

HB 2978 - Wildlife Connectivity

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water
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Bernadette Graham Hudson
Wildlife Division Administrator
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

Sristi Kamal, Ph.D.
Deputy Director
Western Environmental Law Center

Amy Ramsdell
Delivery and Operations Administrator
Oregon Department of Transportation

Tristan Henry
Oregon Field Representative
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership





wildlife need to move



Food + Shelter +
Reproduce

Escape
Disturbance

Adapt to changing
environment



An estimated minimum **14.5 million** animals are killed on Oregon's roadways each year



Vehicle strikes are a significant driver of **population declines** in many species



High traffic volumes **block wildlife movement**, particularly for smaller species



Problem with a solution



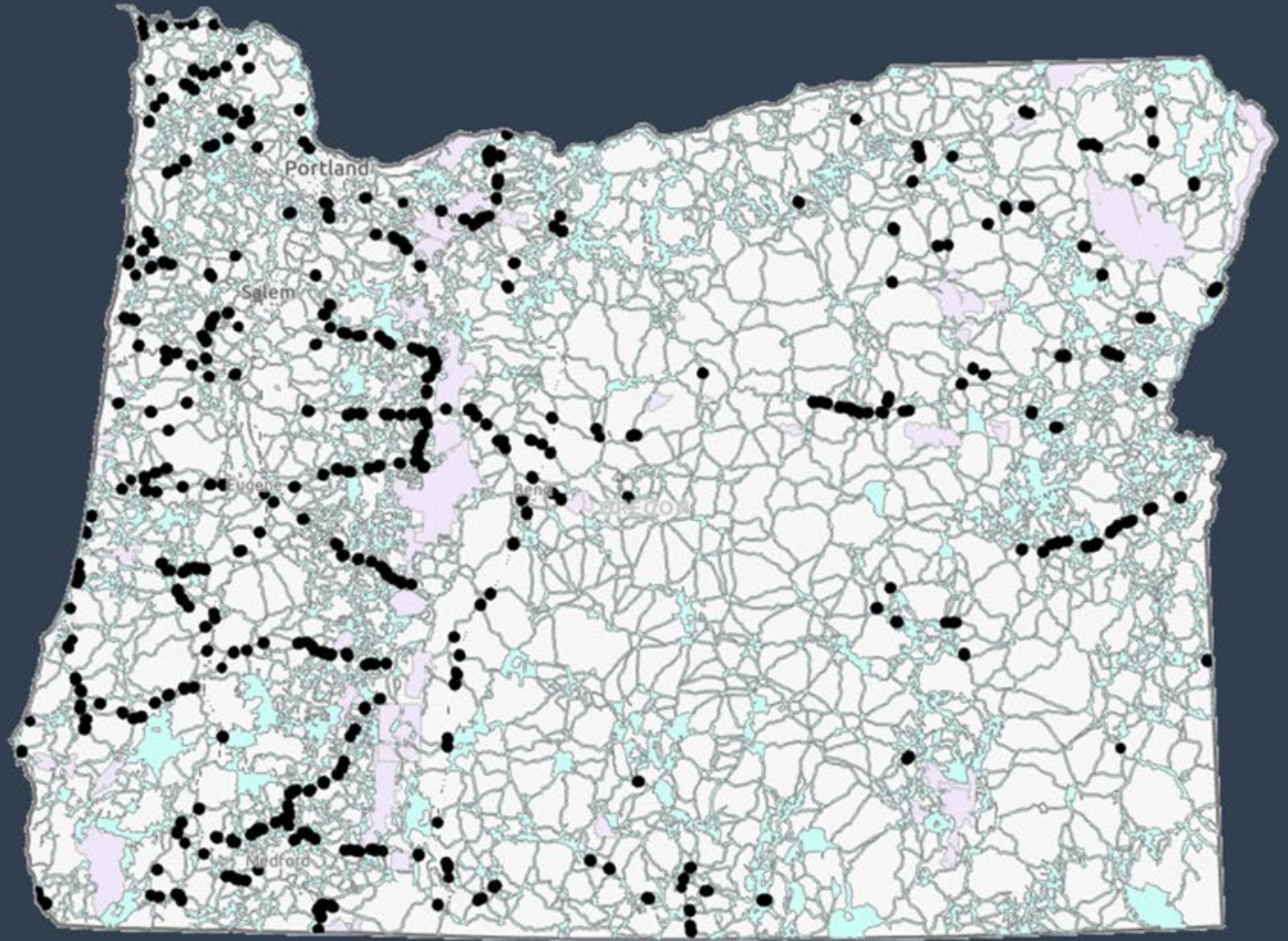
Mapping Priority Wildlife Connectivity Areas

● Priority areas for
transportation projects

156 primary
priority areas

6 projects
completed

Helping focus work



Safety of the System

- Wildlife-vehicle collisions have **significant impacts** to the safety of our transportation system users and wildlife
 - Approximately **~7,000 collisions** per year in Oregon (2017–2021)
 - **~4 fatalities** (annual avg) (2017–2021)
 - **~36 serious injuries** (annual avg) (2017–2021)
 - Deer collision costs **~\$19k per collision (annual avg)**; Elk collision costs **~\$73k per collision (annual avg)** (Western Transportation Institute)

Deer & Elk Collision Hotspots on State Highways
January 2017 - December 2021



Reported collisions per mile, per year



Funding

Wildlife Crossings in Oregon

- Funding today:
 - No dedicated, long-term funding source
 - Submitted two **IIJA Wildlife Passage Pilot Program** Grant applications (I-5 & US97)
- FHWA awarded **\$33 million** grant for ODOT to construct a wildlife crossing over I-5 in southern Oregon
 - **Total project cost:** \$37 million
 - Located in the **Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument** in the Mariposa Preserve at milepost 1.7
 - **First wildlife overcrossing for Oregon** and for the entire stretch of I-5 between Mexico and Canada.



Location of I-5 Wildlife overcrossing project

Implementing HB 2978

- **ODOT's role:**

- Conduct feasibility studies and update guidance
- MOU between ODOT and ODFW to stand up Advisory Committee
- Develop a training program in coordination with ODFW
- Seek federal funding opportunities
- Develop a list of priority projects to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions
- Install and maintain wildlife crossing infrastructure

ODOT anticipates resource needs to carry out this work.



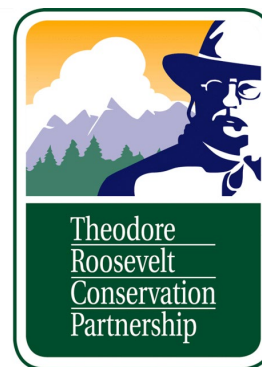


Pew



Sristi Kamal, Ph.D.

Deputy Director, Western Environmental Law Center



OREGON WILDLIFE FOUNDATION



Wildlands Network



The Cost of Collisions & Effectiveness of Wildlife Crossings

The Problem: Expensive & Dangerous

- ODOT's data shows there have been 357 known and reported elk collisions.
- The Western Transportation Institute (WTI) estimates that
 - Each deer deer collision costs a total of \$19,038 per collision and
 - Each elk collision costs \$73,196 per collision

This means Oregon has a \$114 million per year deer-vehicle collision problem and elk collisions have cost Oregonians an estimated \$26 million.

The Solution: Wildlife Crossings

- Oregon's Highway 97 crossing project has reduced deer-vehicle collisions by over 90%.
- The famous Banff National Park crossings have reduced ungulate collisions by nearly 90%.
- Colorado's crossings in the Blue River Valley have also reduced collisions by almost 90%

Widespread Support for Wildlife Crossings in Oregon



- Polls show **86%** of voters want the state “to build more overpasses and underpasses” for wildlife.
- **75%** of voters supported increasing state funding to build those crossings.
- **Over 35,000** Watch for Wildlife License plates have been purchased by Oregonians since 2022, **raising \$1.2 million in revenue** for crossing projects.
- **Over 60 diverse groups and organizations** have formally endorsed wildlife crossing legislation in past legislative sessions
- **57 Oregon state legislators** across political parties have supported crossing legislation.

Timeline of Legislation & Program Growth



2019

Legislature *unanimously passes HB 2834, requiring ODOT to work with ODFW to develop Wildlife Corridor Action Plan (WCAP) and establish a program to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions* in areas where wildlife corridors in the WCAP intersect with proposed or existing public roads.



2021

HB 2548 introduced, resulting in a formal workgroup that studied and reported on funding issues and opportunities related to wildlife crossing infrastructure construction.



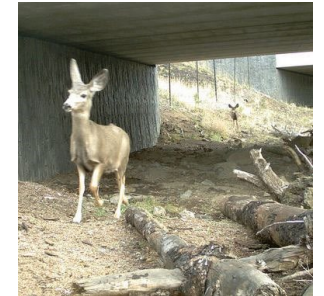
2022

After the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 unlocks billions in funding for crossings, **OR legislature allocates a \$7 million to ODOT** for wildlife crossing construction via HB 5202 .



2023

A one-time **\$5 million lottery funds bond** was created via HB 5030 to **support a broad range of wildlife corridor projects**, including crossings. Funds are managed and dispersed through the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.



2025

Timely policy opportunities and funding mechanisms to permanently fund ODOT's WVC reduction program.

HB 2978: Policy Advancement

- ODOT and ODFW to update its wildlife guidance materials, standards, and highway specifications, to incorporate wildlife crossing design considerations;
- An MOU between ODOT & ODFW to spur collaboration and resource sharing amongst agencies and partners such as Tribes, NGOs, academic Institutions & local communities
- Creates of a training program designed to educate ODOT staff and other stakeholders on the efficacy of transportation solutions for wildlife and human safety; and,
- ODOT to consult with ODFW to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wildlife connectivity from the construction, improvement, operation and maintenance of transportation infrastructure throughout this state

