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# University Relations: News Release



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November 5, 2012

## Wildlife crossings on highways a win-win

### Research demonstrates savings by reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions

A new joint study by the Miistakis Institute and Western Transportation Institute (WTI) has found the wildlife underpass in Dead Man's Flats, Alberta, is improving human safety by reducing the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions in the area.

The underpass, southeast of Canmore, has proven more cost-effective than the societal costs paid for damaged vehicles, human injury and death, and lost hunting revenues.

"The results of this study are particularly relevant as this is the first time that a study in North America has demonstrated the savings realized by building wildlife crossing structures on a major roadway," says Tony Clevenger, co-author of the report.

An analysis of the underpass, which includes three kilometers of fencing along a section of the Trans-Canada Highway, identified a significant reduction in the total number of wildlife-vehicle collisions per year, from an average of 12 to 3 accidents per year, since the underpass was installed in 2004.

The *Highway Wildlife Mitigation Opportunities for the Trans-Canada Highway in the Bow Valley* report demonstrates that the wildlife underpass reduced the average annual cost to society of wildlife-vehicle collisions by over 90 per cent – from \$129,000 to \$18,000 per year.

The report identifies five other sites for potential crossing structures and fencing on the Trans-Canada Highway within the Bow Valley, where current annual costs due to wildlife-vehicle collisions are in excess of \$20,000 per year.

Funded by the Kananaskis Summit Environmental Legacy Fund established in 2002 at the G8 Summit in Kananaskis and administered by the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the study suggests that highway crossing structures are no longer infrastructure reserved only for protected areas and parks. To learn more about the results of the study, [click here](#) to visit [www.rockies.ca/project\\_info2.php?id=54](http://www.rockies.ca/project_info2.php?id=54)

To highlight the effectiveness of wildlife crossing structures, Miistakis, WTI and Parks Canada [created an infographic](#) to illustrate how wildlife crossing structures work, the volume of animals using them in Banff National Park, and the cost-effectiveness of expanding or building roadways with both people and animals in mind.

The Miistakis Institute is an independent, non-profit charitable organization affiliated with the University of Calgary that brings together people and ideas to promote healthy communities and landscapes.

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**MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**WHAT:** New study into benefits of wildlife crossings on highways

**WHO:** Report co-author Tony Clevenger

**WHEN:** Monday, November 5, 2012. 11 a.m. – noon

**WHERE:** Seebe Interchange on the Trans Canada Highway. For more details, please contact Nathan Long – University of Calgary Media Relations.

Additional footage of wildlife crossings and research activities is available upon request.

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