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Animals crossing this highway in southeast B.C. will soon get their own overpass

The Radium Wildlife Overpass will cross the highway near Mile Hill

[Corey Bullock](#) · CBC News ·

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A herd of Radium bighorn sheep is pictured grazing in June 2023. (Jet Belgraver/CBC News)

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For years, the bighorn sheep in the Village of Radium Hot Springs have been getting struck by vehicles, dramatically dwindling their population.

Approximately 10 per cent of the herd is killed annually by collisions with vehicles, according to the province.

Conservation groups say the southeastern British Columbian herd is one of the last viable herds of bighorn sheep in the area.

Now the herd is getting help from the government of B.C., with a wildlife overpass set to go to tender in the coming weeks.



Approximately 10 per cent of Radium bighorn sheep, pictured in 2023, is killed annually by collisions with vehicles, according to the province. (Jet Belgraver/CBC News)

According to a news release from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), the Radium Wildlife Overpass will cross the highway near Mile Hill.

The location was chosen through collaboration with MOTI, the Ministry of Forests, the Village of Radium Hot Springs and Parks Canada.

There will be approximately six kilometres of fencing and gates that will guide animals to the overpass and safely over the highway.

- [Spike in bighorn sheep deaths drives B.C. community to seek solutions](#)

MOTI has worked with the Shuswap First Nation and Ktunaxa Nation to help provide monitoring of the herd.

"We support it 100 per cent," said Richard Martin, councillor for Shuswap Band, which is located near the Village of Radium.

"It's going to be a huge success, I think there are a few things that still need to be ironed out with the fencing and overpass itself, but it was for sure a path that we wanted to go down with government to make it successful because the herd numbers were going down."

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The transportation and infrastructure ministry has worked with the Shuswap First Nation and Ktunaxa Nation to help provide monitoring of the herd. (Jet Belgraver/CBC News)

The population of sheep in this herd dropped from approximately 230 sheep in 2003 to 120 in 2019, according to a MOTI release.

Martin says this herd of bighorn sheep is the only one of its kind that migrate through their territory.

"They actually migrate through our reserve, coming out of Shuswap Creek, which is located about dead centre of our reserve," he said.

Martin adds the overpass will also help other animals, like elk and deer, safely cross the highway.

Nicole Trigg, founder of the Facebook group Help the Bighorn Radium Herd, says this is a case study where citizen activism works.

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"It's a great example of when social media is harnessed for good," she told CBC News.

- [**Bighorn sheep deaths in Radium Hot Springs raise concerns about traffic in the area**](#)

The overpass is something that locals, like Trigg, and researchers have been calling for, for some time.

In the meantime, MOTI has installed wildlife signage, flashing LED warning signs and a message sign indicating changes in sheep activity. The speed limit was also temporarily reduced in the Mile Hill area to 70 kilometres per hour.

Project partners include Parks Canada, the Village of Radium Hot Springs, Teck Resources Ltd., the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, the Ktunaxa Nation Council and the Shuswap Band.

Teck has also provided \$2.5 million to help fund the project.

"This furthers our goal of becoming nature-positive by the year 2030. That essentially means that we're looking to protect land and biodiversity and further those goals across the region," Rory O'Connor, manager for social responsibility for Teck in Sparwood, told CBC News.

"And helping this iconic herd of bighorn sheep is part of that."

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