are we now

The project team has completed the conceptual design work 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). The conceptual design includes the review of the existing structures and the identification of retrofits that improve wildlife passage. Based on wildlife movement data from the Reconnecting the Rockies Alberta science initiative, wildlife surveys, landscape characteristics, existing human developments and identified animal-vehicle collision (AVC) prone locations through the Alberta Wildlife Watch Program and the target wildlife species in the area (e.g. bighorn sheep, elk, grizzly bear and moose), the project team identified the Crowsnest River bridge east of Blairmore as an existing bridge structure that could be retrofitted and has started the preliminary design of the enhancements to improve wildlife passage.

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 complete the design of the wildlife exclusion fencing, including the enhancement of the Crowsnest River Bridge.

Benefits of wildlife exclusion fencing

Wildlife 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

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Support for wildlife fencing

The Government of Alberta has allocated funding 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 passage

The existing Crowsnest River bridge east of Blairmore will be retrofitted and enhanced to provide improved wildlife passage.

Wildlife exclusion fencing will guide wildlife to the bridge and when paired with enhancements to the Crowsnest River bridge will provide a safe location for wildlife to pass under Highway 3 and reduce the risk of injury or death.

Wildlife exclusion fence

The wildlife exclusion fence will extend 6.8 km along both sides of the highway from the east end of Coleman to just west of Frank.

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 per cent, 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 enter 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 Sulphur Springs wildlife exclusion fence project, email the project team at: sulphurspringswildlife@wsp.com

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