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Banff wildlife could benefit from new crossings

Last Updated: Monday, January 24, 2011 | 3:39 PM MT Comments 12 Recommend 14
 CBC News



Banff National Park could benefit from the development of new, cheaper wildlife crossings highlighted by a recent design competition in Washington, D.C. (CBC)

A unique worldwide competition in Washington, D.C. could have major implications on transportation and wildlife in the Banff area.

Landscape architects from all over the world were challenged to design the best highway wildlife crossings.

Five finalists gathered in the U.S. capital to present their projects, and judges announced the winner — a firm from New York — on Sunday night.

Wildlife scientist Anthony Clevenger was one of the five judges in the ARC International Wildlife Crossing Infrastructure Design Competition. He has studied road effects on wildlife in Banff, and said Parks Canada has already expressed interest in the final projects for sections of the Trans-Canada Highway in Alberta and B.C.

"There's discussion of possibly spanning the Trans-Canada Highway and the CP Rail in Banff National Park, and I know that the transportation engineer in charge of that project is very interested in the results of the ARC competition and how it might be applied to Banff," Clevenger said.

Designs were judged on cost-effectiveness, innovation and the creative use of existing landscape.

The cost of animal overpasses has tripled in last three years from about \$2 million to \$6 million a piece. It's estimated that the winning design would cost about half that on a per-unit basis.

"There's really a need to reassess how these structures are built, how they're constructed, how they're designed to see if these structures could be built for less," said Clevenger. "That's really what we believe, and that's the impetus for this competition."

Banff currently has 22 underpasses and two overpasses. Four new overpasses are in the works.

Animal and vehicle collisions cause about \$250 million in damages each year in Canada.

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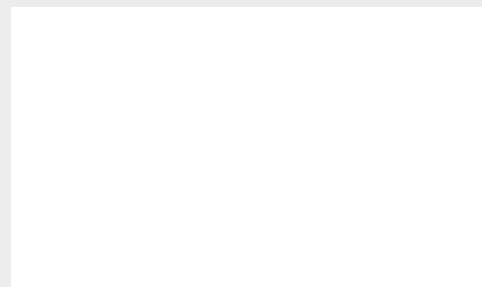
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okiikarasu wrote:

Posted 2011/01/29 at 10:13 AM ET

It is too bad that there is no link to the competition finalists For those of you counting wildlife crossings, think about the ones that you drive over without any awareness of them - dozens. And do the animals use them? Check Parks Canada for some stats or google them - pioneered here in the Rockies and in a few other places (Florida, Italy) and the ones here are used regularly. It takes wild animals time to use changes in their habitat just as humans take time to adapt to changes). Many important local species have been recorded using the crossings (both overpasses and underpasses) including all members of the deer family, sheep, grizzly bears, black bears, wolves, coyotes and an occasional wolverine. They are designed in such a way that the animals are not usually visible to folks on the highway. Do the crossings save your insurance and healthcare costs from escalating? Of course - fewer accidents, less cost to all of us.



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Turd_Ferguson_ wrote:

Posted 2011/01/25 at 3:23 PM ET

A link to the design would be nice.

C'mon CBC you're better than this.



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JLHenn wrote:

Posted 2011/01/25 at 1:09 PM ET

On my trip out to Lake Louise last weekend, I counted at least 4 animal overpasses that have now been completed, once again, incomplete info and a meaningless picture.

I'm pretty sure the animals don't care very much about the aesthetics of the overpasses. Does anyone know what the stats are on the usage of these overpasses? Do we know if the predators use them as a corridor for a quick lunch when prey animals make it to the other side? And yes, more must be done by CPR about their continual slaughter of our Bears. If a Cadillac can have a night-time heads-up display to show a driver objects on the road, I'm sure that CPR can do it for their Engineers for animals on the track. Once the animals have been detected some type of deterrent system can be activated; bear bangers, lights and horns. It's just an idea!

Within the past year I watched: The National Parks; America's Best Idea on PBS. I've never seen a Canadian version. I think it's time for the same quality of program, televised on the CBC so that Canadians can understand our National Parks and support them.

From over 20yrs of visiting Banff, I've watched a steady decline in the number of animals that can be observed in their habitat. There doesn't seem to be much nature left in Banff. I don't count tacky gift shops and restaurants and I don't go to Banff to shop. Banff should be a place to experience nature in all its beauty, to get away from the city and see animals in their habitat, undistributed.



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Spoke63 wrote:

Posted 2011/01/25 at 11:32 AM ET

Something MUST be done, and indeed it starts with our Government putting Nature above ca\$h. Another observation...an American firm?? SIGH!



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Stay 2 nights mid week Dec & Jan receive \$ 25 p/n food credit
www.banffparklodge.com

Local Coupons

1 ridiculously huge coupon a day. Get 50-90% off your city's best!
www.Groupon.com

Astounding Wildlife Park

See Australia's cultural landscape. Experience indigenous culture in NT
TravelNT.com/Parks

GhostCmpr wrote:

Posted 2011/01/25
at 11:21 AM ET

The Bigger questions is, why are all those animals allowed out of the Zoo!



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