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NEWS RELEASE

DRIVERS WARNED OF HIGH RISK AREA FOR DEER COLLISIONS WEST OF VANDERHOOF

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C. (January 18, 2007) – The Wildlife Collision Prevention Program wants to inform drivers of an area near Vanderhoof that is experiencing a high rate of deer vehicle collisions. A stretch of Highway 16 near the McCall Road junction, about 12 kilometres west of Vanderhoof, is a hotspot for collisions between deer and vehicles right now.

“There is a passing lane and a curve at this spot, which means drivers are accelerating at the same time that their line of site is reduced because of the curve.” says Cam Hill, Conservation Officer. “Reports indicate that over a dozen deer have been struck by vehicles here since Christmas.”

Deer are crossing the highway frequently, but many deer seem to be crossing between 7:00 and 8:00 am and between 5:30 and 6:30 pm, so drivers need to be particularly attentive at this time.

“There are typically about 2 deer collisions reported every January on the roads near Vanderhoof, so this one site appears to exceed the historical pattern.” says Roy Rea, a Wildlife Vehicle Collision Researcher at UNBC. “Deer collisions around Vanderhoof have been steadily increasing over the past decade. The deep snows this year appear to be exacerbating the problem.”

Deer exhibit unpredictable behaviour. Even if deer see an approaching vehicle, they may still bolt on to the road, or cross and then re-cross the road. They often will run and swerve in a dodging motion, right into a vehicle. They usually travel in groups and motorists should expect to see more than one animal at a time.

The Wildlife Collision Prevention Program reminds drivers that winter is high-risk times for wildlife vehicle collisions. In the winter, wildlife move toward areas where forage is more plentiful, and wildlife is attracted to the road because of roadside salt deposits and ease of movement. If a collision with wildlife occurs, the RCMP must be notified if there are any human injuries or damage over \$1000.00. Call the Conservation Officer Service at 1.877.952.7277 to report dead or injured wildlife on or near the road.

WCPP “Hints for the Highway” while driving this winter are:

- Slow Down and Obey all Posted Signs – collision avoidance and driver response time are improved at lower speeds.
- Drive Defensively – actively watch for wildlife in the ditch, on the road shoulder, and in the right of way, particularly between dusk and dawn.
- Be Alert – animals are unpredictable, often travel in groups, and may bolt unexpectedly.
- Use Your Vehicle – clean your headlights, use your high beams when safe, and wear your seatbelt.

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For more information, please contact:

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High Risk Crash Location West of Vanderhoof

