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## **“Dinosaurs” in Hand Hills Ecological Reserve?**

Just two months after Park’s Canada kicked off their [plains bison](#) reintroduction, which will see the iconic animal return to a landscape it once roamed, Hand Hills Ecological Reserve, near Drumheller, has unveiled its plans to reintroduce another extinct species. While Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) generally supports the conservation practice of reintroducing locally extinct species, the proposed plan has brought up several concerns.

“Of course we want to see extirpated animals return to their native landscape but there are legitimate issues that need to be addressed.” says AWA Paleontologist Ellie Malcolm, “It’s not uncommon for a species to be reintroduced into an area where they had been locally extirpated, but never has there been a reintroduction of a species that has gone globally extinct. Frankly, we’ve never seen anything like this before and we don’t know what the impacts could be.”

On April 1, 2017, the park staff announced plans to do what was previously thought to be the realm of science fiction: tentatively scheduled for early 2018, the park staff is proposing to reintroduce a small herd of triceratops into a quarantined area of Hand Hills Ecological Reserve.

“Fossil records have shown that this area was once part of the triceratops’ historical range. Reintroduction is an important step towards restoring the full diversity of species and natural processes to the park’s natural ecosystem,” says the project spokesperson, Grant Hammond. “Triceratops were once the dominant grazer in the area, shaping the [landscape](#) of what is now the ecological reserve. We believe that a successful reintroduction will provide park visitors the opportunity to view a truly unique and majestic animal that has been gone from the landscape for far too long.”

AWA was told that there are plans to change the name of the ecological reserve to “Cretaceous Park” and, if the project proves successful, follow up with two less exciting sequel introductions of the iguanodon and gallimimus – dinosaurs nobody asked for.

“There are even plans for a bigger budget ‘Cretaceous World’, which sounds promising but will likely end up being a thinly veiled rehash of the original park”, says Malcolm, “God help us.”

Hammond confirmed that the project is unconcerned with the impacts to native vegetation and wildlife.

“People don’t want to see an endangered species, they want to see a dinosaur. Maybe when these local species go extinct there will be funding to reintroduce them too,” Hammond added. “But the mighty triceratops was here 68 million years ago; it doesn’t get much more native than that.”

### **For more information:**

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*Pssst – this article is an April Fool’s Day joke; the triceratops reintroduction and the people quoted are completely fictional. This parody article was not done in association with, and in no way reflects, the views and opinions of Hand Hills Ecological Reserve.*

