



Reducing Vehicle Wildlife Collisions & Improving Connectivity in El Dorado County



Building on previous projects

US 50 in El Dorado County is one of the top 4 designated "hotspots" in California for collisions & mortality rates - UC Davis Road Ecology Center

EDC General Plan update 2010

Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP): The 2010 era involved working on the INRMP, which aims to identify and protect important habitat in the county.

Land Use & Conservation: The 2010 planning efforts focused on managing growth to reduce urban/suburban sprawl and preserving open space, oak woodlands, and natural habitats.

1st under-crossing 2012

"Highway 50's first human-made wildlife undercrossing was built in 2012 between Greenstone and El Dorado roads. That passage is a 12-foot by 12-foot tunnel"

Mt Democrat

Highway 50's second culvert/fencing wildlife corridor, occurred East of Placerville as part of the Camino Safety Project - completed in 2021/22"-Caltrans

CDFW priority Barrier studies

The Continued presence of such high rates of WVC's West of Placerville, indicates the desire for wildlife to connect north and south, connectivity which is prevented by a lack of suitable crossing structures.

Because of the absence of connectivity, this stretch of US 50 has been a **priority barrier as designated by CDFW and continues to be designated as a barrier critically needing design improvements.**

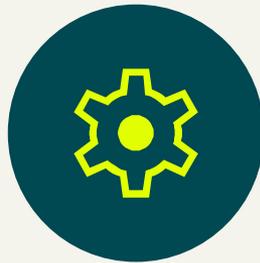
New Project Planning

El Dorado County Highway 50 – Wildlife Vehicle Collision (WVC) Mitigation Project



Concept

Apply for available funding to design, implement and then mitigate the high rate of WVC's in the region. Rapid urban growth, expansion of roadways, & increased traffic on US 50 all contribute to isolated deer herds, decreased genetic diversity and a high rate vehicular accidents. (A top 5 hotspot in the State of California) UC Davis Road Ecology Center



Goal

To improved permeability under US 50 by improving existing conditions, adding adequate wildlife fencing to manage the 13 mile corridor and to design and construct two additional box culvert under-crossings. This will result in keeping animals off the roads, providing safe migrating routes and improving motorist safety.



Team

EDCTC Jerry Barton (Principal planner in charge)
UC Davis Road Ecology Center,
Dr. Fraser Schilling, (Research)
EN2, Rick Lind, (Consultant team project mgmt)
Dokken Engineering,
(Feasibility studies, preliminary engineering)
EDC surveyors office, Brian Frazier
EDCTC Executive Director, Woodrow Deloria
Wildlife Crossings Advocacy, Lisa Morgan

Opportunities

2024 | The U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration posted a notice of funding opportunity for a Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP). EDCTC applied for the grant in September of 2024, and although the project was rated as “highly desirable” funding was frozen based on Federal Government administration changes. It is likely this program will be re-authorized at some point in which additional funding sources could be applied to the construction phase of this project.

2025 | The **Wildlife Conservation Board** (WCB) is a state grant-making agency dedicated to safeguarding California's spectacular biological diversity and wild spaces for the benefit of present and future generations.

The EDCTC applied for grant funding, March of 2026. If awarded the project as outlined will result in a “shovel ready” project for construction in Phase 2.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

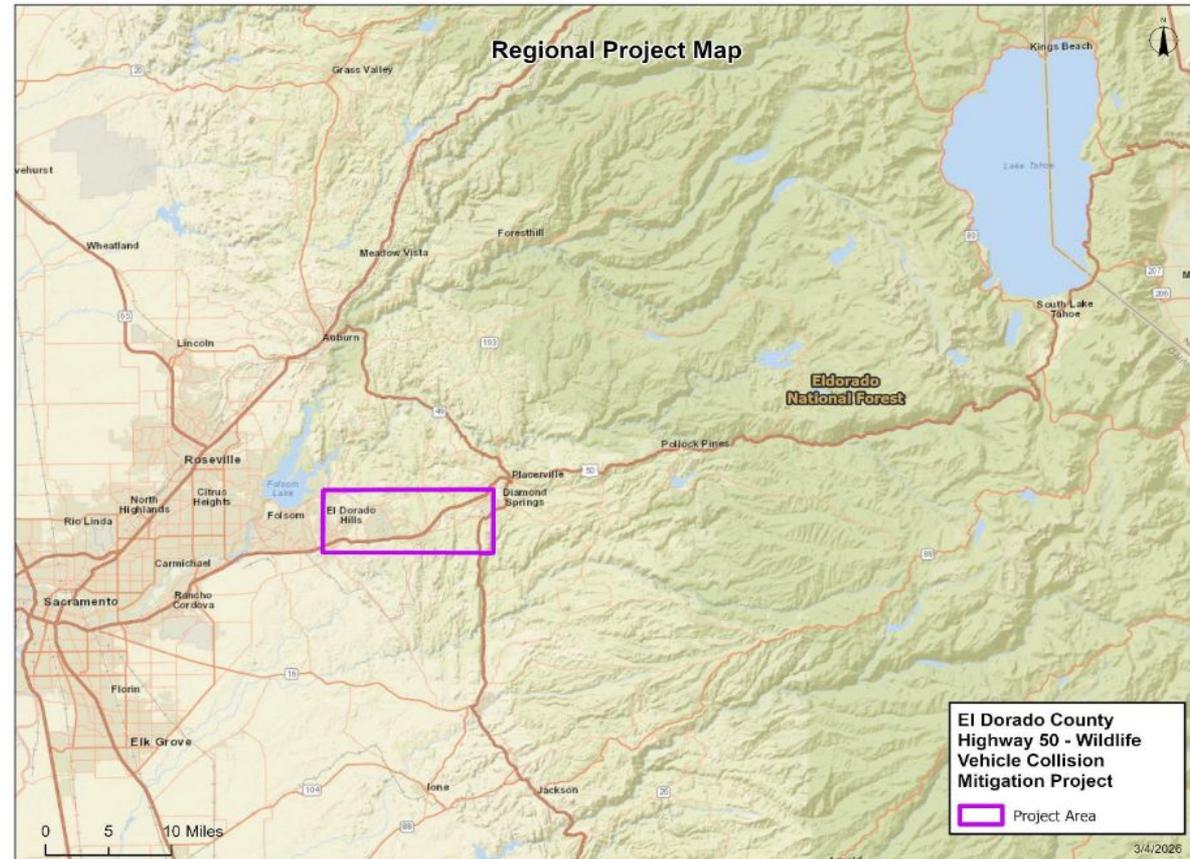


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Project Location

Regional Influence

Figure 2. Regional Project Map



Source: EN2 Resources, Inc., 2026

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Project Location

Focus Areas

Figure 3. Wildlife Under-Crossings and Fencing Areas (Site-Specific Map)



Source: EN2 Resources, Inc., 2026

Details

Key points

- 01 The project is located along US 50, spanning approximately 13 miles from Silva Valley Parkway to Weber Creek in Placerville.
- 02 Within the 13-mile Project area, annual costs from large wildlife collisions averaged \$707,918 between 2016 and 2023. Over the 20-year lifespan of wildlife fencing alone, this equates to more than \$14 million in collision-related costs.
- 03 Amount requested from WCB \$4,698,000
Start date: Proposed: July 1st, 2026
End date: Proposed: June 30, 2030
- 04 The Project area includes CDFW-identified priority barrier W020, which restricts movement of black bear, mountain lion, and mule deer. Adjacent-to-highway connectivity scores from the Areas of Conservation Emphasis (ACE) analysis are medium to high (3-4) across approximately 90% of the Project.

El Dorado County Highway 50 – Wildlife Vehicle Collision (WVC) Mitigation Project

Wildlife connectivity through the Sierra Nevada foothills is impacted by residential development encroaching from the Sacramento Valley, rural residential development, and major highways bisecting foothill ecosystems. In El Dorado County, some of the last undeveloped foothill habitats running north-south are crossed by US Highway 50. This section of US 50 has been previously identified as having some of the highest rates and costs of Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVC) in California (UC Davis Road Ecology Center, 2023-25).



Sierra Nevada foothills

The combination of loss/ disruption of habitat connectivity and wildlife mortality on US 50 prevents north-south wildlife connectivity for the entire Sierra Nevada range.

Connectivity

The primary goal of the Project is to fill a critical gap in wildlife crossings in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Restoring terrestrial connectivity using structures and maintaining riparian corridors are significant goals for Caltrans and other transportation agencies. It is understood that transportation agencies must devise ways to maintain and construct new infrastructure to address connectivity for species under existing and future conditions

Agritourism

Improving wildlife connectivity and preventing WVC's will help strengthen El Dorado County's existing biological corridors and habitat connectivity land use policies. It will also preserve El Dorado County's agritourism by maintaining the aesthetics of a natural and productive place to live and visit.

“I look at this as a starting point in what will be a continual effort.”

2012 Suzanne Melim, Caltrans Biology Branch Chief

Deliverables

Design enhancements to existing infrastructure

Planning, design, and environmental clearance for two new wildlife under-crossings

Planning, design, and clearance for approximately 7–9 miles of new wildlife exclusion fencing connecting existing and proposed crossing structures

Project support

- Sergio Aceves, California Department of Transportation, District 3 Director
- Suzanne Melim, California Department of Transportation, District 3 Chief
- Greg Ferrero, County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors, District I
- Lori Parlin, County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors, District VI
- Kevin Kiley, Congress of the United States, 3rd District, California
- James Corless, Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Executive Director
- Cara Lacey, The Nature Conservancy, Associate Program Director
- Christopher Hall, California Deer Association, Chief Executive Officer
- Brian Frazier, County of El Dorado Surveyors Office, County Surveyor
- Kara Perry, Director of Site Protection, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians



Empowering Connectivity,
Promoting Resiliency,
Preserving Heritage

The EDCTC envisions a transportation future that reflects and enhances the character of rural, urban, and suburban communities. It prioritizes connectivity, adapts to climate change, builds resilience, and serves all users of the transportation system throughout El Dorado County.

RTP 2045 Vision Statement

