



March 1, 2019

Jackson Town Council and Teton County Board of County Commissioners

RE: Joint Retreat: Safe Wildlife Crossings a priority for 2019 SPET Ballot

Dear Mayor, Councilors, and Commissioners,

We've all seen too many dead animals on the side of the road. Over 500 animals are killed annually on roads in Teton County, including our iconic ungulate species of elk, moose and deer. Wildlife-vehicle collisions pose a risk to our families, and our roads cut off key migration corridors. Furthermore, *wildlife collisions cost Teton County tax payers approximately \$3 million from May 2016 to April 2017*, and 1 in 5 Wyoming highway accidents involve wildlife. It doesn't have to be this way. We can protect wildlife and our families by making it safer for wildlife to cross the road.

Wildlife crossings work

Wildlife crossings are bridges, tunnels and at-grade structures designed to help wildlife safely cross the road. While it's helpful to slow down and pay attention to wildlife, it's simply not enough. Combined with high fences along the roads to funnel animals to the crossings, wildlife crossings have proven themselves as the most effective way to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. *In Wyoming, Montana, and Canada, wildlife crossings have reduced wildlife-vehicle collisions by nearly 90%.*

Wildlife Crossings Master Plan is ready for implementation

The 2018 and 2019 *Indicator Reports* highlight implementing the Wildlife Crossings Master Plan as a key next step for ecosystem stewardship, and we thank you all for your past support and vision in funding and passing the Wildlife Crossings Master Plan last year. Now, it is time to fund the top-priority wildlife crossings – ideally, in a 2019 Special Purpose Excise Tax (SPET) ballot. We believe wildlife crossings are a top priority for our town and county as a public infrastructure project in the next SPET election.

Wildlife crossings have bipartisan support

We know from public opinion research that wildlife crossings receive strong and bipartisan support from voters. Allowing voters the opportunity to show their support for safe wildlife crossings on the next SPET ballot is a clear way to effectively and efficiently implement the Master Plan and uphold our community vision set out in the Comprehensive Plan.

Safe wildlife crossings are important public infrastructure and should be at the top of our list of priorities for SPET funding. **Please prioritize a safe wildlife crossings measure on the 2019 SPET ballot so we can make our roads safer for wildlife and people.** Please see potential draft ballot language on the next page.

Thank you all for your work on behalf of the people and wildlife of Teton County and the Town of Jackson. Please let us know how we can help as you move forward with this process.

Sincerely,

Leah Zamesnik
Conservation Policy Manager
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

Chris Colligan
Wildlife Program Coordinator
Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Jon Mobeck
Executive Director
Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation

