



## Mariposa Preserve Wildlife Crossing Project

### **What they are saying ...**

#### **Amy Amrhein, Co-Coordinator for Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition:**

“In 2021, the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition assembled 17 organizations and agencies to work on planning a series of wildlife crossings along Interstate 5 between Ashland and the California border. Being awarded this federal Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program grant for \$33 million is the culmination of our efforts with the Oregon Department of Transportation and means both the driving public and regional wildlife will remain safe from wildlife-vehicle collisions. Thank you to Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and Congressman Bentz for your tremendous support of this important project.”

#### **Jack Williams, PhD, Emeritus Senior Scientist for Trout Unlimited and Co-Coordinator Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition:**

“This is the Christmas present that wildlife in southern Oregon were hoping for. The Mariposa Wildlife Overcrossing is exactly what wildlife need – it helps to heal and restore critical east-west habitat connections that were lost when Interstate-5 was built more than 50 years ago. We were fortunate here in southern Oregon to have a broad coalition of supporters – including passionate conservationists, community leaders, and politicians – that recognized this need and made the idea a reality.”

#### **Pam Marsh, Oregon State Representative for District 5:**

“I am thrilled about the federal allocation towards the Mariposa Wildlife Overcrossing in my District. While I-5 is a vital transportation corridor for our region and state, it divides the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, obligating wildlife to make death-defying treks across high-speed traffic. This location will reconnect habitat and support biodiversity, while reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions. I am extraordinarily grateful to Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden and Congressman Bentz for championing a project in Southern Oregon that protects people, wildlife and our rich ecological landscape. I can hardly wait for the time that bears, mountain lions and deer are safely traversing well above the freeway.”

#### **Ken Helm, Oregon State Representative for District 27:**

“This project will deliver immense benefits over time for people and wildlife, exemplifying what can be accomplished when working together for shared resilience. Senator Merkley, Senator Wyden, and Congressman Bentz deserve significant gratitude and recognition for their partnership and support in securing federal resources. The new wildlife overpass will be an iconic landmark for travelers as they enter Oregon from the south on Interstate 5, underscoring Oregon’s commitment to safe highway travel as well as safe passage for migrating wildlife.”

**Rachel E. Wheat, PhD, Wildlife Connectivity Coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife:**

“This new overcrossing, the first of its kind in Oregon, will be tremendously valuable for Oregon’s wildlife, restoring a critically important habitat linkage in one of the most biodiverse areas of the United States. The overcrossing will allow a wide diversity of species, ranging in size from rare and unique butterflies to elk and cougar, to safely cross Interstate 5. The selection of this project for funding showcases the need for connectivity for all wildlife species and the importance of investment in mitigating transportation impacts to our most sensitive wildlife populations. Not only will the structure support daily and seasonal movement of animals, but it will be located in a key area for facilitating wildlife movement in response to changing climate conditions.”

**Colby Drake, Natural Resources Manager for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon:**

“This project will construct an overpass wildlife crossing on Interstate 5, in the Mariposa Preserve, at milepost 1.7 in Oregon, the ancestral homelands of the Rogue and Chasta. We believe this is an important investment of the Federal Highway Administration dollars since Interstate 5 creates harmful impacts to habitat connectivity and wildlife movements. Wildlife resources have been and always will be important to the Tribe and this project would provide the foundation to not only protect wildlife from harm, but to also improve public safety through minimizing collisions.”

**Kelly Coates, Natural Resources Director for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians**

“The Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe is pleased that the wildlife crossing project on I-5 in Jackson County has received full funding. Allowing the safe passage of animals across one of the nation’s most heavily driven freeways is incredibly important for not only the safety of the wildlife, but also the safety of drivers and passengers on the road. This mountain passage is steep, narrow and dangerous for our culturally significant species and the revered wildlife of Southern Oregon. We look forward to seeing the many diverse species, big and small, that will use this wildlife passage during their migration, as well as the improvements toward making Oregon’s highways safer.”

**Karen H. Mager, PhD, Associate Professor of Environmental Science, Policy, & Sustainability, and Biology at Southern Oregon University:**

“Over the past three years, my SOU students have captured tens of thousands of images of the wildlife inhabiting this highway corridor. Our research confirms the extraordinary animal biodiversity at the site where this wildlife crossing will be built. This wildlife crossing will benefit not only wildlife and motorists, but also the numerous SOU students who will gain hands-on research experience studying its impacts. We look forward to monitoring the wildlife crossing in collaboration with our partners for many years into the future, to give us the unique chance to observe how this crossing improves highway safety for animals and motorists alike.”

**Dave Willis, Chair of the Soda Mountain Wilderness Council:**

“Protecting biodiversity and ecological connectivity are the two primary purposes of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument,” said Soda Mountain Wilderness Council chair



and long-time Monument advocate Dave Willis. “The connectivity flow enhances the biodiversity and Interstate 5 is a major connectivity disrupter. The wildlife crossing south of Siskiyou Pass is a very positive and long overdue step toward repairing compromised Cascade-Siskiyou connectivity. More connectivity protection and restoration is certainly needed here – in many ways – but/and major kudos to Jack Williams and Amy Amrhein for their dedicated and instrumental roles in leading this important project that so many of us in the coalition have been glad and grateful to support and contribute to. Without Amy and Jack, this would not have happened.”

**Michael Dotson, Executive Director of KS Wild:**

"We are thrilled to see the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program award a \$33 million grant to the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossings Coalition. Having Oregon's first wildlife overpass constructed across Interstate 5 within the boundaries of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is an important step forward in improving wildlife and habitat connectivity in one of the most biodiverse regions in North America. This wildlife overpass will sit at an important crossroads, where the Cascade Range intersects with the Siskiyou Crest and Klamath Mountains."

**Tyler Dungannan, Conservation Coordinator for Oregon Hunters Association:**

"This is a monumental step for sportsmen and women, for habitat connectivity improvements, and for wildlife vehicle collision reductions in Oregon. The Oregon Hunters Association looks forward to continuing our support during construction of this vitally important wildlife crossing overpass."

**Tim Greseth, Executive Director of the Oregon Wildlife Foundation:**

"The Oregon Wildlife Foundation has been the fiscal sponsor of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition since their inception. We are thrilled the WCPP grant has been awarded to this priority Oregon wildlife crossing project that will expand habitat connectivity and decrease wildlife-vehicle collisions on Interstate 5. This will be the first wildlife crossing overpass in Oregon and will help inspire and support other important projects