

HABITAT CONNECTIVITY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

The Habitat Connectivity Strategic Communications Project reached out to communities and individuals in 2009 to learn their thoughts and concerns about wildlife corridors and how best to engage people in planning and implementation efforts.

This project is part of a larger effort by the [Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group \(WWHCWG\)](#), which will be an important piece of the statewide Wildlife Action Plan.

Key Accomplishments

- **Developed questions and key information** to guide interviews and survey with guidance from market research firm Robinson Research.
- **Distributed a survey** to over 50 participants representing councils, advisory committees and other stakeholder groups.
- **Interviewed 20 individuals in Spokane, Omak, Tonasket, Olympia, and Lacey** representing state associations of cities, counties, county planners, ranchers, private forest owners, and the Washington State Conservation Commission.
- **Analyzed survey and interview findings.**
- **Recommended communication strategies** to help engage communities in to the Washington Habitat Connectivity Analysis and the Wildlife Action Plan.

Lessons Learned

- **Use commonly understood terms** and avoid scientific jargon.
- **Involve locally trusted groups** such as conservation districts and county planning groups.
- **Use concrete examples** to show how specific localities successfully addressed the problem.
- **Respect private land owners' stewardship.**
- **Involve communities early** to help inform county comprehensive plans. Maps and recommendations will be most useful in the earliest phases of county planning.

Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group

The mission of this [working group](#) is to promote the long-term viability of wildlife populations in Washington State through an open membership, science-based, collaborative approach that produces analyses that identify opportunities and priorities to conserve and restore habitat connectivity in Washington and neighboring habitats.

Membership is open in the full working group. A core team is responsible for the delivery of analysis products. Current core team members include Bureau of Land Management, Conservation Northwest, The Nature Conservancy of Washington, Western Transportation Institute, University of Washington, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, WA Department of Transportation, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife, WA Department of Natural Resources.