

Rock Creek Corridor

Preserving wildlife connectivity while reducing animal-vehicle collision risk

CONSERVATION PURPOSE

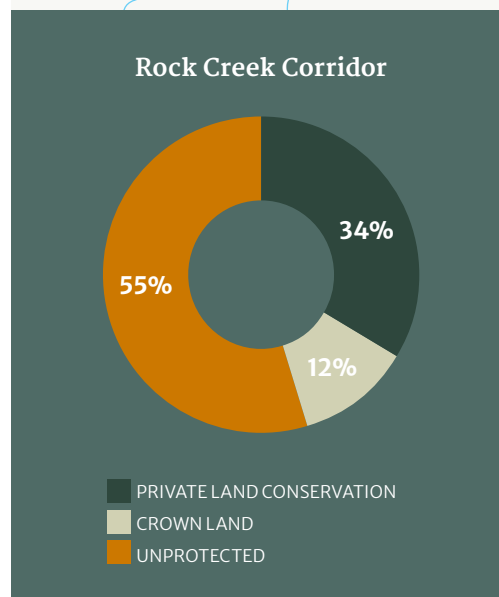
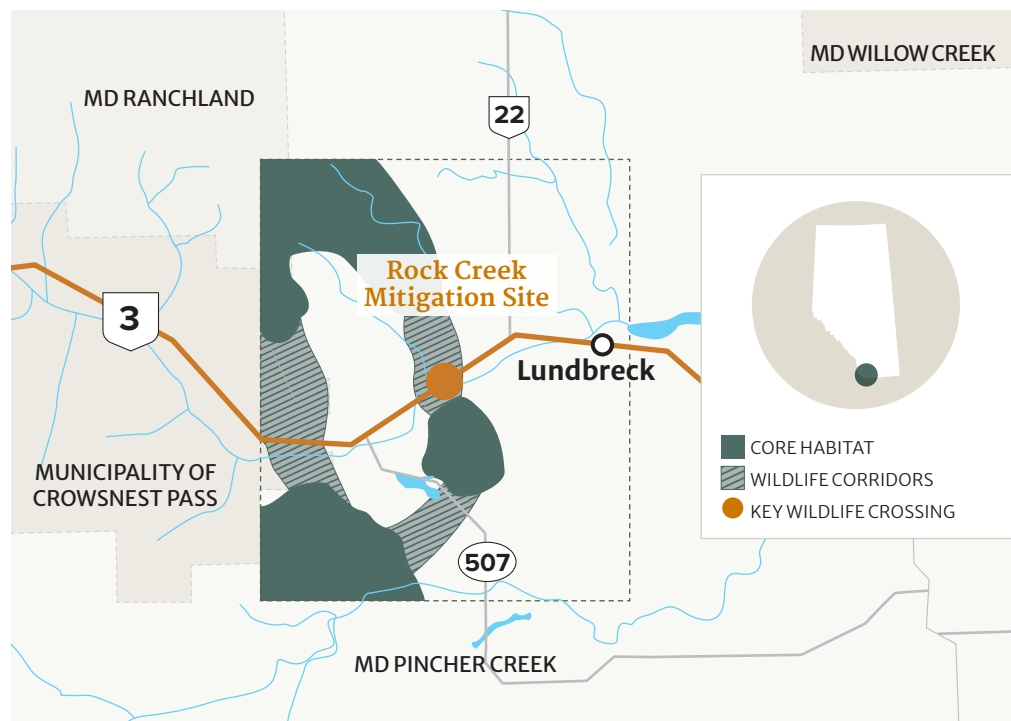
- Protect the north-south movement of large mammal (e.g., grizzly bear, elk and bighorn sheep) through a corridor of private land in the Canadian Rocky Mountains.
- Protect human health and biodiversity by installing a wildlife underpass and fencing along Highway 3 to enable safe wildlife movement and reduce the risk of animal-vehicle collisions, which are a common occurrence at this location.

DESCRIPTION

Wildlife connectivity is the unimpeded movement of species and the flow of natural processes, which is essential to healthy landscapes. Rock Creek is a key area for wildlife conservation including grizzly bears, cougars and wolves, and movement through this area is important for animals to find food, mates and shelter.

Human infrastructure can fragment and degrade vital wildlife corridors, hindering wildlife from moving freely, and risking localized extinction and overall population health.

On average, thirteen animal-vehicle collisions occur each year on Highway 3 at Rock Creek. To improve safety for humans and wildlife, a wildlife underpass, associated fencing and wildlife jump-outs will be installed by Alberta Transportation. Mitigation at this site will save approximately \$408,000 (CAD) each year from costs associated with animal-vehicle collisions (Lee et al., 2024).



Black bear caught on camera within the Rock Creek corridor.

SUCCESS OF PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION

Private land conservation provides landowners in the region with a tool to protect the ecological values of Rock Creek while maintaining this working landscape. Because of privately conserved lands, the surrounding area will remain as working ranchlands instead of being developed. This supports Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors' investment in road mitigation infrastructure (underpasses and fencing), which will allow large mammals to safely cross Highway 3.

A total of 5,197 acres (34%) has been protected within the Rock Creek corridor through private land conservation, 1,805 acres (12%) are crown land.

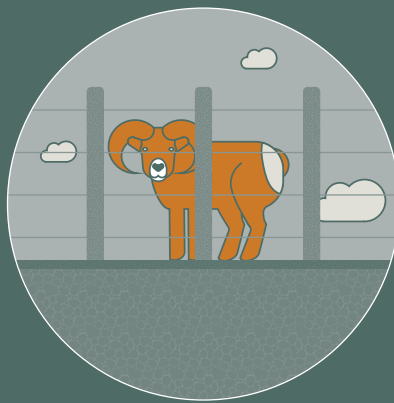
It has taken large financial contributions to protect this land. This includes millions of dollars invested by the land trust community, significant land donations from landowners, and substantial support from the Alberta Land Trust Grant Program.

ROAD MITIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Underpass



Fencing



COLLABORATION

The success of this project is thanks to the many groups working to promote connectivity in this area: Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA), Miistakis Institute, Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC), Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS), Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, and others.

