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Pass traffic under watch
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The watch is on in the Crowsnest Pass, with a unique community-based initiative looking to make life safer for four-legged neighbours who dare to cross bustling Hwy. 3.

Since its inception in fall 2004, the Road Watch program has engaged more than 65 volunteers in the Crowsnest area, who have reported on the movements of 1,250 animals on or near the busy thoroughfare.

More than 200 large animals die annually from vehicle collisions in the Crowsnest Pass, a critical wildlife corridor located 240 km southwest of Calgary.

The 32-km stretch of Hwy. 3 has seen a 27% increase in traffic volume in the last 10 years, spelling trouble for wildlife.

"The increased traffic rates are of concern -- although most of the collisions are with deer, the potential to hit wolves, cougars and grizzlies in this area is high," said program founder Dr. Michael Quinn, an environmental design professor at the University of Calgary.

"The loss of a small number of these carnivores can cause serious problems for the overall population."

Road Watch volunteers record their observations by using online mapping at www.rockies.ca/roadwatch.

The data will be used to determine the type and locations of future wildlife crossing structures on Hwy. 3.

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