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Recreational Abuse of Alberta's Wilderness Presented at Conference

New information on recreational use and abuse in Bighorn Wildland will be presented by Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) at the 2004 Interdisciplinary Research and Management in Mountain Areas Conference in Banff.

"Degradation of wilderness by recreationists is the result of poor management," says Lara Smandych, AWA Conservation Biologist. "Protection of wilderness values must be made a government priority."

Preliminary results from AWA's Bighorn Wildland Recreational Use and Impact Monitoring Study show that Bighorn Wildland is being subjected to intensive OHV and equestrian use. This recreation has resulted in environmental degradation including off trail use, braiding and rutting of trails, and illegal (off trail/out of season) OHV use.

"Trail monitoring is crucial for effective long-term management of the impacts of recreational activities in remote backcountry areas with high ecological value," says Smandych. "AWA will continue trail monitoring efforts and continue to demand better management for Bighorn Wildland. We will continue to push government for legal protective designation for the area."

AWA will present a poster highlighting results of their study at the conference on Friday, September 24, 2004 between 7:30 to 9:30 pm.

For more information please contact:

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