

Summary

Meeting dates: March 1-2, 2013, Commission Meeting

Agenda item 6: Interstate 90 Wildlife Bridges

Presenter(s): William Meyer, Area Habitat Biologist, Region 3, Habitat Program
Jason Smith, Environmental Manager, Washington State Dept. of Transportation

Background summary:

Connecting fish and wildlife across our landscapes is critical to maintaining healthy populations. The Interstate 90 (I-90) Snoqualmie Pass East corridor project provides a unique opportunity to significantly improve ecological connectivity, while meeting transportation needs on the busiest mountain pass in the United States. Over the past 15 years, significant land conservation efforts by a variety of environmental partners have resulted in over 117 square miles of land being protected on both sides of the I-90 corridor near Snoqualmie Pass. In order to protect this investment in habitat conservation, we needed to connect this habitat across this busy transportation corridor.

The 15 mile project corridor will contain wildlife passage structures that allow animals to move both over and under the highway. The I-90 project will also improve safety by reducing wildlife/vehicle collisions while making a busy freeway permeable to wildlife movements. For over 14 years, the Region 3 Habitat Program staff has worked collaboratively with Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and private conservation partners to provide ecological connectivity across I-90.

The first 5 miles of the project are approaching completion. The wildlife passage structures that have been completed are being used by the animals. When completed, the I-90 project will help create a healthier ecosystem in the central Cascades and provide a safer, more reliable transportation system.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

N/A

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Action requested:

N/A

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

Communications Plan:

N/A
