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## DENVER AND THE WEST

# Finalists named in competition to design I-70 wildlife crossing on Vail Pass

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The Denver Post

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Transportation officials in the West are hosting an international competition to design an inexpensive, "next-generation" wildlife crossing for possible installation over Interstate 70 in the Vail area.

The Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University is sponsoring the contest, which has settled on five finalists — design firms based in New York, Philadelphia, Toronto and Amsterdam.

Finalists were selected from 36 team submissions from nine countries, with more than 100 firms from around the world involved, according to the institute.

Teams included architects, engineers, landscape architects, ecologists and wildlife biologists.

The ARC International Wildlife Crossing design competition seeks "to raise international awareness of a need to better reconcile human and wildlife mobility through a more creative, flexible and innovative system of road and habitat networks," the group says.

The institute is working with the Colorado Department of Transportation. I-70 at West Vail Pass won out over about two dozen other sites in 16 U.S. states and Canadian provinces that were in the running to be the location for the prototype wildlife crossing, according to the institute.

"The intent of the ARC competition is to generate new solutions that are applicable not only at Vail Pass but which can be incorporated into wildlife-crossing designs across the U.S., Canada and around the world," competition sponsors said.

Each year, hundreds of animals are killed, and many motorists injured, in vehicle-wildlife collisions in the CDOT region that includes the I-70 mountain corridor, as well as in other parts of the state.

Bear, bobcat, coyote, deer, elk, bighorn sheep and lynx are among the species involved in such accidents, CDOT says.

On Friday, the state agency released its latest environmental study of the I-70 mountain corridor and noted that planned highway and transit improvements will "further impede the ability of wildlife to move across I-70."

Working with other groups, CDOT identified 13 areas where the I-70 mountain corridor "interferes with



A wildlife crossing spans the Trans Canada Highway in Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada. A similar crossing might be in store for Interstate 70 over Vail Pass. ( Tony Clevenger, WTI )

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wildlife migration," and the agency said that by creating wildlife crossings, "animal-vehicle collisions can be reduced and habitat connectivity increased."

Later this month, architects, designers and others on the five finalist teams are scheduled to converge on Vail Pass for an I-70 site visit as part of their preparation of wildlife-crossing designs.

Final submissions are due in early November, and the winner of the jury competition will be honored at a National Academy of Sciences transportation research gathering in Washington in January.

Finalists in the competition are expected to be pre-qualified by CDOT if the agency requests bids for design of an I-70 wildlife crossing.

To see a list of the design teams that are finalists, go to [www.arc-competition.com/finalists.php](http://www.arc-competition.com/finalists.php).

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