

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

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