



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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Industry, Conservation Groups, Government, and Landowners to Help Southern Alberta's Vulnerable Pronghorns

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Edmonton March 31, 2009) ... April 2 through 5, 2009 volunteers will congregate along CFB Suffield's north boundary to participate in a pilot to create a wildlife-friendly fence. Coordinated by Alberta's largest conservation group, the Alberta Fish & Game Association, this multi-stakeholder initiative involves several sponsors, partners and supporting agencies. Recognizing the growing problem, project participants are collaborating to address fencing barriers that affect Alberta's vulnerable pronghorn antelope population.

According to University of Calgary researcher, Mike Suito, "recent GPS tracking studies show that Alberta's pronghorn are extremely mobile, especially as they migrate to hospitable wintering locations in the fall and then back to fawning grounds in the spring to settle back into their summer territories. During these movement cycles they encounter countless barbed wire fences that restrict movement."

As a rule, antelope crawl under fences rather than jump over them. Many barbed wire fences are constructed with the bottom strand only 30 centimetres (12 inches) off the ground - too low to accommodate pronghorn movement. In turn, many antelope are funneled along these fencing structures until they can locate a suitable place to cross. Likewise, many lose swatches of hair as barbs snag their hides as they cross. In extreme cold conditions, this exposes flesh and endangers the animal. This fencing project is designed to alleviate this problem.

"Universally accepted standards for wildlife-friendly fencing suggest that by removing the bottom barbed strand, then elevating to 46 centimetres (18 inches) and replacing it with a double-stranded smooth wire we can minimize the barrier and facilitate free-flowing movement. Fencing of this nature has been on the radar of wildlife managers for some time now; we're very excited about the prospect of expanding it to other jurisdictions in the future," says Project Manager Kevin Wilson

This project is made possible, thanks to a grant from the Minister's Special License Program and additional funding support by Alberta Conservation Association and EnCana. Volunteers plan to replace 37 kilometres (23 miles) of fence wire during the four-day project.

For more information or to schedule an on-site interview, call Kevin Wilson at 780.913.1021 or e-mail: kwilson@tbwfi.ca.

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The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization proud to serve Albertans in the promotion of the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources and the conservation of their habitats. The AFGA has been active since 1908 in working towards these goals and has a province-wide membership of more than 19,000 individuals spread among 100+ Clubs.

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