

Ecological Connectivity Policy Compendium: U.S. Policies to Conserve Ecological Connectivity 2007-2021

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Federal, Tribal, and Regional Policies.....	4
State Policies.....	16
County Policies.....	27



Authors' Note:

This document is a compendium of key connectivity policies drawn from reviews previously published by the Center, as well as more recent connectivity policies promulgated in the years 2020-2021.

To view Volumes 1, 2 and 3, visit:

- Volume 1: [Recent Progress on Wildlife Corridor and Ecological Connectivity Policy in the United States \(2007-2010\)](#)
- Volume 2: [New Policies with the Potential to Improve Wildlife Corridors and Ecological Connectivity \(2012-2016\)](#)
- Volume 3: [U.S. Policies to Conserve Ecological Connectivity Since 2007 \(2007-2008 and 2016-2019\)](#)

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Introduction

Ecological connectivity (or simply “connectivity”) is the unimpeded movement of organisms, species, and genes on a daily, seasonal, and/or annual basis and sustains critical ecological processes, such as the flow of nutrients and energy.¹ As such, ecological connectivity is fundamental for biodiversity conservation and human well-being in an era of accelerating environmental change.² As human development fragments landscapes, species become increasingly isolated in islands of remaining suitable habitat.³ This limits their ability to access resources, maintain genetic diversity, and respond to changing environmental conditions, such as climate and land use changes.⁴ Habitat fragmentation therefore significantly contributes to increased species mortality and population declines, a troubling trend that has created a national and global biodiversity crisis.⁵

Reconnecting habitats requires maintaining or restoring landscape features that facilitate species movement, as well as mitigating barriers to species movement, such as roads and fences. Increasing the permeability of landscapes not only increases biodiversity and climate resilience, but also directly benefits communities. Connectivity conservation enhances roadway safety, improves access to nature, and provides valuable ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration, clean water, and crop pollination.

For these reasons, ecological connectivity is receiving increasing attention from policymakers at federal, tribal, regional, state and local levels of government. These decision-makers are using a suite of policy tools—including statutory mandates, legislative guidance and non-binding resolutions, regulations, land use planning requirements, mechanisms for interagency coordination, public grants, and financial incentives for private landowners—to restore, maintain, and/or enhance connectivity.

This report includes the most significant federal and state policies that have been enacted since 2007 to support connectivity conservation. Based on the analysis below, there has been an unprecedented level of activity in the past five years, with six federal and 24 state policies enacted just since 2016. The authors also include a sample of key tribal, regional and county connectivity policies, which are too numerous to completely inventory here.

This compendium includes key policies highlighted in earlier reviews published by the Center for Large Landscape Conservation, as well as policies from the years 2020 and 2021. The compilation omits policy proposals from earlier volumes that were not adopted or that have been superseded. Overall, these policies represent important efforts across time, space, and scale to address the transboundary challenge of stitching back together our communities and ecosystems throughout the nation.

¹ Convention on Migratory Species. (2020). *Improving Ways of Addressing Connectivity in the Conservation of Migratory Species, Resolution 12.26 (REV.COP13)*. https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/cms_cop12_res.12.26_connectivity_e.pdf

² Heller, N.E., & Zavaleta, E.S. (2009). *Biodiversity management in the face of climate change: A review of 22 years of recommendations*. *Biological Conservation*, 142, 14-32.

³ Hilty, J. A., Lidicker Jr, W. Z., & Merenlender, A. M. (2012). *Corridor ecology: the science and practice of linking landscapes for biodiversity conservation*. Island Press.

⁴ Ament, R., Callahan, M., McClure, M., Reuling, and G. Tabor. (2014). *Wildlife Connectivity: Fundamentals for conservation action*. Center for Large Landscape Conservation: Bozeman, Montana. <https://largelandscapes.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Wildlife-Connectivity-Fundamentals-for-Conservation-Action.pdf>

⁵ Pörtner et al. (2022). *Climate change 2022: impacts, adaptation and vulnerability*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. <https://edepot.wur.nl/565644>.

Federal, Tribal, and Regional Policies

[Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, U.S. Public Law 117-58](#) (November 15, 2021); *signed by President Joseph Biden*. This Act includes an historic investment in aquatic and terrestrial habitat connectivity through federal transportation programs. It establishes “a competitive wildlife crossings pilot program to provide grants for projects that seek to achieve... a reduction in the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions [and] improved habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.” The pilot program is to distribute \$350,000,000 between fiscal years 2022 and 2026; the primary consideration for grant funds is “the extent to which the proposed project of an eligible entity is likely to protect motorists and wildlife by reducing the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.” Other considerations are the extent to which a project: “(A) Leverag[es] Federal investment by encouraging non-Federal contributions to the project, including projects from public-private partnerships. (B) Support[s] local economic development and improvement of visitation opportunities. (C) Incorporat[es] innovative technologies, including advanced design techniques and other strategies to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions and improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. (D) Provid[es] educational and outreach opportunities. (E) Conduct[s] monitoring and research to evaluate, compare effectiveness of, and identify best practices in, selected projects.”

In addition to dedicated funding through the pilot grant program, additional billions of dollars are available for wildlife-vehicle collision reduction and terrestrial habitat connectivity improvement projects under the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program, the Federal Lands Transportation Program; and the Pollinator-friendly Practices on Roadsides and Highway Rights-of-Way Program. Further, aquatic habitat connectivity projects are eligible under the Bridge Investment Program, the Collaborative-based, Aquatic-Focused, Landscape-Scale Restoration Program, the National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grant Program, and the Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program.

The Act directs the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to update and expand the existing 2008 Wildlife-Vehicle Collision Reduction Study, Report to Congress and Best Practices Manual. It also directs USDOT to “develop a quality standardized methodology for collecting and reporting spatially accurate wildlife collision and carcass data for the National Highway System.” The Secretary of Transportation shall establish guidance that “contains a threshold for determining whether a highway shall be evaluated for potential mitigation measures to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and increase habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species”. The USDOT shall also consult the 2011 Federal Highway Administration “Wildlife Crossing Structure Handbook” during new construction or rehabilitation of a federal highway. Finally, USDOT shall “determine if the replacement or rehabilitation of bridges and tunnels should include measures to enable safe and unimpeded movement for terrestrial and aquatic species.”

[Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful: A Preliminary Report Submitted to the National Climate Task Force](#) (May 6, 2021); *signed by U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack, U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, and Council on Environmental Quality Chair, Brenda Mallory.* Described as a “first step toward developing a national conservation effort that reflects the President’s ambition” of conserving of at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 [as directed in Conserving Our Nation’s Lands and Waters (Section 216) of Executive Order 14008: Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad (signed by President Biden on Jan 21, 2021)], this Report articulates eight principles and six “recommended areas of early focus...intended to forge common purpose, support voluntary approaches to conservation, and reflect early inputs and ideas that elected officials, Tribal leaders, and stakeholders have lifted up as opportunities for successful collaboration.” Under the theme of “Expand Collaborative Conservation of Fish and Wildlife Habitats,” the Report states that “...agencies can work with States, Tribes, local communities, and private landowners to establish and expand upon promising initiatives to conserve and restore wildlife migration corridors.” These include “a promising effort to enhance winter range and migration corridor habitat of elk, deer and pronghorn on DOI [Department of Interior] lands,” launched under the Trump Administration, that “could be expanded to include other land managers, to build partnerships with working ranches and other landowners, and to conserve corridors and seasonal ranges for other species.” Further, the [Fish and Wildlife Service] “should expand conservation efforts already identified through partnerships with external stakeholders, including fish passage projects in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, conservation of at-risk species identified in State Wildlife Action Plans, and bird habitat conservation through the Migratory Bird Joint Ventures.”

[Native American Fish and Wildlife Society \(NAFWS\) Resolution 19-002: Support for the Protection of Wildlife Corridors](#) (May 23, 2019); *signed by NAFWS President David Reiter.* The Resolution supports the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act and “the inclusion of Tribes in such legislation and that it provides resources to assist Tribes with their wildlife and habitat connectivity efforts on tribal lands.” It further calls upon the “Interior Department to make Secretarial Order 3362 [see earlier entry, 2019] inclusive of the nation’s federally-recognized tribes.” Finally, the Resolution supports “collaborative efforts amongst tribal, state, federal and private land managers to protect wildlife corridors and other habitat connectivity needs across large landscapes on and off tribal lands.”

[John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, U.S. Public Law 116-9](#) (March 12, 2019); *signed by President Donald Trump.* Section 713 of this Act amends Title VII of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 by adding the following: “The Secretary shall assess the impacts of habitat fragmentation on wildlife in the California Desert Conservation Area (The Area) and establish policies and procedures to ensure the preservation of wildlife corridors and facilitate species migration.” It also mandates a study, to be completed within two years of enactment, “regarding the impact of habitat fragmentation on wildlife in The Area.” Study components include identification of migrating and likely to migrate species, examination of the potential impacts of habitat fragmentation, identification of critical migration corridors recommended for preservation, and recommendations for ensuring the biological connectivity of public land in The Area. The study’s findings are to be utilized in all land management plans applicable to The Area.

[Department of the Interior Secretarial Order \(SO\) 3362: Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors](#) (February 9, 2019); *signed by USDI Secretary Ryan Zinke*. SO 3362 directs appropriate agencies within the Department of the Interior (DOI), which include the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Geological Survey, to “work in close partnership with the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming to enhance and improve the quality of big-game winter range and migration corridor habitat on Federal lands....” The DOI agencies are to “[a]ssess State wildlife agency data regarding wildlife migrations early in the planning process for land use plans and significant project-level actions that bureaus develop,” and to “[e]valuate and appropriately apply site-specific management activities, as identified in State land use plans, [or] site-specific plans...that conserve or restore habitat necessary to sustain local and regional big-game populations.” The Order describes “minimizing development that would fragment winter range and primary migration corridors,” as one of several potential measures to conserve or restore habitat.

[Conservation Reserve Program of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, Public Law No. 115-334](#) (December 20, 2018); *signed by President Donald Trump*. Under the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, the Conservation Reserve Program provides federal funding for the Secretary to prioritize lands “of ecological significance, including land that...may assist in the restoration of threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, may assist in preventing a species from being listed as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or improves or creates wildlife habitat corridors.”

[Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\). Final Rule. Resource Management Planning 2.0. \(43 CFR Part 1600\)](#) (December 12, 2016, *Rescinded 2017*). The Final Rule “enable[s] the BLM to more readily address landscape-scale resource issues, such as wildfire, habitat connectivity, or the demand for renewable and non-renewable energy sources and to respond more effectively to change.” The Rule’s section on habitat for special status species, including state or federally listed threatened or endangered species refers to: “...areas of key fish and wildlife habitat such as big game wintering and summer areas, bird nesting and feeding areas, habitat connectivity or wildlife migration corridors, and areas of large and intact habitat. The identification of these areas is important at the onset of planning because fish and wildlife habitat often crosses jurisdictional boundaries and conservation of such habitat will often require landscape-scale management approaches.” The Rule states “...areas of ecological importance might include refugia or migratory corridors identified to help sensitive species respond to the effects of climate change....”

[New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Resolution 40-3: Resolution on Ecological Connectivity, Adaptation to Climate Change, and Biodiversity Conservation](#) (August 29, 2016); In this far-reaching Resolution, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) “instruct agencies within their jurisdictions to elevate ecological connectivity, conservation and restoration in their activities.” Further, “[t]hese agencies are...instructed to encourage regional collaboration, as appropriate, in order to identify priority connectivity zones and expand existing protected areas....” The Resolution identifies land protection, land planning transportation enhancement, and the sustainable management of land and aquatic systems “in order to maintain and improve connectivity” as areas for agency cooperation. The Resolution further encourages

“land planning entities at all levels, especially municipalities, to incorporate habitat connectivity objectives in land use planning and policies.” In addition, the NEG/ECP “direct officials to collaborate, where possible, to document the current state of forest and habitat connectedness in individual jurisdictions and the region...[and] to develop regional work plans to identify address potential issues and collaborative solutions.”

[Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act \(FAST Act\), Public Law 114-94](#) (December 4, 2015); *signed by President Barack Obama*. The FAST Act retains the Map-21 Act [see entry, 2012] provisions to reduce the number of motorist collisions with wildlife and improve connectivity among habitats disrupted by roads with high numbers of wildlife-vehicle collisions. In addition, under the FAST Act, on transportation right-of-ways, a provision “encourage[s] the development of habitat and forage for Monarch butterflies, other native pollinators, and honey bees through plantings of native forbs and grasses...that can serve as migratory way stations and facilitate migrations.”

[Department of the Interior \(DOI\). Departmental Manual, Part 600, Chapter 6: Implementing Mitigation at the Landscape-scale \(600 DM 6\)](#) (November 3, 2015). The DOI issued a new mitigation policy to “best implement mitigation measures [including] landscape-scale approaches.” The addition directs agency officials to use “compensatory mitigation” to offset impacts to public lands and to “identify and promote mitigation measures that help address the effects of climate change and improve the resilience of... resources.” It includes direction to “[avoid] ecologically sensitive landscapes, culturally sensitive areas, sensitive viewsheds, and crucial wildlife corridors.”

[America’s Agricultural Act of 2014, Public Law 113-79](#) (February 7, 2014); *signed by President Barack Obama*. The Act authorizes payments to lands, voluntarily enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, which “could provide habitat for animal and plant populations of significant ecological value if the land is retained in its current use or restored to a natural condition.” The new Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) “shall give priority to acquiring wetland reserve easements based on the value of the wetland reserve easement for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.” Lastly, the effectiveness of the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) is to be measured in part by “evaluating the extent of improved access on eligible land, improved wildlife habitat, and related economic benefits.”

[Secretarial Order \(SO\) 3330: Improving Mitigation Policies and Practices of the Department of Interior](#) (October 31, 2013; *Rescinded 2017; Reinstated 2022*); *signed by USDI Secretary Sally Jewell*. The purpose of SO 3330 “is to establish a Department-wide mitigation strategy.” Central components include: “(1) the use of a landscape-scale approach to identify and facilitate investment in key conservation priorities in a region; (2) early integration of mitigation considerations in project planning and design; (3) ensuring the durability of mitigation measures over time; (4) ensuring transparency and consistency in mitigation decisions; and (5) a focus on mitigation efforts that improve the resilience of our Nation’s resources in the face of climate change.” The SO also “supports a landscape-scale approach to mitigation...[T]hrough the development of a comprehensive mitigation strategy, we can ensure that our national wildlife refuges, national parks, and other Federal lands and waters are managed for conservation purposes with sound stewardship and a commitment to conserve habitat and fish and wildlife migration corridors.”

[National Fish, Wildlife and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) (March 2013). Released by an intergovernmental working group led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Strategy states: “There is an urgent need to identify the best candidates for new conservation areas (including refugia and corridors of habitat that allow species to migrate), and areas where habitat restoration can promote resiliency and adaptation of species and ecosystem functions.” The Strategy describes “... the importance of providing linkages and corridors to facilitate connectivity.” In order to achieve this goal, Strategy 1.4 recommends “conserve, restore, and as appropriate and practicable, establish new ecological connections among conservation areas to facilitate fish, wildlife, and plant migration, range shifts, and other transitions caused by climate change.” Additionally, Strategy 1.4.6 recommends “[p]rovid[ing] landowners and stakeholder groups with incentives for conservation and restoration of key corridor habitats through conservation programs such as those under the conservation title of the Farm Bill and landowner tools under the ESA as well as other mechanisms...” Strategy 7.1 identifies actions to “[s]low and reverse habitat loss and fragmentation.”

[Western Governors’ Association. Policy Resolution 2013-04: Conserving Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West](#) (Spring 2013). In this update of the Western Governor’s Association’s 2007 and 2010 resolutions, a wildlife council will launch “a West-wide Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) that will depict crucial wildlife habitat across 17 western states in a user-friendly GIS tool.” The Western Governors “direct [the council] to continue its guidance in the development, management and implementation with partners of the state and West-wide CHATs” and “encourage federal agencies to provide their data to state wildlife mapping efforts, to ensure that the most complete data is available and incorporated into the state and West-wide CHATs.” The Governors “encourage widespread use of CHATs by industry, the public, and state and federal agencies. Decision-makers at all levels in the public and private sectors can use state CHATs to better inform energy, transportation, and land use planning while providing for healthy and productive landscapes.”

[Department of Interior \(DOI\). Departmental Manual, Part 523 Chapter 1: Climate Change Policy \(523 DM 1\)](#) (December 20, 2012). The Office of Policy Analysis amended DOI’s Manual to state “The Department will integrate climate change adaptation strategies into its policies, planning, programs, and operations,” and offer a list of 11 policies, among which “[c]onsistent with existing laws and regulations, it is the Department’s policy to:

- Promote landscape-scale, ecosystem-based management approaches to enhance the resilience and sustainability of linked human and natural systems
- Advance approaches to managing linked human and natural systems that help mitigate the impacts of climate change, including:
 - a. Protect diversity of habitat, communities and species;
 - b. Protect and restore core, unfragmented habitat areas and the key habitat linkages among them;
 - c. Anticipate and prepare for shifting wildlife movement patterns;
 - d. Maintain key ecosystem services;
 - e. Monitor, prevent, and slow the spread of invasive species (defined in Executive Order 13112 as alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health); and

- f. Focus development activities in ecologically disturbed areas when possible, and avoid ecologically sensitive landscapes, culturally sensitive areas, and crucial wildlife corridors.”

[Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act \(MAP-21\), Public Law 112-141](#) (July 6, 2012); signed by *President Barack Obama*. The MAP-21 Act is the first U.S. national transportation law to provide authority across multiple programs for state, federal and tribal managers and researchers to “reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality or to restore and maintain connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.” Under both the Federal Lands Transportation Program and Tribal Transportation Program, funds can be allocated “to improve public safety and reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity” and “to mitigate the damage to wildlife, aquatic organism passage, habitat, and ecosystem connectivity, including the costs of constructing, maintaining, replacing, or removing culverts and bridges, as appropriate.” Further, Federal Lands Access Program funds can be used for “environmental mitigation in or adjacent to Federal land to improve public safety and reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity.” In addition, “projects to mitigate hazards caused by wildlife” are among the “[h]ighway and transit safety infrastructure improvements” authorized under the Surface Transportation Program. Finally, the Highway Safety Improvement Program includes “the addition or retrofitting of structures or other measures to eliminate or reduce crashes involving vehicles and wildlife.”

[U.S. Forest Service. Final Rule. National Forest Land Management Planning System \(36 CFR Part 219\)](#) (April 9, 2012). This Final Rule “sets forth process and content requirements to guide the development, amendment, and revision of land management plans to maintain and restore [National Forest System] land and water ecosystems while providing for ecosystem services and multiple uses.” Affecting 155 national forests, 20 grasslands, and one prairie, the rule states: “Ecosystem Integrity. The plan must include plan components [*sic*], including standards or guidelines, to maintain or restore the ecological integrity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems and watersheds in the plan area, including structure, function, composition, and connectivity, taking into account: (i) Interdependence of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the plan area. (ii) Contributions of the plan area to ecological conditions within the broader landscape influenced by the plan area. (iii) Conditions in the broader landscape that may influence the sustainability of resources and ecosystems within the plan area. (iv) System drivers, including dominant ecological processes, disturbance regimes, and stressors, such as natural succession, wildland fire, invasive species, and climate change; and the ability of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems on the plan area to adapt to change. (v) Wildland fire and opportunities to restore fire adapted ecosystems. (vi) Opportunities for landscape scale restoration.”

The Rule defines connectivity as “[e]cological conditions that exist at several spatial and temporal scales that provide landscape linkages that permit the exchange of flow, sediments, and nutrients; the daily and seasonal movements of animals within home ranges; the dispersal and genetic interchange between populations; and the long distance range shifts of species, such as in response to climate change.”

[Executive Order \(EO\) 13604: Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects](#) (March 22, 2012); *signed by President Barack Obama*. EO 13604 directs federal agencies to establish processes that “inform decision-makers and affected communities about the potential benefits and impacts of proposed infrastructure projects, and ensure that projects are designed, built, and maintained in a manner that is consistent with protecting our public health, welfare, safety, national security, and environment.” In addition, EO 13604 requires federal agencies to ensure that “projects are designed appropriately to avoid, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on public health, security, historic properties and other cultural resources, and the environment, and to minimize or mitigate impacts that may occur.”

[Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\). Instruction Memorandum 2012-039: Identification and Uniform Mapping of Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Habitat Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Western Governors' Association](#) (December 13, 2011); *signed by Deputy Director Mike Pool*. Issued to all BLM field officials, the Instruction Memorandum describes the agreement of federal agencies “to use wildlife-related information and data developed through CHAT [Western Wildlife Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool, the name given to the decision support system described in the Memorandum of Understanding], whenever they are adequate and at an appropriate scale, as a principal source to inform land use, land planning, and related natural resource decisions,” to seek information “from a State in other usable forms” or, if unavailable, to “explore the possibility of the States developing such information.” Further, the Memorandum states “[t]he regional-level data and maps developed through CHAT will be useful to inform large-scale planning that spans multiple states and/or jurisdictions, including energy and transportation projects. Additionally, the BLM’s National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy and the Rapid Ecoregional Assessments are two ongoing efforts that are directed, as appropriate, to use CHAT to inform these efforts.”

[State-Federal Implementation Group \(SFIG\) Agreement under the June 2009 Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Coordination Among Federal Agencies and States in Identification and Uniform Mapping of Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Habitat](#) (June 20, 2011); *signed by Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, USDI, Michael J. Bean; Director of the Office for Watershed, Fish, Wildlife, Air and Rare Plants, USFS, Anne Zimmerman; Chairman, Western Governors' Wildlife Council and Director of the Governor of Utah's Public Lands Policy Coordination Office, John Harja; and Vice Chairman, Western Governors' Wildlife Council and Governor of Washington's Natural Resources Advisor, John Mankowski*. The Agreement states: “the states and federal agencies agree that implementation of this agreement is essential to achieving the purpose of the June 15, 2009 MOU” and commits the SFIG “to meet regularly, in conjunction with WGWC [Western Governors' Wildlife Council] meetings, to monitor ongoing coordination across relevant state and federal initiatives [and that] ongoing discussions should include:

- Identification of specific opportunities to reduce duplication of effort, create efficiencies and ensure the development of complementary mapping products;
- Recognition and sharing across the region of successful approaches for agency to agency coordination of data and processes;
- Establishment of appropriate forums for technical staff to engage in the development of DSSs [Decision Support Systems] – including data sharing and edge matching across political jurisdictions; and

- Consideration and support for the use of state wildlife DSS information by BLM in their REAs [Rapid Ecosystem Assessments] and by the Forest Service in their National Planning Rule and Integrated Resource and Protection Strategies.”

[Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\). Final Rule. Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program \(7 CFR Part 636\)](#) (November 23, 2010). Reauthorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program “provides direct technical and financial assistance to improve fish and wildlife habitat on eligible agricultural, nonindustrial private forest land (NIPF) and Indian land. The focus on the program is on national, regional, and State-directed fish and wildlife priorities, including rare and declining species.” Under the Final Rule, one of five national priorities is “[p]rotect, restore, develop, or enhance important migration and other movement corridors for wildlife.”

[Department of Interior Secretarial Order \(SO\) 3308: Management of the National Landscape Conservation System](#) (November 15, 2010); *signed by USDI Secretary Ken Salazar*. SO 3308 states “The National Landscape Conservation System components shall be managed as an integral part of the larger landscape, in collaboration with the neighboring land owners and surrounding communities, to maintain biodiversity, and promote ecological connectivity and resilience in the face of climate change.”

[Western Governors’ Association. Policy Resolution 2010-10: Conserving Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West](#) (October 2010). A renewal of its 2007 Resolution, this document reaffirms commitment to wildlife corridor conservation: “The Council is making excellent progress and the Governors encourage their individual members to continue to work to achieve state-based wildlife decision support systems (DSSs) for wildlife corridors and crucial habitat. DSSs should be publicly available and compatible across all the Council member states within the next three years.” The Resolution continues: “The Governors request the Congress to acknowledge and provide resources to state efforts to develop wildlife DSSs and conserve wildlife corridors and crucial habitat through existing and necessary new authorities and appropriations provided to the federal land management agencies. Congress should require Federal agencies to use state wildlife DSSs early on in their land management and other planning processes.”

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service \(USFWS\). Rising to the Urgent Challenge—Strategic Plan for Responding to Accelerating Climate Change](#) (September 2010). The USFWS Strategic Plan “acknowledges the climate crisis as one of enormous consequence and challenge for fish and wildlife conservation” and sets goals for “three progressive strategies: adaptation, mitigation, and engagement [with internal and external partners].” Further, “[f]or the Service, adaptation is planned, science-based management actions, including regulatory and policy changes that we take to help reduce the impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife and their habitats. Adaptation forms the core of the Service’s response to climate change and is the centerpiece of our Strategic Plan.”

Adaptation Goal 3 specifies: “We will plan and deliver landscape conservation actions that support climate change adaptations by fish and wildlife of ecological and societal significance,” and includes the following:

Objective 3.2: Promote Habitat Connectivity and Integrity

Climate change is contributing to the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of current habitats and will likely create novel habitats as species redistribute themselves across the landscape. In addition, climate change is interacting with non-climate stressors—such as land-use change, wildfire, urban and suburban development, and agriculture—to fragment habitats at ever-increasing rates. Protecting and restoring contiguous blocks of unfragmented habitat; and using linkages and corridors to enhance connectivity between habitat blocks (in particular, protected areas such as National Wildlife Refuges) will likely facilitate the movement of fish and wildlife species responding to climate change. Novel conservation measures that address the dynamic nature of climate change effects on habitat may also be needed, among them, long-term climate refugia; protected habitat areas with dynamic boundaries; or other conservation entities, such as land facets.

Through conservation designs developed by LCCs [Landscape Conservation Cooperatives], we will work with partners to identify needed habitat protection and landscape-scale habitat linkages and corridors. By joining the habitat protection and management capacities of the Service (e.g., National Wildlife Refuge System, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Endangered Species Program, National Fish Habitat Plan, National Fish Passage Program, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, and North American Wetlands Conservation Act) with those of our partners, we will help build this connectivity within and between landscapes. We must also strive to maintain ecosystem integrity and resilience by developing new and innovative ways of protecting and restoring key ecological processes to sustain fish and wildlife. Processes such as pollination, seed dispersal, nutrient cycling, natural disturbance cycles, predator-prey relations, and others must be part of the natural landscapes we seek to maintain or restore. These processes are likely to function more optimally in landscapes composed of large habitat blocks connected by well-placed corridors....

The goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan are to be “stepped down to specific actions that will form our near-term, 5-Year Action Plan for addressing climate change.”

[National Park Service \(NPS\). Climate Change Response Strategy](#) (September 2010). The Strategy describes four integrated components—science, adaptation, mitigation and communication—for NPS to address the impacts of climate change. Among these, Adaptation Objective 6.3 reads: “Collaborate to develop cross-jurisdictional conservation plans to protect and restore connectivity and other landscape-scale components of resilience. Protecting and restoring corridors (passageways that connect habitat patches) and connectivity across landscapes will require strong collaboration with partners and programs to share knowledge, develop repositories of genetic resources, and, where appropriate, develop cross-jurisdictional conservation.” This objective is nested under Adaptation Goal 6: “implement adaptation strategies that promote ecosystem resilience and enhance restoration, conservation, and preservation of park resources.”

[U.S. Forest Service \(USFS\). National Roadmap to Responding to Climate Change](#) (July 2010). The National Roadmap builds upon the USFS Strategic Framework [see entry, 2008], and was developed to help fulfill Objective 2.2 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Strategic Plan (2010-2015) “to lead efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change,” which includes “bring[ing] all National Forests into compliance with a climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy.” The Roadmap identifies needed assessment, education and management measures on ongoing, immediate and long-term time-scales. One of five immediate management initiatives is:

“Connect habitats to improve adaptive capacity.

- Collaborate with partners to develop land management plans that establish priority locations for maintaining and restoring habitat connectivity to mitigate effects of climate change.
- Seek partnerships with private landowners to provide migration corridors across private lands.
- Remove or modify physical impediments to the movement of species most likely to be affected by climate change.
- Manage forest and grassland ecosystems to decrease fragmentation.
- Continue to develop and restore important corridors for fish and wildlife.”

[U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\): Memorandum on Reducing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions](#) (June 1, 2010); *signed by Associate Administrator for Office of Safety, Joe Toole, and Associated Administrator for Planning, Safety and Realty, Gloria Shepherd.* This Memorandum on FHWA’s Wildlife Vehicle Collision Reduction Training Course states: “The information presented in the...course is a useful tool in evaluating the need to accommodate wildlife collision mitigation strategies and connectivity needs during the environmental review process....” The Memorandum “encourage[s] all divisions to adopt the practice [of incorporating a consideration of wildlife and safety needs into Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements] since early consideration can result in project design features that decrease wildlife mortality and increase safety for vehicle drivers and passengers.” The course “cover[s] a wide variety of [mitigation] strategies such as wildlife fencing, animal detection systems, and vegetation management in great detail.”

[Presidential Memorandum: A 21st Century Strategy for America’s Great Outdoors](#) (April 16, 2010); *signed by President Barack Obama.* This Memorandum launched the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative, whose goals include “[b]uild upon State, local, private, and tribal priorities for the conservation of land, water, wildlife, historic, and cultural resources, creating corridors and connectivity across these outdoor spaces....” The Memorandum names the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality as leads to develop, in the words of a 2011 progress report, “a 21st Century Conservation agenda that will protect America’s natural and cultural resources and connect people to the outdoors through jobs, education, recreation and service,” and specifies that eight agencies should “align policies and programs to achieve [the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative’s] goals.” The Initiative included a series of citizen listening sessions held around the country, development of an action plan, and follow up reports in 2011 and 2012.

[Department of Interior Secretarial Order \(SO\) 3289: Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources](#) (September 14, 2009; Amended February 22, 2010); *signed by USDI Secretary Ken Salazar*. SO 3289 “establishes a Department-wide approach for applying scientific tools to increase understanding of climate change and to coordinate an effective response to its impacts on tribes, and on the land, water, ocean, fish and wildlife and cultural heritage resources that the Department manages.” It states that “shifting wildlife and habitat populations may require investments in new wildlife corridors” because “[t]he realities of climate change require us to change how we manage the land, water, fish and wildlife and cultural heritage and tribal lands and resources we oversee.” The Order specifies “the Department must conserve and manage fish and wildlife resources, including over 800 native migratory bird species and nearly 2000 federally listed threatened and endangered species” and also describes actions to develop regional Climate Science Centers “to provide climate change impact data and analysis geared to the needs of fish and wildlife managers as they develop adaptation strategies in response to climate change.” Further, the Order authorizes development of a network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives “[g]iven the broad impacts of climate change, management responses to such impacts must be coordinated on a landscape-level basis, [f]or example wildlife migration and related needs for new wildlife corridors....Because of the unprecedented scope of affected landscapes, Interior bureaus and agencies must work together, and with other federal, state, tribal and local governments and private landowner partners, to develop landscape-level strategies for understanding and responding to climate change impacts.”

[Memorandum of Understanding among the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Energy and the Western Governors' Association: Regarding Coordination Among Federal agencies and States in Identification and Uniform Mapping of Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Habitat](#) (June 15, 2009); *signed by USDI Secretary Ken Salazar, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, USDOE Secretary Steven Chu, WGA Chairman and Governor of Montana Brian Schweitzer and WGA Vice Chairman and Governor of Idaho V.L. "Butch" Otter*. Signed during the Administration of President George W. Bush, this Memorandum describes cooperation by the Parties to “develop state-based decision support systems that develop, coordinate, make consistent and integrate quality data about wildlife, corridors, and crucial habitat across landscapes.” Further, the Parties agree to use these decision support systems “to inform relevant decision-makers at all levels of government, and the private sector engaged in land use decisions, and to evaluate a variety of land uses while providing healthy and productive landscapes.”

[Bureau of Land Management. Trapper's Point Area of Critical Environmental Concern](#) (November 26, 2008). Under the Pinedale Field Office's Resource Management Plan revision, an area known as Trapper's Point along Wyoming's Path of the Pronghorn migration route was formally-designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to “[p]reserve the viability of the big game migration bottleneck, cultural and historic resources, and important livestock trailing use.” In accordance with this decision, the following regulations apply: “a. Surface disturbing activities are prohibited except those to enhance the viability of the big game migration.... b. A portion of the ACEC (4,160 acres) is closed to land disposal and mineral location.... c. No additional fences will be constructed in the ACEC area except to enhance the viability of the big game migration. d. The ACEC is unavailable for oil and gas leasing. e. OHV use is limited to designated roads and trails and is closed from November 15 to April 30.”

[U.S. Forest Service. Strategic Framework for Responding to Climate Change](#) (October 2, 2008). Prepared at the direction of U.S. Forest Service Chief Gail Kimball, the Framework describes the “development of wildlife corridors to facilitate wildlife migration” as one of several “anticipatory actions intended to prevent serious disruptions due to changing climate.” The Framework states “[e]cosystem health and resilience, productivity, biological diversity, and carbon storage are likely to decrease over large areas without direct intervention and management,” such that the Forest Service should “assist private landowners and communities to voluntarily implement adaptation techniques on their lands, and...work collaboratively with other federal agencies and international partners.” Further, the Framework emphasizes that “[m]aintaining ecosystem services while contributing to mitigation will require integrated, landscape-level and regional approaches to management across ownerships.”

[U.S. Forest Service. Pronghorn Migration Corridor Forest Plan Amendment](#) (May 31, 2008). Covering approximately 47,000 acres within the Pinedale and Jackson Ranger Districts of the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the Bridger-Teton National Forest designated a pronghorn migration corridor and amended the Forest Plan such that “[a]ll projects, activities, and infrastructure authorized in the designated Pronghorn Migration Corridor will be designed, timed and/or located to allow continued successful migration of the pronghorn that summer in Jackson Hole and winter in the Green River basin.” The Amendment protects the 43-mile extent of the 90-mile migration corridor on U.S. Forest Service land, noting that “[the] Forest Service by itself cannot guarantee continued successful migration of this herd over the entire migration route...[due to] numerous factors beyond Forest Service control such as activities on lands under other jurisdictions within the migration route.”

[Executive Order 13443: Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation](#) (August 16, 2007); signed by *President George W. Bush*. At the direction of President George W. Bush, the Order directs federal agencies to enhance hunting along with the management of game species and their habitats. Further, the Order directs the convening of a White House Conference on Wildlife Policy, held Oct 2-3, 2008, in Reno, NV, which culminated in a 10-year action plan called the Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan. The plan prioritizes the protection of wildlife corridors through easements or acquisition, and the mapping of high importance habitat and corridors and their inclusion in NEPA analyses on oil and gas leasing. It also recommends “creation of incentives for federal land managers to partner on wildlife corridor conservation with private landowners and industry on landscape-scale approaches through coordinated development and conservation planning.”

[Western Governors' Association. Policy Resolution 07-01: Protecting Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West](#) (February 27, 2007). In what is regarded as the first regional statement on corridors, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) resolves “the Western States, working in partnership with the federal land management agencies, Department of Defense, Western and National Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the energy industry, and conservation groups, should identify key wildlife migration corridors and crucial wildlife habitats in the West and make recommendations on needed policy options and tools for preserving those landscapes.” The Resolution further establishes a “wildlife migration corridors and critical habitats working group to oversee staff's implementation of this resolution,” particularly its directive that Congress “remove the categorical exclusion for NEPA reviews for exploration or development of oil and gas in wildlife corridors and critical wildlife habitat on federal lands.”

State Policies

[California: SB 790. Wildlife Connectivity Actions; Compensatory Mitigation Credits](#) (October 8, 2021); *signed by Governor Gavin Newsom*. The Act states that the Department of Fish and Wildlife is authorized to “approve compensatory mitigation credits for wildlife connectivity actions... [that provide] permanent protection of the real property...[or] where, and to the extent permanent protection is infeasible, the wildlife connectivity action has long-term durability.” In order to determine the value of compensatory mitigation credits, the Department of Fish and Wildlife “may consider all of the following: (1) The measurable improvement to habitat connectivity and wildlife migration, including improving the ability of wildlife to safely cross or bypass built infrastructure, such as roads, that inhibit such connectivity or migration. (2) The value of the habitat connected by the wildlife connectivity action. (3) Benefits to affected species, including... improved genetic diversity and breeding opportunities, removed migration barriers, and improved access to additional latitudes and altitudes of potentially suitable habitat to adapt to climate change. (4) Improved connectivity in critical terrestrial habitat linkages. (5) The use or value of the particular location in improving connectivity and migration, including...topography, watercourse presence, vegetative cover, mortality data, or other factors that increase the likelihood of use, or value of, a particular location for connectivity or migration.”

[Nevada: Creating the Nevada Habitat Conservation Framework Executive Order 2021-18](#) (August 23, 2021); *signed by Governor Steve Sisolak*. Recognizing [that] “wildlife habitats of the State of Nevada provide recreational, economic, and quality of life values to all citizens,” this Executive Order requires the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to “establish a Nevada Habitat Conservation Framework (Framework) to provide for habitat conservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and protection in a coordinated and inclusive manner across landownerships and in partnership with [agencies], stakeholders, and local entities.” A primary goal of the Framework is to “[maintain] connectivity of habitats and corridors.” In order to achieve this goal, “NDOW shall develop a statewide Nevada Wildlife Connectivity Plan (Connectivity Plan)” to include: “The process for NDOW to identify and delineate migration corridors supported by existing and ongoing scientific research; Habitat definitions, conservation recommendations, and best management practices or measures that could be implemented at all levels of government planning and regulation for migratory habitats, based on best available science...; and [m]igration corridor assessments that include a summary of knowledge regarding the migration, conservation threats, land tenure characteristics, and management recommendations that shall be provided to associated [land managers].” NDOW and Nevada Department of Transportation shall “enter into an MOU that formalizes and sets expectations for... the implementation of the Connectivity Plan within 12 months of its completion,” including “identifying points where key wildlife habitat, wildlife migration corridors, and highways intersect; identifying and implementing strategies to avoid, minimize and mitigate wildlife-vehicle collisions; and prioritizing areas for implementation of wildlife crossings or other highway features to improve permeability for wildlife while maintaining highway user safety.” However, “the Executive Order does not authorize any prescriptive actions on private lands.”

[California: AB 149. An Act Relating to Transportation](#) (July 16, 2021); *signed by Governor Gavin Newsom*. The Act authorizes the Wildlife Conservation Board to “name a nonvehicular wildlife crossing if at least 25 percent of the funding to construct the crossing derives from a state source.” In doing so, “[t]he Wildlife Conservation Board shall consult with the Department of Transportation or other appropriate entities on the design of lettering and placement of any sign that displays the name of a nonvehicular wildlife crossing.” The Act also stipulates that “the Wildlife Conservation Board may adopt criteria for the implementation [of the related sections in the bill].”

[Florida: SB 976. An Act Relating to the Protection of Ecological Systems: Florida Wildlife Corridor Act](#) (July 1, 2021); *signed by Governor Ron Desantis*.

The purpose of the Act is:

- a. Maintaining wildlife access to the habitats needed to allow for migration of and genetic exchange amongst regional wildlife populations.
- b. Preventing fragmentation of wildlife habitats.
- c. Protecting the headwaters of major watersheds, including the Everglades and the St. Johns River.
- d. Providing ecological connectivity of the lands needed for flood and sea-level rise resiliency and large-scale ecosystem functions, such as water management and prescribed burns essential for land management and restoration.
- e. Preserving and protecting land and waters that are not only vital to wildlife but are critical to this state’s groundwater recharge and that serve as watersheds that provide drinking water to most Floridians and help maintain the health of downstream coastal estuaries.
- f. Providing for wildlife crossings for the protection and safety of wildlife and the traveling public.
- g. Helping to sustain this state’s working ranches, farms, and forests that provide compatible wildlife habitats while sustaining rural prosperity and agricultural production.

In order to do so, the Act encourages “state, regional and local agencies [to]...include in their land-buying efforts the acquisition of sufficient legal interest in opportunity areas to ensure the continued viability of the Florida Wildlife Corridor,” along with “investment in conservation easements voluntarily entered into by private landowners to conserve opportunity areas.” The Act further encourages “new approaches and novel financing mechanisms for long-term protection of the Florida Wildlife Corridor, including but not limited to public-private partnerships; payment for ecosystem services; blended financing for growth, resilience and green infrastructure; and support for the sustainable growth of agriculture.”

[Colorado: SJR 21-021. Colorado Habitat Connectivity](#) (June 11, 2021) *Signed by Speaker of the House Alec Garnett*. This Joint Resolution aims to protect and enhance habitat connectivity in Colorado by “[developing] a working group... to assist the legislature in crafting legislation necessary to support the governor’s vision and protect wildlife corridors across the state.” It also encourages Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) to “develop or collect data regarding the relationship of all wildlife habitat areas and the connectivity of those areas for all game and nongame species. CPW is encouraged to use the data to develop a plan to provide guidance for state agency decisions and future policymaking and to develop targets for the designation and protection of wildlife corridors.”

[Colorado Oil & Gas Conservation Commission \(COGCC\). Regulations](#) (January 15, 2021). The COGCC Regulations “protect and minimize adverse impacts to public health, safety, welfare, the environment, and wildlife resources,” and define wildlife resources as “fish, wildlife, and their aquatic and terrestrial habitats used for all life stages, including reproduction, rearing of young and foraging, and the migration corridors and seasonal ranges necessary to sustain robust wildlife populations.”

Under the Regulations, development in High Priority Habitats mapped by Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW)—which include “(1) Bighorn sheep migration corridors and winter range; (2) Elk migration corridors, production areas, severe winter range, and winter concentration areas; (3) Mule deer migration corridors, severe winter range, and winter concentration areas; (4) Pronghorn migration corridors and winter concentration areas; (5) Greater sage-grouse priority habitat management areas; (6) Columbian sharp-tailed grouse production areas; (7) Greater prairie chicken production areas; (8) Gunnison sage-grouse occupied habitat and production areas; (9) Lesser prairie chicken focal areas; and (10) Plains sharp-tailed grouse production areas”—require “a CPW-approved Wildlife Mitigation Plan...or other CPW-approved conservation plan and compensatory mitigation for Wildlife Resources....”

A Wildlife Mitigation Plan must “identify site-specific measures to Avoid, Minimize, or Mitigate Adverse Impacts to Wildlife Resources,” including “description of Best Management Practices...for the purposes of minimizing impacts to wildlife,” and “mitigation commitments to offset Unavoidable Adverse Impacts to Wildlife Resources.”

[Virginia: SB 1274. An Act Relating to Government Planning; Wildlife Corridors](#). (January 22, 2021); *signed by Governor Ralph Northam*. The Act adds the Department of Forestry to those named in SB1004 [see entry, 2020] to develop a statewide Wildlife Corridor Action Plan. It also states that the “Commonwealth Transportation Board shall develop and update the Statewide Transportation Plan to “consider and incorporate, where applicable, wildlife corridors and any recommendation of the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan.”

[Wyoming: HB 69. An Act Relating to Wildlife Conservation](#) (July 1, 2020); *signed by Governor Mark Gordon*. This Act provides for “voluntary donations to support wildlife conservation efforts related to the transportation system.” Voluntary donation opportunities are to be provided by requiring that an opportunity to donate be provided on application forms for hunting and fishing licenses, conservation stamps, and state park permits. Further, the Act requires that “funds in the wildlife conservation account shall only be used to provide for wildlife conservation efforts related to the transportation system, including signage, wildlife corridors, wildlife crossings and game fences.”

[Virginia: SB1004. An Act Relating to Wildlife Corridor Action Plan](#) (April 6, 2020); *signed by Governor Ralph Northam*. The Act directs the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, together with the Department of Transportation and Department of Conservation and Recreation, to collaborate to create a Wildlife Corridor Action Plan that “shall identify wildlife corridors, existing or planned barriers to movement along such corridors, and areas with a high risk of wildlife-vehicle collisions” and “prioritize and recommend wildlife crossing projects intended to promote driver safety and wildlife connectivity.” The Act also requires that the Plan “shall list habitat that is identified as of high quality

for priority species and ecosystem health; [and] migration routes of native, game, and migratory species using the best available science.”

[Utah: HCR 13. Concurrent Resolution Supporting the Protection and Restoration of Wildlife Corridors](#) (March 24, 2020); *signed by Governor Gary Herbert*. In this Resolution, the Legislature and Governor express that “healthy plant and animal life are necessary to the quality of life in Utah and to maintain vibrant and balanced landscapes to support outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, animal watching, and similar activities” and recognize ongoing investment through the Division of Wildlife Resources and Department of Transportation to develop, implement and monitor wildlife overpasses and underpasses statewide. The Resolution “urges continued state investment in wildlife connectivity and encourages state and local governments to adopt policies to protect and restore intact fish and wildlife connectivity and migration corridors and promote road safety.” In order to do so, “the Utah League of Cities and Towns and the Utah Association of Counties...[are] requested to provide access to the resolution to the relevant planning commissions and highway authorities.”

[Wyoming: Mule Deer and Antelope Migration Corridor Protection Executive Order 2020-1](#) (February 13, 2020); *signed by Governor Mark Gordon*. This Executive Order designates three Mule Deer Migration Corridors and establishes the process for designation of future corridors. The Order states: “[E]ach executive agency in Wyoming shall exercise its legal and regulatory authorities to protect the annual movement of mule deer and antelope between seasonal ranges in their respective designated migration corridors...while recognizing that adjustments to management may be necessary based upon local conditions, opportunities, and limitations.” Under the Order, the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish, “shall lead research efforts on migration and identification of big game migration corridors...[and] establish and utilize science-based criteria for determining whether an identified corridor necessitates consideration of designation.” The Order clarifies that “whenever possible, development, infrastructure and use should occur outside of designated corridors. Inside corridors, state regulatory agencies should support the continued functionality of designated migration corridors by conditioning permits to avoid and minimize impacts from development or use allowed within the corridor.” It also states that while “[private] landowners should be encouraged or incentivized to manage for the functionality of migration corridors,” the Order “shall [not] apply to actions taken by landowners on their private land or restrict state-issued permits a landowner seeks on his or land or minerals.”

[Colorado: Memorandum of Understanding Between the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Wildlife](#) (December 10, 2019); *signed by Department of Transportation Chief Engineer Steve Harelson and Parks and Wildlife Director Dan Prenzlow*. Under this Memorandum, the agencies agree to cooperate on transportation project planning and implementation to identify priority areas and possible mitigation measures to reduce wildlife-vehicle conflict, and to support a multi-agency-nonprofit group, the Colorado Wildlife and Transportation Alliance, in order to raise awareness and pursue funding opportunities. Specific areas of collaboration identified are: wildlife-vehicle collision identification and mitigation, data access and information sharing, communication and coordination, public and media relations, and training.

[Colorado Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Wildlife Commission. Resolution 19-02 Regarding Support for Governor Polis’s Executive Order D-2019-011: Conserving Colorado’s Big Game Winter Ranges and Migration Corridors](#) (adopted November 14-15, 2019); *signed by Parks and Wildlife Commission Acting Chair Michelle Zimmerman*. The Resolution affirms “that the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission recognizes and appreciates the valuable contributions of Governor Polis’s direction in Executive Order D-2019-011 to work in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Department of Transportation and Colorado Wildlife and Transportation Alliance, to conserve Colorado’s big game winter ranges and migration corridors.” Further, it agrees to “support the funding opportunity from the Department of Interior’s Secretarial Order 2018-3362: Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Ranges and Migration Corridors.”

[Wyoming Department of Transportation. Operating Policy on Fences and Cattle Guards](#) (September 8, 2019); *signed by Director Luke Reiner*. Under this policy, “[s]tandard fence plans can be modified to accommodate animal migration routes, specific land uses, or other unique situations. On primary and secondary highways, a 42-inch-high fence may be allowed in select areas as recommended by the Wyoming Game & Fish Department if the landowner and any lessee involved that may be grazing livestock on adjacent land provide written permission.”

[Wyoming: Greater Sage-Grouse Core Area Protection Executive Order 2019-3](#) (August 21, 2019); *signed by Governor Mark Gordon*. [*Replaces Executive Orders 2015-4 and 2017-2*]. The Order updates the State of Wyoming’s Core Area Strategy, initiated in 2008 [see entry, 2008] and subsequently enriched, to “prioritize the maintenance and enhancement of Greater sage-grouse habitats and populations inside Core Population Areas, Connectivity Areas, and Winter Concentration Areas.” The new Order requires annual reporting to track progress, and states Wyoming will “seek opportunities to expand populations and habitats for Greater sage-grouse,” where feasible, through voluntary efforts.

[Colorado: Conserving Colorado’s Big Game and Migration Corridors Executive Order D-2019-011](#) (August 21, 2019); *signed by Governor Jared Polis*. The Order states: “Simply put, wildlife is essential to Colorado’s outdoor recreation economy and landscape heritage...Intact seasonal habitats, and the migratory routes that connect these habitats, are vital to ensuring that Colorado’s wildlife populations continue to thrive.” The Order directs (a) Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to “identify policy, regulatory, and legislative opportunities to ensure the ongoing conservation of seasonal big game habitat and migration corridors,” including opportunities to “work with neighboring states on cross-boundary migration corridors,” (b) Colorado Parks and Wildlife to work on public outreach and education to implement the order, and (c) Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to “enable safe wildlife passage and incorporate consideration of big game migration into all levels of its planning process.” It also directs CDOT and DNR to enter into a memorandum of understanding to identify and implement priority areas for big game crossings over and under roadways, using the best available science.

[New Hampshire. SB 200. An Act Relative to Wildlife Corridors](#) (July 12, 2019); *signed by Governor Chris Sununu*. New Hampshire recognizes “as a public good that habitat connectivity, including wildlife corridors, habitat linkages, and riparian and coastal corridors, be maintained and expanded... [and] encourage[s], wherever feasible and practical, voluntary steps to protect the functioning of

wildlife corridors....” The policy enables the use of funds from the New Hampshire Community Heritage and Investment Program “to obtain interests in lands...adjacent to state highways...[for] protection of wildlife corridors and habitat strongholds” and that “the department of transportation shall consider wildlife corridors and habitat strongholds...in road mitigation projects... [and] incorporate wildlife corridors that intersect transportation infrastructure into project planning and mitigation efforts to minimize the effect of roads on wildlife connectivity....”

[Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles. Watch for Wildlife License Plate](#) (June 2019). The Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) authorized a new Watch for Wildlife license plate to support wildlife crossings and habitat connectivity projects in conjunction with Oregon Wildlife Foundation. In accordance with DMV policy, plates are to be issued once an initial 3000 are sold, with additional startup costs provided by the Foundation. Funds collected from the plate are to support efforts for safe migration as determined by Foundation.

[Oregon: HB 2834. An Act Relating to Wildlife Corridors](#) (June 7, 2019); *signed by Governor Kate Brown*. The Act recognizes that “biodiversity and habitat connectivity play a vital role in Oregon’s economy” and “in addition to other benefits, wildlife corridors provide ecosystem services such as pollination, air and water purification, carbon sequestration and disturbance prevention,” such that “formally designating and protecting wildlife corridors is a crucial strategy for bolstering Oregon’s ecosystem resiliency and for ensuring the long-term viability of wildlife population[s] and communities.”

The Act requires the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to “develop a plan, to be known as the Wildlife Corridor Action Plan, to preserve long-term habitat connectivity for wildlife in Oregon. The plan shall provide guidance for all state agencies to develop benchmarks for the designation and protection of wildlife corridors....” The Plan is to include “[a] list of areas for which designation of wildlife corridors, land acquisition or other agency actions are of high priority to protect wildlife movement or habitat connectivity,” and be updated every 5 years. The Department of Transportation is to establish a program in concert with the Plan to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions where identified corridors “intersect with proposed or existing public roads.”

[New Mexico: SB 228. Wildlife Corridors Act](#) (March 28, 2019); *signed by Governor Michelle Grisham*. The Act requires “the department of game and fish, in coordination with the department of transportation...create a state ‘wildlife corridors action plan’” that includes “information about the habitat quality needed to support and maintain viable populations of wildlife.” The initial action plan is to be published by January 15, 2020, for public comment and updated every 10 years or “amended prior to a full update as new research and data become available or changes in conditions affecting wildlife and wildlife-human interactions arise.” The Wildlife Corridors Action Plan is to include “a prioritized ‘wildlife corridors project list’ of projects to be undertaken,” ordered by “(1) the potential to reduce wildlife-vehicle collision[s] and enhance safety to the traveling public; (2) the relative current population size of select large mammal species and species of concern or the value of proposed infrastructure that will improve wildlife corridors,” and additional attributes. Annual reporting is required to the governor and legislature on “progress toward completion of a project...with a corresponding explanation...and plans for future progress.”

[Wyoming: HB 39. Wildlife Conservation License Plates](#) (March 13, 2018); *signed by Governor Matt Mead*. The Act establishes a wildlife conservation license plate, annual fee, and specific account for the proceeds raised in order to fund “wildlife conservation efforts related to the transportation system, including signage, wildlife corridors, wildlife crossings and game fences.”

[Vermont: Act 47. An Act Relating to the Commission on Act 250: The Next 50 Years](#) (May 23, 2017); *signed by Governor Phil Scott*. The Act sets up a 6-member legislative commission and group of citizen advisors to examine and report upon the state’s 1970 land use and development law, “with the objective of ensuring that, over the next 50 years, Act 250 supports Vermont’s economic, environmental, and land use planning goals.” Among items required in the review are “[a]n examination of the criteria and jurisdiction of Act 250” to include “...[w]hether the criteria support development in areas designated...and preserve rural areas, farms, and forests outside those areas,” and “[w]hether the criteria support natural resources, working lands, farms, agricultural soils, and forests in a healthy ecosystem protected from fragmentation and loss of wildlife corridors.”

In 1970, Act 250: An Act to Create an Environmental Board and District Environmental Commissions (signed by Governor Deane C. Davis), the General Assembly determined that “a comprehensive state capability and development plan and land use plan are necessary to provide guidelines for utilization of the lands and environment of the state of Vermont and to define the goals to be achieved through land environmental use, planning and control.”

[Florida Department of Transportation. Plans Preparation Manual](#) (January 1, 2017). Under its revised Plans Preparation Manual, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requires consideration of wildlife connectivity in new bridge design, whether for minor grade separations, small water crossings, major bridges or interchanges. Evaluation of wildlife connectivity needs begin in the initial phase of project evaluation, and “[w]ildlife connectivity features include new or modified structures; e.g. bridges, bridges with shelves, specially designed culverts, enlarged culverts or drainage culverts. Exclusionary devices such as fencing, walls or other barriers may be included to funnel wildlife to a crossing.” The Manual includes multiple references to wildlife connectivity considerations and also refers users to the FDOT Wildlife Crossing Guidelines [see 2016 entry, below].

[California: AB 2087. Regional Conservation Investment Strategies](#) (September 22, 2016); *signed by Governor Jerry Brown*. The Act creates the state’s Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) Program “to inform science-based nonbinding and voluntary conservation actions and habitat enhancement actions that would advance the conservation of focal species, including the ecological processes, natural communities, and habitat connectivity upon which those focal species depend.” A RCIS assessment can be created by any public agency to establish species-level biological goals, objectives and actions, such as land protection, habitat restoration, installation of wildlife crossings, or fish passage barrier removal. Once approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, a RCIS can serve as the basis for a Mitigation Credit Agreement, under which additional entities can gain transferrable mitigation credits based on implementation of conservation or habitat enhancement actions.

[New Hampshire: SB 376. An Act Relative to Wildlife Corridors](#) (August 9, 2016); *signed by Governor Maggie Hassan*. The Act recognizes “as a public good that habitat connectivity, including wildlife corridors and habitat linkages, be maintained and expanded.” It further provides a two-year window for the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department to work in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Services, and Department of Transportation to prepare a report that “shall identify existing and needed wildlife corridors, including riparian corridors, and including potential crossings of transportation arteries.” Further, the agencies are to research voluntary mechanisms and provide recommendations to maintain corridors.

[Vermont: Act 171. An Act Relating to Timber Harvesting](#) (June 7, 2016); *signed by Governor Pete Shumlin*. Among provisions that recognize the economic and ecosystem function value of the public and private forests of Vermont, this Act sets up a 9-member Committee to “study potential revisions to...[Vermont Planning Statutes] to protect contiguous areas of forestland from fragmentation and promote habitat connectivity between forestlands,” and authorizes “the revisions the Committee suggests [for protection] be made.” As a result, each of the state’s 11 Regional Plans, as well as those of municipalities, are to include a land use element that indicates “areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests.”

The Act defines a habitat connector as “land or water, or both, that links patches of wildlife habitat within a landscape, allowing the movement, migration, and dispersal of animals and plants and the functioning of ecological processes.”

[Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Ungulate Migration Corridor Strategy](#) (Adopted February 4, 2016; revised January 28, 2019); *signed by Game and Fish Commission President Charles Price*. Under this Strategy, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission designates “ungulate migration bottlenecks and ungulate stopover areas as ‘Vital’ under the Commission’s Mitigation Policy. Accordingly, ‘The Department is directed by the Commission to recommend no significant declines in species distribution or abundance or loss of habitat function. Some modification of habitat characteristics may occur, provided habitat function is maintained.’” In order to realize the Strategy, “[t]he Department...designate[s] Ungulate Migration Corridors in accordance with the Department’s Standardized Definitions for Seasonal Wildlife Ranges.” Further, [t]he Department...work[s] cooperatively with stakeholders to identify related research and proactive conservation actions (e.g., conservation easements; fence modifications; habitat improvement projects) to conserve migration corridors.”

[Florida Department of Transportation. Wildlife Crossings Guidelines](#) (2016; updated in 2018). The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) developed Wildlife Crossings Guidelines in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to “evaluate the appropriateness of including wildlife crossings (upland or wetland) and associated features,” in new projects and highway retrofits. The Guidelines outline considerations for agency staff, local governments, non-profits, and the public to recommend wildlife crossings and provide information about the research, evidentiary, and funding needs for their implementation. The document is described as a “guide for coordination, consultation and decision making.”

[California: AB 498. An Act to Amend Sections 1797.5, 1930, and 1930.5 of the Fish and Game Code, Relating to Fish and Wildlife](#) (October 8, 2015); *signed by Governor Jerry Brown*. This Act states: “It is the intent of the Legislature that the Wildlife Conservation Board use various funds to work with the department [of Fish and Game] to complete a statewide analysis of wildlife corridors and connectivity to support conservation planning and climate change adaptation activities.”

Moreover, “[I]t is the policy of the state to promote the voluntary protection of wildlife corridors and habitat strongholds in order to enhance the resiliency of wildlife and their habitats to climate change, protect biodiversity, and allow for the migration and movement of species by providing connectivity between habitat lands. In order to further these goals, it is the policy of the state to encourage, wherever feasible and practicable, voluntary steps to protect the functioning of wildlife corridors through various means, as applicable and to the extent feasible and practicable, those means may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Acquisition or protection of wildlife corridors as open space through conservation easements.
- b. Installing of wildlife-friendly or directional fencing.
- c. Siting of mitigation and conservation banks in areas that provide habitat connectivity for affected fish and wildlife resources.
- d. Provision of roadway undercrossings, overpasses, oversized culverts, or bridges to allow for fish passage and the movement of wildlife between habitat areas.”

[Florida Wildlife Corridor Resolution](#) (June 4, 2013); *signed by Governor Rick Scott*. Under this Resolution, Governor Scott and his cabinet of the State of Florida “hereby acknowledge the vital importance of the Florida Wildlife Corridor to the ecological, cultural, and economic health of the State of Florida, as well as, recognize the important opportunity the campaign provides to support efforts to protect Florida’s wildlife, ecosystems, tourism, and agricultural landscapes.” The resolution further states “that the Governor and Cabinet recognize the significant benefits of having a continuous ecological corridor connecting the entire length of Florida for the health of wildlife, the quality of water and air, the preservation of cultural history, and the revitalization of local economies.”

[New Mexico: HM1/SM11. Requesting that the Department of Transportation and the Department of Game and Fish Hold a Workshop to Identify Future Project to Help Reduce Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions; Requesting that the Governor Declare a Wildlife Safety Awareness Day](#) (April 10, 2013). In this Memorial, the House and Senate of New Mexico each resolve that the Department of Transportation and Department of Game and Fish, together with the University of New Mexico, are to hold a workshop “in order to help collect and map current data showing where wildlife vehicle collisions occur in New Mexico and to produce a list of road segments in New Mexico that have the greatest number of wildlife-vehicle collisions.” On the basis of this information, “the departments be requested to apply for funding from the New Mexico highway safety improvement program for use in establishing additional wildlife safety zones along New Mexico roads.”

[New Mexico: HJM 10. Requesting that the Department of Transportation, Department of Game and Fish and New Mexico State Police Work Together Using Existing Resources to Create a Pilot Traffic Safety Project in an Accident-Prone Area of the State to Save Lives by Reducing Collisions between Large Animals and Vehicles](#) (March 2, 2011). The Joint Memorial requests that Departments of Transportation and Game and Fish, together with New Mexico State Police, collaborate to “create a pilot traffic safety project in an accident-prone area of the state to increase the safety of New Mexico’s residents by reducing large animal-vehicle collisions” and in designing the project, “the participating state agencies consider reducing the speed limit and doubling the fines for speeding in the wildlife crossing zone...” The Joint Memorial includes “that the governor be requested to issue a proclamation declaring a day to promote slowing down for the safety of drivers and wildlife.”

[California: AB 2785. Wildlife Conservation: Habitat Connectivity](#) (September 26, 2008); *signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger*. This law directs the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to “investigate, study, and identify those areas in the state that are most essential as wildlife corridors and habitat linkages...[and] to develop and maintain a spatial data system that identifies those areas in the state that are most essential for maintaining habitat connectivity, including wildlife corridors and habitat linkages.” Further, under the law, required datasets and associated analytical products are to be made available to the public and other government entities.

AB 2785 is described as one of two directives leading to the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, a joint effort of the California Department of Transportation and DFG, the goal of which is to identify large remaining blocks of intact habitat or natural landscape and model linkages between them that need to be maintained, particularly as corridors for wildlife.

[Wyoming: Greater Sage-Grouse Core Area Protection Executive Order 2008-2](#) (August 1, 2008); *signed by Governor Dave Freudenthal*. This Executive Order establishes a Core Area Protection strategy identified by the state’s Sage Grouse Implementation Team and recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a “sound framework,” under which activities to maintain and enhance habitats and sage-grouse populations are prioritized. The Order also provides for the creation of incentives “to enable development of all types outside Core Protected Areas,” provided that such developments are “designed and managed to maintain populations, habitats and essential migration routes....”

[Arizona: Arizona Missing Linkages. 2007 and 2008 Design Reports](#). Following the development of Arizona’s Wildlife Linkages Assessment, a 2006 statewide overview developed by Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD), Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Northern Arizona University, Sky Island Alliance and the Wildlands Project, ADOT funded the development of “detailed linkage designs” to maintain connectivity between “wildland blocks” in 16 priority areas highlighted in the Assessment. AZGFD subsequently built upon this work by holding stakeholder workshops in each county to gain additional input.

[Washington State: Department of Transportation Executive Order 1031. Protections and Connections for High Quality Habitats](#) (July 23, 2007); signed by Secretary of Transportation Douglas B. MacDonald. [Amended and Reaffirmed, 2013 and 2019]. The Executive Order (EO) states that the “Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), in partnership with other agencies, organizations, and the public, must assure that road and highway programs recognize, together with other needs, the importance of protecting ecosystem health, the viability of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species, and the preservation of biodiversity.” EO 1031 further specifies “[t]ransportation planning should recognize and respond to particular concerns and opportunities for habitat preservation and the need for habitat connections,” and states the intention of WSDOT “[t]o locate specific opportunities to restore habitat connectivity already damaged by human transportation corridors.”

Moreover, the Executive Order suggests collaboration with additional agencies to develop a “statewide habitat connectivity plan” and is credited with helping to bring about the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group, co-led by WSDOT and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

County Policies

[Montana: Gallatin County Envision Gallatin Growth Plan](#) (September 21, 2021). Gallatin County in Southwest Montana adopted a Growth Plan that recognizes the value of “healthy native plant and wildlife habitat and protection of critical wildlife migration corridors” and “an abundance of healthy wildlife” as part of the region’s heritage and economy. The Plan maps “core,” “higher,” and “lower” value habitat areas throughout the County, and sets goals to “[a]void creating impediments to wildlife movement and migration,” “[m]inimize the fragmentation and loss of habitat” and “[m]inimize human-wildlife conflicts” in designated areas. Further, the Plan requires the County to “[d]evelop and/or maintain strategic partnerships to monitor key environmental indicators that support air and water quality, biological integrity, ecological connectivity, etc,” and sets the increase of preserved wildlife corridors as an open space goal. The Plan also specifies the County can consider the “potential for fragmentation and loss of wildlife habitat” and “potential for creating barriers to wildlife movement and migration on the landscape (e.g., non-wildlife friendly fencing, construction or widening of roads, and increased traffic volume, light pollution for migrating birds and bats) and aquatic organism passage in streams and rivers (e.g., road crossings of streams that prevent aquatic organism passage)” in carrying out subdivision review.

[Colorado: Summit County: Resolution 2019-75: A Resolution Endorsing the Summit County Safe Passages Plan](#) (October 22, 2019). Summit County, Colorado, formally endorsed a county-wide Safe Passages Plan in 2019, stating “[i]mplementing mitigation recommendations from the Summit County Safe Passages Plan will set the example for communities state and nationwide to work together and provide for the needs of both people and wildlife.” The Summit County Safe Passages Plan was developed under the auspices of a coalition of local governments, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations in 2017.

[New Mexico: Santa Fe Resolution No. 2019-92](#) (July 9, 2019), [San Miguel Resolution No. 201902154](#) (July 9, 2019), [Rio Arriba Resolution No. 2020-06](#) (July 30, 2019), [Taos County Resolution No. 2019-39](#) (August 20, 2019), [Colfax County No. 2109-28](#) (September 9, 2019) and [Mora County No. 2019-056](#) (October 23, 2019): A Resolution in Support of Protecting Wildlife Corridors in the Upper Rio Grande Basin. These six northern New Mexico counties passed similar resolutions that include formal support for the U.S. Congress to pass the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act – introduced in Congress in May 2019 – and also to encourage regional National Forests (Carson, Santa Fe and Rio Grande) to establish special management areas for wildlife habitat connectivity. The policies uniformly recognize that wildlife resources are “fundamental” to the “history, culture and identity” of each county and describe “the need and opportunity to foster increased collaboration among state, federal and tribal natural resource managers to promote and protect landscape connectivity.”

[Montana: Missoula Area Land Use Element](#) (June 6, 2019). Missoula County in western Montana adopted a Missoula Area Land Use Element as an amendment to its 2016 Growth Policy. A component of the Element’s vision is, “Preserve Working Lands, Agricultural Areas, and Naturally-Functioning Systems.” This component describes a role of the county as “protection of...important habitats,” including “geographic funnels and terrain features (e.g., riparian corridors, ridgelines, timbered draws, passes) that naturally guide wildlife to certain areas in harsh weather conditions and

during seasonal movements and migrations.” The Element also describes the need to update the zoning map and regulations to reflect 15 land use designations, including “open, resource and recreation.”

[California: Ventura County Ordinance No. 4537: An Ordinance of the County of Ventura, State of California, Amending Division 8, Chapter 1, Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 of the Ventura County Ordinance Code, Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to Regulate Development within the Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors and the Critical Wildlife Passage Overlay Zones](#) (March 12, 2019). Ventura County Ordinance No. 4539: An Ordinance of the County of Ventura, State of California, Amending Division 8, Chapter 1, Article 18 of the Ventura County Ordinance Code, Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance to Amend the Zoning Classifications of Lots to Indicate their Inclusion within the Newly-Established Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors Overlay Zone and/or Critical Wildlife Passage Areas Overlay Zone (March 12, 2019). California’s Ventura County passed Ordinances 4537 and 4539 to amend its Non-Coastal Zoning Code in order to “Regulate Development Within the Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors and the Critical Wildlife Passage Areas Overlay Zones.” Together, the goal of these Ordinances is “to preserve functional connectivity for wildlife and vegetation throughout the overlay zone by minimizing direct and indirect barriers, minimizing loss of vegetation and habitat fragmentation and minimizing impacts to those areas that are narrow, impacted or otherwise tenuous with respect to wildlife movement.” The Ordinances regulate outdoor lighting, require setbacks from surface water and known wildlife crossings, limit installation of wildlife impermeable fencing, and prohibit planting of invasive species.

[Colorado: Eagle County Safe Passages for Wildlife Final Report](#) (December 4, 2018). Eagle County, Colorado, adopted a Safe Passages for Wildlife report as a Special Master Plan. First, the County carried out a habitat linkage analysis and stakeholder meetings to gain “a standardized framework for initial identification and delineation of habitat linkages across roadways for select focal species,” as detailed in Eagle County Wildlife Connectivity Assessment: Phase I, Identification of Habitat Linkages Across Major Highways. The Final Report builds upon Phase I “by integrating additional data sources and broadening stakeholder engagement to refine and prioritize wildlife-highway crossing zones and to develop more specific recommendations for improving or restoring safe passages for wildlife across Eagle County’s major roads and in the adjacent landscape.”

[Wyoming: Teton County Wildlife Crossing Master Plan](#) (June 19, 2018). Teton County, Wyoming adopted a county-wide, Wildlife Crossings Master Plan under the direction of a 2015 Teton County Integrated Transportation Plan, which required a plan to “enhance wildlife permeability and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.” As adopted, the Wildlife Crossings Master Plan is “aimed at reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions with large mammals, providing safe crossing opportunities for large mammals, and making stream crossings passable for fish species.” The Plan identifies wildlife-vehicle collision hot spots and mitigation options. Prepared by the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University in consultation with the county and other interested stakeholders, the Plan’s recommendations result from cost-benefit analyses, prioritization, and investigation of wildlife-vehicle collision mitigation methods of various types, including underpasses, overpasses, at-grade crossings, fencing, lighting, and speed limits.

[Washington: Spokane County Critical Areas Ordinance for the Protection of Wetlands, Fish and Wildlife Habitats, Geo-hazard Areas and Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas](#) (Amended May 1, 2018; adopted March 26, 1996). The Critical Areas Ordinance of Spokane County in eastern Washington, first adopted in 1996 and most recently updated in 2018, includes designation and protection of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and species-specific conservation areas, in accordance with the requirements of the 1990 state Growth Management Act. Recorded priority habitats include wildlife corridors (e.g. “areas used for foraging movements, seasonal migrations or the once in a lifetime dispersal of juvenile animals”), landscape linkages that enable “community or ecosystem processes to operate,” riparian areas, and urban and rural open space that serve as corridors between other priority habitats. Performance standards are specified for regulated uses in these areas. Incentives such as property tax relief, on-site density transfers and off-site transfers of development rights facilitate conservation goals while protecting property rights.

[Montana: Park County Growth Policy Update](#) (May 1, 2017). Located within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, Park County, Montana, updated its 2016 Growth Policy to include specific goals, objectives, and actions to promote coexistence with wildlife. The updated Growth Policy directs the planning department to “[i]dentify critical wildlife corridors for development, infrastructure and conservation planning,” and to include this information in the County Atlas. It also encourages the state to maintain wildlife corridors in highway construction.

[Minnesota: Hennepin County Natural Resources Strategic Plan](#) (May 24, 2016). Hennepin County, which encompasses Minneapolis along with suburban and rural areas, serves as its own Conservation District. In order to fulfill this responsibility, Hennepin County has a Natural Resources Strategic Plan, a primary goal of which is to “promote, establish and restore ecologically functional landscapes and control threats to natural resources to promote diverse and sustainable ecosystems throughout the county.” The County has classified each of its acres according to natural and habitat values, “laying the groundwork for long-term protection and restoration of natural areas and important corridors or greenways that facilitate the growth and movement of wildlife and native vegetation between natural areas.” The Plan commits the County to “[i]dentify, protect and restore the best remaining natural areas and corridors.”