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For Immediate Release

COLORADO CHOSEN AS SITE TO SHOWCASE WILDLIFE CROSSING DESIGNS OF THE FUTURE

Competition Challenges Design Teams to Reweave Landscape for Wildlife in a Cost-effective Manner Using New Methods, New Materials, and New Thinking.

Denver, December 16, 2009 - As a gift during this holiday season, West Vail Pass, Colorado, along Interstate 70, has been chosen as the official site for the first-ever North American Wildlife Crossing Structure Design Competition entitled ARC. Signifying the official site selection was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) this month between the ARC steering team and the Colorado Department of Transportation. The MOU sets in motion the design competition which will engage interdisciplinary design teams from around the world to explore new methods, new materials, and new thinking when designing wildlife crossings structures. West Vail Pass was chosen as the top site out of a total of 22 candidate sites across North America.

The timing of this competition comes on the heels of Gov. Bill Ritter's recent effort to promote wildlife connections between Colorado and New Mexico. "Wildlife is one of the most important resources in the West. It is part of our heritage, and its protection should be part of our legacy," said Gov. Ritter.

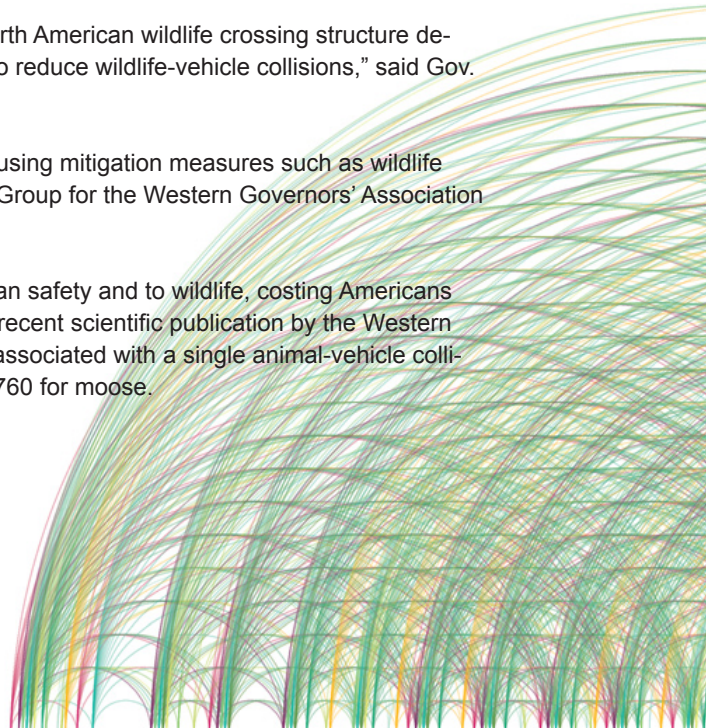
The ARC competition establishes Colorado as a leader and an innovator in wildlife conservation and driver safety. Once completed, Colorado will have a cost-effective solution that will provide safer roads and protect the wildlife that generates over \$3 billion a year in hunting, fishing and wildlife watching related revenues.

"The state of Colorado is delighted to be hosting the first-ever North American wildlife crossing structure design competition. The competition will cultivate innovative ideas to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions," said Gov. Ritter.

Ensuring wildlife can move freely across roadways and rail lines using mitigation measures such as wildlife crossings was a recommendation of the Transportation Working Group for the Western Governors' Association Wildlife Corridors Initiative.

Crashes between motor vehicles and wildlife are a threat to human safety and to wildlife, costing Americans more than \$8 billion annually along with hundreds of lives lost. A recent scientific publication by the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) calculated the average total costs associated with a single animal-vehicle collision for three species: \$6,617 for deer, \$17,483 for elk, and \$30,760 for moose.

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"Identifying new options for mitigating wildlife-vehicle collisions is particularly critical in Colorado's high country, especially as traffic increases on our state highways," CDOT Region 3 Transportation Director Weldon Allen said. "Safety is one of the Core Values that all stakeholders in the I-70 Mountain Corridor study agree need to be factored in to every effort and project. An innovative design for an I-70 wildlife crossing will give CDOT and its regional planning partners another alternative as we work together to plan and implement safety measures along this corridor."

Wildlife crossings, including overpasses and underpasses, connect habitats and allow animals to cross major highways safely. With the impacts of climate change forcing animals to move and adapt to shifting habitats, landscape connections for wildlife become even more important. The price tag, however, prevents many wildlife crossings, especially overpasses, from ever being built. The ARC Competition will challenge entrants to design cost-effective wildlife crossing structures of the future while also reconnecting habitat for wildlife.

"The road network, and all the luxuries it affords, is a remarkable societal and engineering achievement. But unless we, as a society, figure out a way to lessen its impact on wildlife and wild processes - the relevance of that achievement is diminished," said Tony Clevenger, wildlife ecologist for the WTI and initiator of the ARC Steering Team. "The crossing structures of today are built of concrete and steel. The possibilities for lighter, more durable, mobile and less expensive structures exist – the ARC competition encourages innovative thinking out of the box."

The site of the competition is located where natural and human-dominated worlds collide: approximately 10,000 feet above sea level and 90 miles west of Denver along I-70. With species ranging from the diminutive marten to stately moose, it serves as the perfect setting for design teams to let their imaginations run wild. But any winning design will also have to be rooted in practicality and will help inform wildlife crossings across North America.

"Wildlife corridors are increasingly essential as our transportation system continues to grow and human and wildlife domains overlap. Across the nation accidents involving wildlife are on the rise and animal populations are increasingly impacted. The ARC competition will improve traveler safety and environmental sustainability by making creative solutions more affordable and more easily adopted nationwide. West Vail Pass is ideally suited to evaluating this problem and I'm eager to see the innovative solutions that it produces," said Representative Jared Polis, who is the Congressman for Colorado's second Congressional district where the competition is located.

ARC is more than a competition; it is an ideology that spans disciplines, species, geography and aspirations. The name emerged directly from the science of road ecology – the interactions between road systems and the natural environment. Initiated by the WTI and the Woodcock Foundation in New York City, ARC quickly drew additional support from the Edmonton Community Foundation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials. ARC continues to draw mounting support from federal and state agencies, universities, professional associations and non-profit organizations in the U.S. and Canada.

Further information about the ARC Competition and a full list of the eighteen sponsors is available at www.arc-competition.com. Complete entry rules will be available in spring 2010.

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NEW METHODS • NEW MATERIALS • NEW THINKING
North American Wildlife Crossing Structure Design Competition

QUOTES ON THE ARC COMPETITION

<i>“The state of Colorado is delighted to be hosting the first-ever North American wildlife crossing structure design competition. The competition will cultivate innovative ideas to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.”</i>	Governor Bill Ritter Colorado
<i>“Wildlife corridors are increasingly essential as our transportation system continues to grow and human and wildlife domains overlap. Across the nation accidents involving wildlife are on the rise and animal populations are increasingly impacted. The ARC competition will improve traveler safety and environmental sustainability by making creative solutions more affordable and more easily adopted nationwide. West Vail Pass is ideally suited to evaluating this problem and I’m eager to see the innovative solutions that it produces.”</i>	Rep. Jared Polis 2 nd Congressional District Boulder, CO
<i>“The road network, and all the luxuries it affords, is a remarkable societal and engineering achievement. But unless we, as a society, figure out a way to lessen its impact on wildlife and wild processes - the relevance of that achievement is diminished. The crossing structures of today are built of concrete and steel. The possibilities for lighter, more durable, mobile and less expensive structures exist – the ARC competition encourages innovative thinking out of the box.”</i>	Tony Clevenger Wildlife Ecologist Western Transportation Institute & Initiator of the ARC Steering Team apclevenger@gmail.com 403.760.1371
<i>“The aim of the competition is to develop innovative approaches to wildlife crossings -- an important new type of infrastructure. Through the competition, we hope to get people excited about what is possible. When a diverse group of experts put their heads together, the potential for cost-effective, ecologically-viable, and beautiful designs is boundless.”</i>	Nina-Marie Lister ARC Competition Professional Advisor nm.lister@me.com 416.704.5736

<p><i>“Identifying new options for mitigating wildlife-vehicle collisions is particularly critical in Colorado’s high country, especially as traffic increases on our state highways. Safety is one of the Core Values that all stakeholders in the I-70 Mountain Corridor study agree need to be factored in to every effort and project. An innovative design for an I-70 wildlife crossing will give CDOT and its regional planning partners another alternative as we work together to plan and implement safety measures along this corridor.”</i></p>	<p>Weldon Allen Director, Region 3 Colorado Department of Transportation</p>
<p><i>“Vail Pass is an important highway crossing site for so many creatures. Everything from elk and mule deer to endangered species like lynx use this vital movement corridor through our mountains. This design competition focuses on the right location, for the right reasons. The ARC Competition will help more people understand the importance of wildlife crossing structures within our highway system.”</i></p>	<p>Bethany Gravell Executive Director Center for Native Ecosystems & Colorado Safe Passage Coalition bethany@nativeecosystems.org 303.546.0214 x 4</p>
<p><i>“Innovative and effective wildlife crossing designs are a critical part of developing our transportation infrastructure for the 21st century. Our roadway system needs to be adaptable and flexible to meet the needs of communities of people and communities of wildlife as the world’s climate changes at a rapid pace.”</i></p>	<p>Monique DiGiorgio Western Environmental Law Center Conservation Strategist digorgio@westernlaw.org 406.548.1592</p>
<p><i>“As a foundation that focuses its environmental program on the Yellowstone to Yukon region, we believe that the innovation and proliferation of wildlife crossings over the highways of both Canada and the United States are essential to international large landscape conservation. Without crossing structures, the ability for wildlife to move between parks and other protected areas is seriously impeded reducing their access to habitat and genetic diversity and, ultimately, limiting their ability to adapt to climate change.”</i></p>	<p>Jeremy Guth Woodcock Foundation Trustee jguth@woodcockfdn.org 212.812.4342</p>

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ARC: North American Wildlife Crossing Structure Design Competition

ARC is a partnership-driven wildlife crossing design competition. ARC will engage the best and most innovative international, interdisciplinary design teams—comprised of landscape designers, architects, engineers, ecologists, and other experts—to create the next generation of wildlife crossing structures for North America's roadways. In doing so, the competition will raise international awareness around wildlife movement and protection while promoting feasible, buildable context-sensitive and compelling design solutions for safe, efficient, cost-effective, and ecologically responsive wildlife crossings.

Founding Sponsors

Organizations that developed, sustain or serve on the competition's Steering Committee



Organizing Sponsors

Organizations providing the site, information, or provide major funding



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