

Wildlife Crossing and Road Mitigation Job Creation Projects that Would Benefit from Federal Infrastructure and Stimulus Funding

Collisions between motorists and wildlife cause more than 200 human fatalities and over 26,000 injuries each year, at an annual cost to Americans of more than \$8 billion. Research shows that the combination of wildlife crossing structures and fencing to guide animals over or under our nation's highways are highly effective, reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions by up to 97%.

The projects below have support from their respective states and would create jobs, aid local economies and create smart infrastructure to protect wildlife and people.

This list is a representative sample and will be regularly updated.

Contacts: Susan Holmes (susan@wildlandsnetwork.org); Kim Trotter (kim@y2y.net); Anna Wearn (anna@largelandscapes.org); Renee Callahan (rcallahan@arc-solutions.org)

Idaho

US 30 – Rocky Point Wildlife Crossing in Bear Lake Co.

- Project Number 22162, mileposts 442-448. Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) are working together to design one or more wildlife crossing structures south of Montpelier to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and preserve an historic mule deer migration from summer habitat in the Caribou Mountains to winter range on the Bear Lake Plateau. ITD reports ~100 crashes involving mule deer along this 5-mile stretch each year, accounting for ~42% of all accidents. The estimated budget for this safety program project is \$7,550,000 (FY20 – Idaho Transportation Investment Program). ITD is in the process of confirming data and developing range of improvements, with construction scheduled to begin in summer 2025. <https://itdprojects.org/projects/rocky-point-wildlife-crossing/>

State Hwy 21 – Cervidae Peak Wildlife Overpass in Boise Co.

- Project number 20773, milepost 19. ITD is leading the design of a wildlife overpass outside of Boise. The area supports large numbers of migrating ungulate populations (mule deer, elk and antelope), and the roadway is a heavily trafficked Scenic Byway that sees a high number of collisions every year. The area is within a Priority Migration Area identified in Idaho's action plan for Secretarial Order 3362. Project partners include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), ITD, IDFG, the City of Boise and many non-profits. The project will provide passage from the Pioneer Mountains to the Boise River Wildlife Management Area, where approximately 50,000 elk and deer migrate each year. The estimated budget for secured portions of this project is \$2,977,392 million, including \$2,757,392 in funding from the Federal Land Access Program and \$220,000 in local match (FY20-ITIP). The project is in the design phase, and construction is scheduled for 2022. Additional total funding of approximately \$1 million is required to support construct of an associated retaining wall and installation of additional fencing to ensure adequate wildlife funneling to the new overpass.

US 95 – McArthur Lake in Boundary Co.

- Project number 20662, mileposts 492-493. A bridge in northern ID is being re-constructed near a lake to lessen the curvature of the road to increase driver safety. The bridge will also be raised and fencing installed along the roadway to facilitate animal movement underneath. The area is within a priority migration area identified in Idaho's action plan for Secretarial Order 3362. Wildlife such as deer, elk, moose, lynx and bear use the area as a movement corridor between the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Mountains. The estimated budget is \$10,030,000, including \$9,294,000 in federal Highway Safety Improvement funds and \$736,000 in local match (FY20-ITIP). Planning is complete, with construction scheduled for 2022. <https://itdprojects.org/projects/us95mcarthurlake/>

Wyoming

US 189 – La Barge to Big Piney

- Project number P114038, mileposts 85-105. This stretch of US 189 has one of the highest rates of mule-deer vehicle collisions in Wyoming. The migrating and wintering deer impacted are part of the Wyoming Game & Fish Department’s priority Wyoming Range mule deer herd. The road has existing sheep fence (woven wire) along both sides which creates a substantial movement barrier. In addition to mule deer, motorist collisions with pronghorn and moose also occur along this stretch. Construction of wildlife crossings and associated fencing are estimated to cost \$21,477,000, with construction scheduled to start in 2025.

WY 22/WY 390 – Jackson to Wilson

- Project numbers 2000058/CN22036, mileposts 3-4. This stretch of WY 22 near the Snake River has one of the highest rates of moose fatalities from wildlife-vehicle collisions in Wyoming, and is the #1 recommended priority identified in the [Teton County Wildlife Crossing Master Plan](#). The estimated cost of required mitigation measures is \$35,412,000, with a construction start of 2023.

California

State Road 20 – Colusa Co.

- Mileposts 9.8-12.35. This two-lane road improvement project will include curve realignments, shoulder widening, addition of rumble strips and proposed wildlife crossing structures on California SR 20, which serves as a popular thoroughfare between California’s Central Valley, wine country, and coastal towns. In addition to the California Department of Transportation’s identification of this stretch as a safety risk to motorists, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has recognized the site as an area of great concern for both resident and migratory elk herds, and collaring data shows that SR-20 has become a barrier for the resident elk herd. Adjacent lands also support wildlife habitat for deer, bear, cougar, and coyote, among other species. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include an estimated budget for the wildlife-related portion of the project, and anticipated construction start date.

US 101 – Liberty Canyon

- Upon construction, the Liberty Canyon Wildlife Overpass would be the largest standalone bridge built specifically for wildlife in the nation. The overpass would reconnect the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills in Los Angeles County and span 10 lanes of traffic on US 101 and a frontage road. Caltrans and its partners have recently entered the design phase for the bridge, which is a significant milestone in delivering a construction project, and construction is expected to break ground in 2021/22. Fundraising efforts to raise \$60 million for construction costs are ongoing.

Oregon

US 97 – Chemult-Gilchrist

- This project, which proposes to build an underpass, 10 miles of fencing and associated structures for large mammals, has received over \$700,000 in federal, state, private grants and in-kind donations, but requires additional funding for completion. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated additional funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

US 97 – US Lava Butte

- In 2012, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) built two underpasses, fencing, and associated infrastructure for large mammals at the South Century Drive highway interchange. ODOT is currently embarked on a second phase of the project to include a series of underpasses beneath the newly divided highway, and is seeking additional funding to build another under- and overpass. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated additional funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

Oregon

US 20 – Tumalo

- In the town of Tumalo (west of Bend), ODOT has proposed installing three miles of fencing with modified cattle guards on ODOT property to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions, but currently lacks the funding to execute this proposed project. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

Nevada

USA Parkway/State Road 439 – Storey Co.

- Mileposts 7-10. This segment of SR 439 in Storey County (15 miles east of Reno and just south of the city of Clark), is one of the areas of highest safety concern for animal-vehicle collisions and the #1 hot spot for horse-vehicle collisions in the state. Proposed mitigation includes one or more wildlife crossing structures and associated fencing, which is supported by local businesses and horse advocate groups. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

Colorado

I-25 Overpass – Douglas Co.

- Located in the Central Front Range, the I-25 South Gap Project between Castle Rock and Monument is constructing five open-span bridge underpasses for wildlife. However, the project lacks funding to complete a much-needed wildlife overpass. That funding must be secured soon if the overpass is to be included in the current construction project. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

Montana

US 93 North – Ravalli Co.

- Mileposts 30.4-35.1. This portion of US 93 traverses the Flathead Reservation, home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and includes the largest network of wildlife crossing structures in the U.S. In 2021, the Montana Department of Transportation proposes to install ~4 miles of exclusionary fencing and associated wildlife infrastructure from Old Freight Road, to Pinoneault Rd/Lemery Rd to funnel wildlife to existing crossing structures. US 93 is a heavily trafficked highway that severs important wildlife habitat for iconic species including grizzly and black bear, mountain lion, coyote, deer, elk, and otter, among others. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

Virginia

I-64 Afton Mountain Area

- This several mile segment of I-64 creates a hotspot for wildlife-vehicle collisions where it intersects with a mountainous, forested wildlife corridor along the spine of the Blue Ridge Mountains that provides critical habitat for deer, black bear, and other wildlife. This area has been targeted for several years as a safety evaluation area because of its high frequency of crashes with deer and bear and is considered by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) as an example of a location with a strong need for highway mitigation for wildlife and funding. Because there are no existing bridge or culvert underpasses permeable to wildlife along the Afton segment, construction of one or more wildlife overpasses and/or large underpasses and associated fencing and other infrastructure would have a significant impact on driver safety and habitat connectivity. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

North Carolina/Tennessee

I-40 - Pigeon River Gorge – bridge modification

- This segment of Interstate 40 intersects with the northeast corner of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, thereby acting as a barrier to wildlife movement from the park into extensive national forests to the north. For several years, NGOs and state and federal agencies have been undertaking a collaborative, research-based approach to identify key locations for crossing structures, as summarized [here](#). Although the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has currently scheduled a bridge replacement project at Harmon Den/Cold Springs Creek, NCDOT requires additional funds to make the new bridge more permeable to wildlife by, among other things, widening the highway bridge and associated exit ramps to accommodate the creek and improve connectivity for aquatic species and terrestrial wildlife such as elk, bear, and deer. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

New Hampshire

US 2 - Bowman Divide/Randolph

- The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), New Hampshire Fish and Game and New Hampshire Audubon have done extensive studies at specific sites along this section of U.S. Route 2 where there are particularly high concentrations of wildlife crossing the road. NHDOT has found the idea of installing a wildlife crossing at Bowman Divide to have merit as it would likely would reduce vehicle collisions and greatly benefit wildlife and habitat connectivity.

Florida

State Route 710 – Martin Co.

- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 4 is seeking funding to pay for the installation of wildlife fencing approximately 0.5 miles north and 0.5 miles south of a recently constructed wildlife crossing underpass just west of the Palm Beach/Martin County Line, where SR 710 bisects the DuPuis Management Area/JW Corbett Wildlife Management Area and Jones Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area. A Florida panther was killed on the highway just adjacent to the crossing late in 2019, and wildlife fencing that funnels animals crossing structure could have helped avoid this collision. FDOT is awaiting funding to pay for the fencing, and is otherwise ready to prepare documentation to begin installation upon receipt of funds. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start date.

Washington

Various - Mt Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

- The Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest (MBSNF) and the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest (OWNF) have a large backlog of culverts and road segments in need of repair, replacement, or upgrade. Limited funding and staff hinder current efforts to upgrade the system to current standards and policies. Additional opportunities to replace existing structures with ones that are more resilient to higher peak flows, called “betterments,” also exist, although funding is currently limited. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements and anticipated construction start dates.

Naches Ranger District. Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

- The OOWNF recently released a Decision Notice for a Little Crow Restoration Project in the southern portion of the Little Naches watershed. That decision authorizes a variety of structural upgrades including the replacement of up to 73 existing, undersized stream-road crossings with larger/upsized structures that allow for aquatic organism passage (including at least nine structures on known fish-bearing streams). Authorized management activities are anticipated to begin in fall of 2020 and beyond. This entry will be updated as soon as possible to include estimated funding requirements.