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### **31 GRIZZLY DEATHS IN 2013 SPELLS MORE BAD NEWS FOR ALBERTA'S BEARS**

Calgary, AB – With another 31 bears killed in 2013, Alberta's grizzly population continues to be under threat. According to the 2013 mortality breakdown released by the Government of Alberta at the end of January, more grizzlies died in last year than any other year since 2003. A decade after the official listing of the grizzly bear as *Threatened* in Alberta, bears are still dying in near-record numbers in the province.

Consistent with previous trends for grizzly bear mortality, the majority of grizzly deaths in Alberta last year (26 of the 31) were due to human causes and likely traceable to the proliferation of roads, trails, pipelines and other forms of access that are bringing increasing numbers of people into the bears' remaining habitat. Although Alberta publishes the known causes of grizzly deaths, they do not publish precise locations. However, province-wide, the level of human access on roads and trails into grizzly bear backcountry habitat significantly exceeds the maximums established in the government's [Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan 2008-2013](#).

"This is a very worrying turn for the species," says Wendy Francis, Program Director for the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative. "Even though one year does not make a trend, the repeated deaths, coming year after year, are undermining efforts to recover our grizzly populations."

"With this many deaths attributable to human causes it is long past the time for the Government of Alberta to take the situation seriously," underlines Sean Nichols, Conservation Specialist with Alberta Wilderness Association. "The recovery plan needs to be updated to include meaningful, enforceable management solutions that include hard limits on access density. Dedicated resources to support communities in grizzly bear range to access to education and conflict mitigation programs are also a priority."

Katie Morrison, Conservation Director for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's Southern Alberta Chapter, agrees: "The [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#) (SSRP) being written under the Land Use Framework also needs to include those same limits and regulations. In the draft SSRP released last October an access management plan was promised for 2017. But 2017 is far too late; Alberta's threatened grizzlies need appropriate management today." She says that getting full protection in the SSRP for the Castle and other wildlands in the Eastern Slopes would go a long way toward securing the habitat that grizzlies need to survive.

The Government of Alberta's 2008 Grizzly Bear Plan emphasizes that "human use of access (specifically, motorized vehicle routes) is one of the primary threats to grizzly bear persistence." The plan goes on to recommend that the total length of roads, railroads, trails, pipelines, and cut lines not exceed 0.6km for every square kilometre in core grizzly habitat. In the nearly six years since the Plan's publication, the amount of access has only increased and little has been done to improve protection for grizzly bears' habitat.

**For more information:**

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