



Protect and Restore Habitat Connectivity While Creating Thousands of Jobs

Transportation infrastructure around the country is crumbling and is in desperate need of upgrades. Putting Americans to work by fixing roads and bridges is a great opportunity to address job loss and much needed repairs. With as little as \$200 million, habitat connectivity can be included in these improvements, providing thousands of jobs, restored landscape connections across highways, reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions, and resiliency to our natural systems so that they are better able to adapt to climate change.

motorists and injuring 29,000 more while costing \$1 billion in property damage. Effective habitat connectivity measures have been shown to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions by 80 to 100%.¹

Loss of connectivity will be further exacerbated by global climate change, potentially altering wildlife home ranges and movement corridors. The transportation and natural resource sectors need to protect and restore habitat cores and corridors to allow for safer wildlife movement and provide for adaptation and resiliency to climate change.

Habitat Connectivity Measures

Habitat connectivity measures come in all shapes and sizes, from small metal culverts to large, vegetated overpasses. Each connectivity measure also requires pre-construction research, acquisition and monitoring for best results. Costs for each measure can range from \$150,000 to \$5 million.²



The Need for Habitat Connectivity

Habitat fragmentation is among the most serious threats to species and biological diversity. Highways have divided wildlife habitat into smaller patches, reducing wildlife movement between core habitat areas for foraging, mating, and other life functions.

Estimates indicate there are between 725,000 and 1.5 million wildlife-vehicle collisions annually, killing 200



Creating Jobs by Restoring and Protecting Habitat Connectivity

Currently, twelve state transportation agencies have completed statewide habitat connectivity analyses and seven others are working on regional connectivity analyses. Each connectivity plan includes a list of habitat fragmentation hotspots that will require connectivity measures.³

Several large projects are "shovel ready" but awaiting additional funding. For example, Washington State DOT is preparing to widen I-90 through Snoqualmie Pass to include restoring habitat connectivity.⁴ The project has been stalled due to funding shortfalls, but could begin as early as spring 2009.

In addition, several Transportation Enhancements projects for habitat connectivity are in beginning stages and could be accelerated with funding.

Job Creation



The Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) estimates that **for every \$1.25 billion invested on safety, traffic and environment-related transportation projects, 49,800 jobs are created.** With a \$200 million investment over two years, 7,968 jobs would be created. However, connectivity measures are often just part of a larger infrastructure project like widenings or safety improvements. If connectivity measures account for just 25% of total project costs, the \$200 million invested would actually be a supplement to \$800 million in projects. **Taken together, this would create 31,782 jobs.**



Providing jobs and creating habitat connectivity not only puts Americans to work but it restores habitat, increases highway safety and will help our ecosystems adapt to climate change.

For more information, contact:

Trisha White, Director, Habitat and Highways Campaign – (202) 772-0236

Mary Beth Beetham, Director, Legislative Affairs – (202) 772-0231

¹ Clevenger, A.P. & N. Waltho. 2005. Performance Indices to Identify Attributes of Highway Crossing Structures Facilitating Movement of Large Mammals. *Biological Conservation*, 121:453-464

² <http://www.GettingUpToSpeed.org> See cost chart on page 154

³ http://www.icoet.net/ICOET_2007/proceedings/Chapter6c.pdf

⁴ <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/snoqualmiepassseast>