



Land and Lake Newsletter

Updates on Bruce Peninsula National Park and Fathom Five National Marine Park



A new Ecopassage for Cyprus Lake Road

Submitted by Chantel Lariviere
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The turtles, snakes and frogs living in Bruce Peninsula National Park may be a bit safer this year, thanks to an ecopassage that was recently installed in Cyprus Lake Road. The ecopassage, or wildlife tunnel, is a culvert with holes in the top, which is sunk into the road so an animal can cross to the other side without getting hit by a car. The next time you drive down Cyprus Lake road on your way to camp or hike, watch for the ecopassage about 1km in from Highway 6.

Roads are a significant threat to many wildlife populations, especially reptiles and amphibians. Aside from the individuals that are killed when run over by cars, roads can also be a formidable barrier for some species, fragmenting their populations. Ecopassages are one way to help prevent road impacts on wildlife. These range from the large overpasses in Banff National Park which allow large mammals such as bears, cougars and elk to cross safely over the highway, to smaller underpasses like the one installed here, which is designed primarily for reptiles and amphibians. Bruce Peninsula National Park is home to several species at risk that are impacted by road mortality, including the massasauga rattlesnake, milksnake, and eastern ribbonsnake.

This ecopassage consists of the tunnel which passes under the road's surface and fencing (will be completed in the fall of 2012) that will corral animals towards it, while also preventing them from getting onto the road surface. The tunnel is made from a concrete culvert installed flush with the road surface. Holes in the top allow light and moisture in, making it more attractive for wildlife. We are currently experimenting with the fencing, which extends from the ecopassage in both directions on each side of the road.

Although ecopassages are becoming increasingly common as a way to reduce the impact of roads on wildlife, the technology is still largely experimental. To evaluate the



Work crew installing the ecopassage on Cyprus Lake road.

success of this ecopassage, Parks Canada staff will be undertaking a monitoring program over the next several years in collaboration with Trent University and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

While we anticipate that the ecopassage will play a role in reducing the number of animals killed on our roads, we still need your help by driving carefully in Bruce Peninsula National Park. Driving slowly and scanning for animals will make the biggest difference in preventing roadkills. Please remember to reduce your speed and "Brake for Snakes" ...and turtles, and frogs, and salamanders...

For more information, please contact John Haselmayer, Manager of Resource Conservation, at 519-596-2444 ext 310.

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