



Wildlife Conservation Society
North America Program
301 N. Willson Ave.
Bozeman, MT 59715

27 August 2009

Matt Fry
Staff Terrestrial Biologist
Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.
5400 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82006

Dear Mr. Fry,

In 2005, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) initiated a 5-year study of pronghorn in the UGRB of western Wyoming to understand the potential for winter-related effects of gas field development and infrastructure on pronghorn and to identify important pronghorn migration routes and wintering areas in the Upper Green River Basin (UGRB). Since our project's inception in 2005, WCS has captured 318 adult female pronghorn using a net-gun fired from a helicopter and fitted them all with GPS collars. To date, we have over 250,000 GPS locations for pronghorn in the UGRB and our study affords wildlife managers, and others concerned with wildlife, the opportunity to evaluate the effects of natural gas field development, highways, and other roads on pronghorn through a long-term research program.

We are writing this letter for two reasons. The first is to offer support for the Wyoming Game and Fish proposal for TIGER Discretionary Grant funds for the US-191 Trapper's Point project. The installation of both underpasses, and more importantly, overpasses for pronghorn that migrate between winter range in the UGRB and summer range in Grand Teton National Park may be critical to the long-term persistence of the well-delineated "Path of the Pronghorn" migration route identified by NPS and WCS scientists.

The second and equally important reason, for our letter is to address the opportunity for WCS to become a research partner in the described efforts under the TIGER Discretionary funds proposal submitted by the Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Game and Fish, BLM, USFS and the USF&WS. Given that WCS has a wealth of data concerning pronghorn road crossings along the stretch of US Highway 191 proposed to contain the overpass and underpass structures, WCS should be included as a valuable research partner in this endeavor. Our data and expertise should be included to evaluate the best location and design of highway crossing structures for pronghorn. Further, given that WG&F biologists in the Pinedale office have requested WCS raw data and analyzed data to help delineate the proper and most effective location of these overpasses and underpasses along US-191 near Trapper's Point, we feel that we have much to offer as a partner in this important endeavor. Finally, given that WCS has the largest GPS location and movement dataset on pronghorn in western Wyoming we can contribute significantly as a research partner in this proposal and subsequent research/work. We applaud the efforts of the various agencies in seeking this funding for these important and vital wildlife conservation projects in the state of Wyoming.

I look forward to discussing the possibilities for collaboration in this important proposed project. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at the address listed on this page or via email at jbeckmann@wcs.org.

Sincerely,

Jon Beckmann, Ph.D.
Associate Conservation Scientist
Wildlife Conservation Society
North America Program
301 N. Willson Ave.
Bozeman, MT 59715