



Greater Yellowstone Coalition

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August 26, 2009

To: Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Attn: Matt Fry
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82006

Dear Matt:

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition (GYC) is pleased to take this opportunity to offer our support to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's efforts to acquire TIGER Discretionary Grants for Wildlife Connectivity Projects in western and southern Wyoming. It is our understanding that such potential projects are on US Highway 191 at Trappers Point; US Hwy 189 Labarge to Dry Piney Creek; US Hwy 189-Interstate 80 north to Milepost 24; and Interstate 80 Halleck Ridge, Cooper Cove, Leroy to Sisters and Creston Junction to Wamsutter.

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition is a non-profit, public interest group with approximately 8,200 members consisting of businesses, families and wildlife enthusiasts seeking to protect the lands, waters and wildlife of the 18-million-acre Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem now and for future generations. We have been implementing our mission for 26 years.

We recognize the value of mitigating the adverse effects to wildlife movements and habitat connectivity that some stretches of highways have had over the years. With far better science available now, and the best engineering brought to bear, we believe that wildlife mortality can be reduced, human safety protected, and important ecosystem functions such as wildlife migrations can be restored and protected by the overpasses, underpasses and fencing projects you are seeking to implement.

We were gratified that in 2008 the Western Governor's Association passed their Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Habitat Initiative since we had worked with our conservation partners as advisors on that effort. In 2003-04, GYC was part of the Trappers Point Working Group of diverse interests and were pleased to submit to the Bureau of Land Management recommendations to better protect the renowned Trappers Point bottleneck that sustains the 160-mile migration corridor for pronghorn antelope from Grand Teton National Park. GYC also participated in the multi-year Pinedale BLM Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, which eventuated in the 2008 Record of Decision that gained Trappers Point the status of an Area of Critical

Environmental Concern. Important work, such as is proposed in your TIGER Grant proposal still remains to be done to protect that migration bottleneck.

GYC has long and actively engaged in a variety of other efforts to remove or mitigate impediments to wildlife migrations and protect and restore habitat connectivity. We consistently participate in US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) planning efforts, Environmental Impact Studies for highway and energy projects, and on-the-ground remedial efforts to protect and restore the critical wild patterns on the landscape that enhance the quality of the human experience for residents and visitors alike in Wyoming.

As all Wyoming residents have learned in recent years, the increase in energy development throughout once-open landscapes brings increased traffic and wildlife/vehicle collisions on state and interstate highways. Your proposals to build overpasses, underpasses and strategically placed fencing should reduce those costly and harmful collisions and facilitate effective seasonal and daily wildlife movements. There is no better time than the present to ambitiously bring together partners such as the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT), WGFD, BLM, the USFS and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to implement these projects that have already been identified.

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition looks forward to assisting the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and other agencies in the implementation of policies and projects that protect the treasured wildlife and habitat values, and prosperous human communities, of this world-renowned ecosystem. We are hopeful that funding for the highway projects is acquired as soon as possible, and that well-designed mitigation projects are built. Please do not hesitate to call on us for additional input to help develop and implement these important projects.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Dorsey
Wyoming Representative
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