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Helping moose across the highway

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The Telegram

Extensive signs, wildlife pathfinding advice, fence.

A group lobbying for safer highways says the provincial and federal governments should play hard to reach an agreement on a design competition for highway wildlife crossings.

It would be an urban situation, said Eugene Hoggard, who heads the Save our Parks Action Committee, which is concerned about the ballooning number of moose-vehicle accidents on provincial highways.

ARC, The International Wildlife Crossing Design Competition might settle for a design to confront the problem of accidents involving black bears, cougars, bobcats, lynx, moose, elk, deer and moose in V.I.C. Co. But the competition will also serve as a spring event, giving wildlife-vehicle accidents across the U.S. and Canada.

According to ARC, the resulting design has drawn the interest of Parks Canada, which has its own system of crossings in Banff, Alta.

But Hoggard said there's no reason the federal government can't erect structures to keep the road to the south less natural parks — from Banff and Gros Morne — safer. Tanya Nore has an estimated 1,000 moose and Gray Moose have 5,000.

Little stone about moose

He said the province has done little to control the moose problem on its highways, except cut funds and increase its enforcement program since the group was formed about two years ago.

Science Tony Clevinger, who has studied the results of wildlife crossings in Banff for about 15 years and came up with the ARC competition as a way of getting a cost-effective design, said cutting back is the sole means of reducing wildlife accidents is unclear.

There are an estimated 500 wildlife-vehicle accidents here each year and a class-action lawsuit over the most serious has been launched by St. John's lawyer Ches Crosbie against the provincial government.

Clevinger said in a telephone interview he was surprised this province hasn't done more to control the problem of moose on the highways, to offer protection for New Brunswick, Quebec, Alberta and some U.S. states have done out of context for raising accidents. They combine experience and expertise with training to get training.

His studies have shown accidents with elk — which have the most encounters with vehicles in Banff — have gone from 100 a year to a 400 a year as a result of the crossings and fencing. The majority of large animals on the highways has been cut by 80 per cent.

It was a straightforward case," Clevinger said.

People have asked if that's the most reason.

According to Parks Canada, 11 different species of large mammals used 30 wildlife crossings more than 200,000 times between the Banff National Park's west gate and the British Columbia border since 1990. There are over 41 crossings along 25 kilometers of highway, all of them maintained. The crossings are combined with fencing.

Clevinger said the cost of installing the Banff-style crossings was getting too high, but the competition has proven there are better and less expensive ways of doing things.

The winning public design came from HRT's Engineering, Clevinger, one of the jurors, said it is a simple design that can become a transportation model.

Bridge engineer Ted Zol of New York said he built a design in cost-effective. The structure that won the competition is designed to open a narrow highway and would cost \$4 million USD, possibly half that for a two-lane highway. The pre-cast concrete overpass is landscaped to mimic natural wildlife habitat.

That price per structure includes a healthy budget for landscaping, said Zol, technical director of budgets for the company.

The estimated cost of wildlife vehicles crashes in the U.S. is \$8 billion a year and Zol said governments can't afford to ignore the accidents, which have doubled in the last 15 years.

He can't build major interstates in high-quality habitat without some consideration of the problem with vehicles and animals," Zol said.

"It's not going away in my view, the problem has been studied enough."

The goal of the competition was to supply an idea, but that doesn't guarantee it will be built.

The ARC competition's advisor is Tom Mace Laker, a visiting professor of design at Harvard and university professor at Harvard School of Urban and Regional Planning.

Laker said the crossings provide the opportunity to protect people's safety while satisfying concerns for wildlife habitat.

"You need protection of habitats," she said.

And she said studies of existing crossings have conclusively demonstrated wildlife reach their young to one them.

"Some they do," said Hoggard.

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Number of views: 1272

Comments

FRANK CORCORAN - January 26th, 2011 at 08:56:16

Moose are the largest animal, by a lot of things here. There is nothing more vehicle accidents. Some are in a line along the road and still wearing signs where have been. Can the best and best ways and for cost.

FRANK CORCORAN - January 26th, 2011 at 08:56:12

Compare the number of moose on the highway to the number of deer deaths or the amount of moose tracks and cars including tractor trails that show by at road signs. who would be what? 500000

CHRISTOPHER CHEN - January 26th, 2011 at 08:56:00

So I believe we are doing fine. Great work. I am going to suggest, people are going that far or not please, playing with the road, making...

MIKE - January 26th, 2011 at 08:55:55

The animal crossing is one of the best I have seen. I should be done ADP?

COLLEEN - January 26th, 2011 at 07:31:15

There is a suggestion that will reduce collisions and won't cost the gov't a cent, reduce a night time speed limit of 60km/h.

MIKE - January 26th, 2011 at 7:30:30

Insurance is needed to meet a realistic goal for all.

FRANK CORCORAN - January 26th, 2011 at 12:22:16

I am a Civil Engineering student and as a transportation I am conducting a feasibility analysis for the City of Calgary, and I am looking for some guidance. I want to know how to design a wildlife crossing that will be safe for the animals and the vehicles and the people.

FRANK CORCORAN - January 26th, 2011 at 11:26:25

All I have from Eugene Hoggard is that there are too many moose, something has got to be done about the moose. There is nothing more to be done about the moose and the vehicles and the people.

FRANK CORCORAN - January 26th, 2011 at 11:26:25

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