

# **Grizzly Bears and Pipelines: Response to Unique Linear Features (Year 2)**

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Oil and gas pipelines create many linear features throughout grizzly bear habitat in Alberta. Linear features form openings or edges, resulting in changes in vegetation and landscape permeability. Some wildlife species appear to avoid linear features, while these features can act as habitat or movement corridors for other animals. In the absence of previously published data regarding grizzly bear response to pipelines in North America, we have proposed four primary research objectives (see below) to be investigated over a two year period in the Kakwa region of Alberta (Figure 1).

Data collection and analysis to be completed in Year 1 of this study (2012) directly address two of these primary research objectives, and data collected in Year 1 will also contribute to meeting objectives for Year 2. At the completion of Year 1 of this project, we will have gained valuable information regarding

grizzly bear response to pipelines, including whether bears are selecting or avoiding pipelines, what behaviors are being displayed by bears using pipeline RoWs, and if/how bears are using pipelines for movement.

Our preliminary data from Year 1 show that bears in our study area are using pipeline RoWs for a number of purposes (e.g. anting, travel, foraging). Building on this information, the goal for Year 2 of this study is to better understand why bears may be on RoWs, including determining what factors may predict bear use of pipelines, and what the potential consequences of this use may be.

### **Policy Issue**

Biodiversity: Species conservation

### **Knowledge Gap**

Grizzly bear response to oil and gas developments

### **Reports**

Final Report

Published Paper