

# Wildlife Corridors and Ecological Connectivity: Potential State Legislation

## Overview

The United States is home to a rich array of wildlife. Both habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors play a vital role in species survival as well as in preserving ecological functions such as healthy water supplies.

## Potential State Provisions



### **Support the identification and conservation of wildlife corridors, including migratory routes and routes used by resident/non-migratory aquatic and terrestrial species**

- Authorize studies, task forces, working groups and/or public engagement campaigns to develop corridor designations and recommendations.
- Direct state agencies to identify and protect state-designated wildlife corridors, and encourage agencies to raise awareness regarding the benefits of state-designated corridors.
- Require incorporation of connectivity information into State Wildlife Action Plans via revision or amendment.
- Use state-designated wildlife corridors to inform federal, regional, local and other initiatives such as federal land agency planning, and local land use planning/growth/development codes.



### **Improve connectivity data collection, analysis, storage and distribution**

- Direct relevant state agencies to:
  - Coordinate, collect and store wildlife corridor and connectivity data and analyses.
  - Establish a publicly-accessible statewide database of important connectivity data and identified terrestrial and aquatic wildlife corridors.
  - Use the best available science to develop wildlife connectivity models and maps.



### **Develop statewide plans and best management practices for connectivity conservation**

- Authorize or direct state agencies to develop interagency, statewide plans for connectivity conservation aimed at preserving state-designated wildlife corridors.
- Require development of best management practices (BMPs) for ensuring protection of wildlife corridors for linear infrastructure such as roads, railways, pipelines, and transmission lines.
- Require development of BMPs for ensuring protection of wildlife corridors for forestry, mining, grazing and related activities on state lands.



### **Formulate economic instruments for promoting wildlife movement on private lands**

- Require agencies to provide technical assistance to private landowners who want to take advantage of federal incentive programs, e.g., Farm Bill's Environmental Quality Incentive Program and Conservation Reserve Program.
- Provide state-based programs that encourage restoration on private lands.
- Establish state-based incentive programs such as conservation banking.



### **Develop partnerships that drive positive outcomes for connectivity**

- Direct the state wildlife agency to develop BMPs to foster public-private partnerships (PPPs).
- Authorize PPPs that promote effective policy for wildlife corridors across multiple jurisdictions.



### **Facilitate robust, long-term funding options**

- Authorize funding for designated corridors.
- Appropriate funds to specific agencies to facilitate connectivity projects.
- Direct state agencies to develop a list of existing funding sources and potential new funding mechanisms to identify, prioritize and conserve/improve ecological connectivity.

## Contact

For more information, you can reach out to Ruth Musgrave, NCEL's Senior Advisor on Conservation, or Robert Ament, Center for Large Landscape Conservation's Senior Conservationist.

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