



How Not to Hit a Deer: Give 'Em a Road Crossing That Looks Like Home

by STEVE CASIMIRO on JANUARY 26, 2011 · 1 COMMENT



Rick Ridgeway's [Freedom to Roam](#) has focused attention on the needs of migrating animals to have corridors connecting their migration paths. It's a worthy cause to protect the viability of species like the pronghorn, but there's a more prosaic issue facing animals in motion: avoiding getting hit by cars and trucks. Collisions with critters have increased by 50 percent in the last decade and a half, cost \$8 billion a year, and kill approximately 100 people annually, according to the National Safety Council, and traditional wildlife tunnels and overpasses aren't exactly attractive to animals. If you spent your life eating fresh buds in the woods and playing tag with other woodland creatures, would you want to enter a dingy, dark, concrete tunnel?

Didn't think so. But [a contest to redesign an animal crossing in West Vail, Colorado](#), as a test piece has just ended, and the winner is an architectural firm that created lanes of natural habitat across I-70. The overpass/tunnel system suggested by Michael Van Valkenburgh & Associates would blend in with the environment and cost less than traditional structures.

"This landscape is not for humans [Ed note: though it would make a sick mountain bike bridge]." writes MVV. "Rather than allowing the primarily visual, aesthetic drivers of landscape design to determine form, the hyper-nature bridging system is driven by the demands of ecological engineering. Instead of attempting to recreate the surrounding nature, the design condenses and amplifies multiple landscape bands (Forest, Meadow, Shrub, Scree) into habitat corridors that provide connections for a larger cross-section of species."

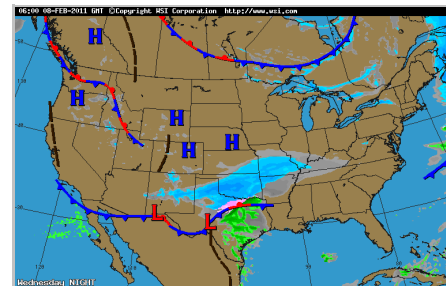
The winning entry isn't scheduled to be built, but if it costs less and is more effective than what's currently in place, it should inspire better corridors in the future.

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You can check out the video about the contest below and take a look at the winning presentation in PDF [here](#).



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Jay Goodrich January 26, 2011 at 12:31



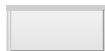
Vail still really wants to be British Columbia (look at the AICan Highway), but as usual will fall short because they don't feel the money is worth the expense. The world's most expensive truck stop will always be just that! After living there for 20 years and seeing just about every species dead along the roadside in that area, I cannot believe Vail wouldn't be interested in putting a positive spin on their image. If it doesn't make the town money, they will never do it, period.

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