



## Wildlife Crossings in New Mexico



Michael J. Dax  
Western Program Director  
[Michael@wildlandsnetwork.org](mailto:Michael@wildlandsnetwork.org)

# Wildlife and Roads

New Mexico sees a minimum of 1,600 wildlife-vehicle collisions annually

- Reported vehicle collisions represent ½ or even 1/3 of actually collisions
- These crashes cost New Mexicans and the state \$20 million per year

Some roads are too busy for animals to attempt to cross resulting in habitat fragmentation

- Wildlife needs to move daily and seasonally for access to food and water, finding mates and maintaining genetic diversity,

Number of Recorded WVC and Assoc. Costs for WCAP Top 11 Priority Project Areas (2009-18)			
Crash Type	Cost/Occurrence (FHWA)	Occurrences	Est. Cost (FHWA)
Property Damage Only	\$11,900	1,883	\$22,407,700
Possible Injury (Type C)	\$125,600	82	\$10,299,200
Minor Injury (Type B)	\$198,500	50	\$9,925,000
Serious Injury (Type A)	\$655,000	8	\$5,240,000
Fatality	\$11,295,400	2	\$22,590,800
TOTAL	-	2,025	\$70,462,700





# Wildlife Crossings are effective

Wildlife Crossings are the **MOST EFFECTIVE** safety solution DOT can implement

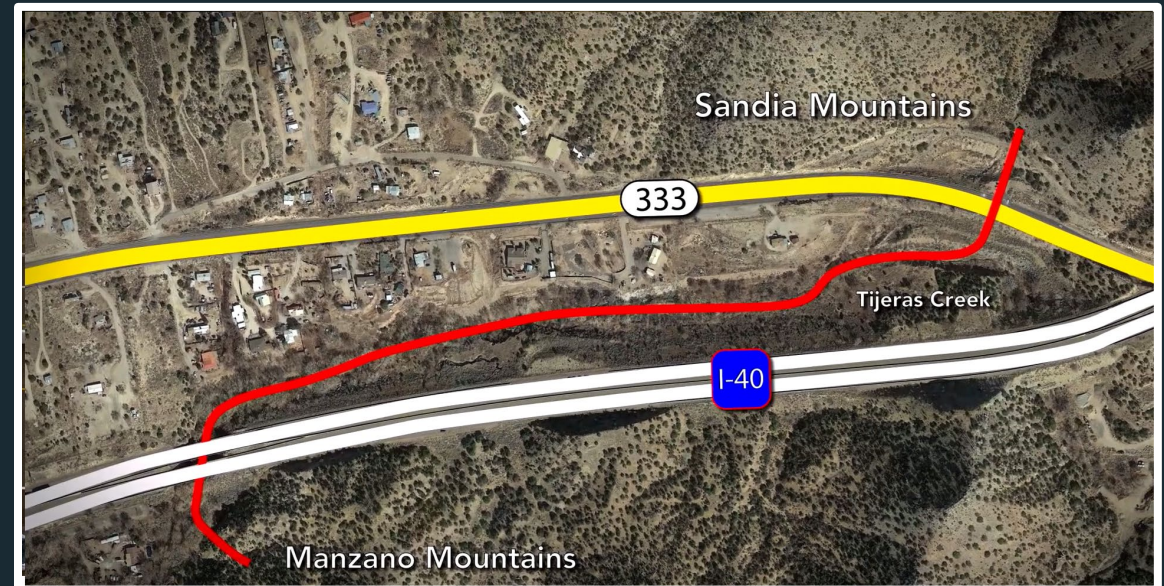
- In Banff, wildlife crossings have reduced collisions by 80%
- In Arizona, a series of underpasses have reduced elk collisions by 90%
- On Colorado's SR 9, wildlife vehicle collisions have been **reduced by 92%**





# Wildlife Crossings Legislation

- HJM 3 (2003) directed NMDGF and NMDOT to work together to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions
- HJM 4 (2009) Share information about wildlife corridors and crucial habitat
- HJM 10 (2011) Pilot Traffic Safety Project
- HM 1/SM 11 (2013) directed DOT and NMDGF to hold workshop to identify future crossings projects





# SB 228 Wildlife Corridors Act

- First legislation of its kind
  - Passed Senate 24-18
  - Passed House 51-12
- Directed NMDOT and NMDGF to develop comprehensive Action Plan to identify and prioritize areas for wildlife movement and key road barriers to those movements
- Focus on wildlife-vehicle collisions AND wildlife connectivity



# Wildlife Corridors Action Plan

WCAP identified 11 priority safe passage projects:

## 6 based on wildlife connectivity needs

- US-64/US-84 Tierra Amarilla to Chama
- US-285 San Antonio Mountain
- I-25/US-64/NM-505 Raton Pass/Pronghorn Triangle
- I-10 Peloncillo Mountains
- I-25/US-550 Bernalillo/Pueblo of Santa Ana
- NM-38 Questa to Red River

## 5 based on wildlife-vehicle collisions

- US-550 North of Cuba
- US-180/NM-90 Silver City
- US-70 and NM-48 Ruidoso
- I-25 Glorieta Pass
- US-70 Bent





# Wildlife Corridors Action Plan

Original projections for project costs: \$388,044,512 (2021 dollars)

Priority Project	Project Elements	County	Projected Cost
US-550 North of Cuba	4 OPs, 5 UPs	Sandoval County	\$45,206,312
US-180 and NM 90 Silver City	2 OPs, 7 UPs	Grant County	\$39,431,000
US-70 and NM 48 Ruidoso	1 OP, 8 UPs	Lincoln & Otero Counties	\$30,668,000
I-25 Glorieta Pass	1 OP, 4 UPs	Santa Fe County	\$21,000,000
US-70 Bent/Sacramento Mountains	1 OP, 7 UPs	Otero County	\$27,990,000
US-64/US-84 Tierra Amarilla to Chama	7 OPs, 19 UPs, 1 ADS	Rio Arriba County	\$50,554,000
US-285 Rio Grande Del Norte Natl. Monument	4 OPs, 5 UPs, 1 ADS	Taos & Rio Arriba Counties	\$28,622,000
I-25/US-64/NM 505/NM-445 Raton to Maxwell	2 OPs, 4 UPs	Colfax County	\$31,458,000
I-10 Peloncillo Mountains	2 OPs, 3 UPs	Hidalgo County	\$46,174,800
I-25 and US-550 Sandia-Jemez Mountains	5 OPs, 3 UPs	Sandoval County	\$49,336,000
NM 38 Questa to Red River	3 OPs, 1 UPs, 1 ADS	Taos County	\$17,604,400

**Key:** OPs = overpasses; UPs = underpasses; ADS = Animal Detection Systems

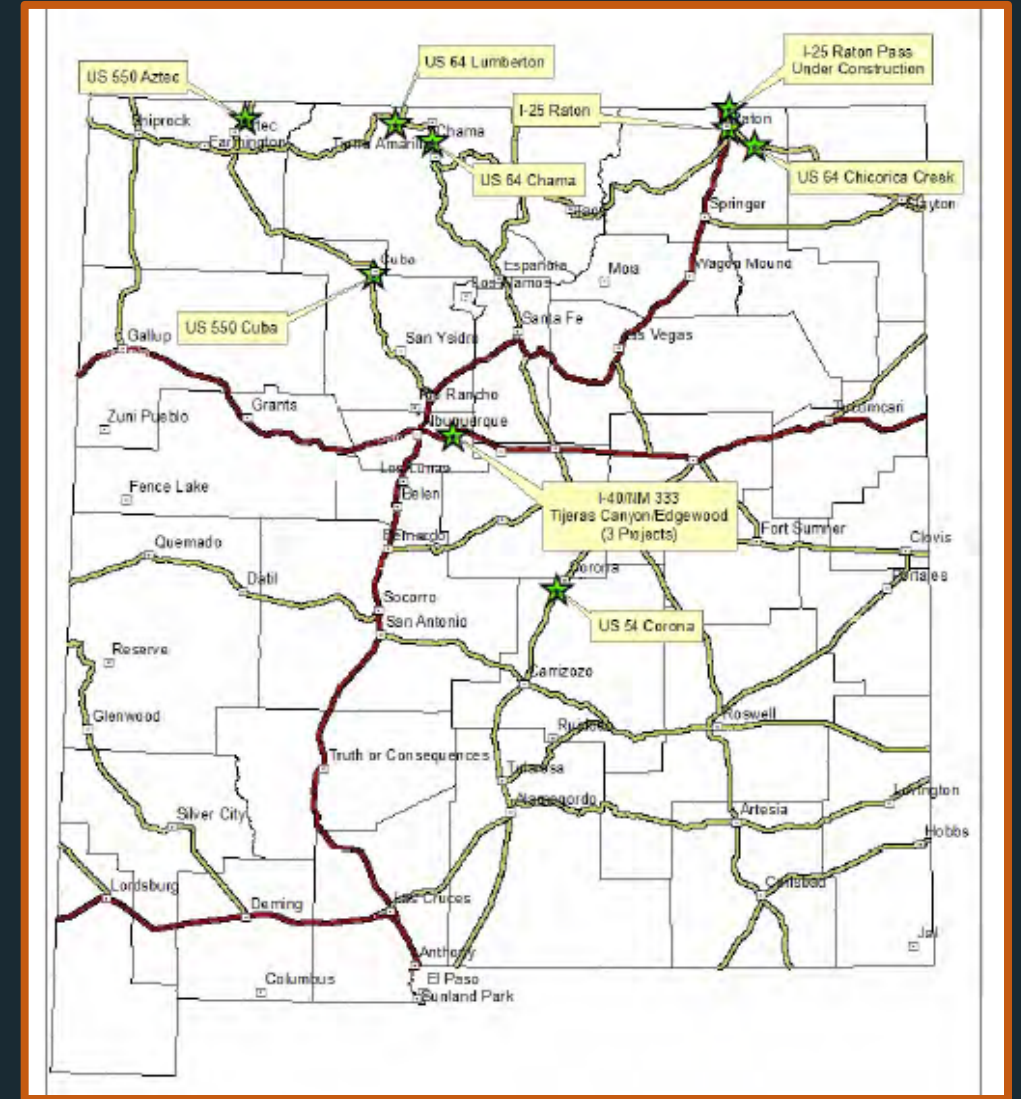


# Funding for Wildlife Crossings

2022 – Legislature approved \$2 million

2023 – SB 72 created a dedicated fund with \$5 million

2024 – Legislature appropriated \$5 million





# Funding for Wildlife Crossings

Consistent state funding is needed for:

- Long-term planning
- Scoping reports, engineering and design
- maintenance





# Federal Funding opportunities

**Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP) - \$350 million over 5 years**

2023 - \$112.5 million

2024 - \$145 million

2025 - \$80 million

In 2024, 56 applications from 34 states requesting \$550 million

## **Other Grants:**

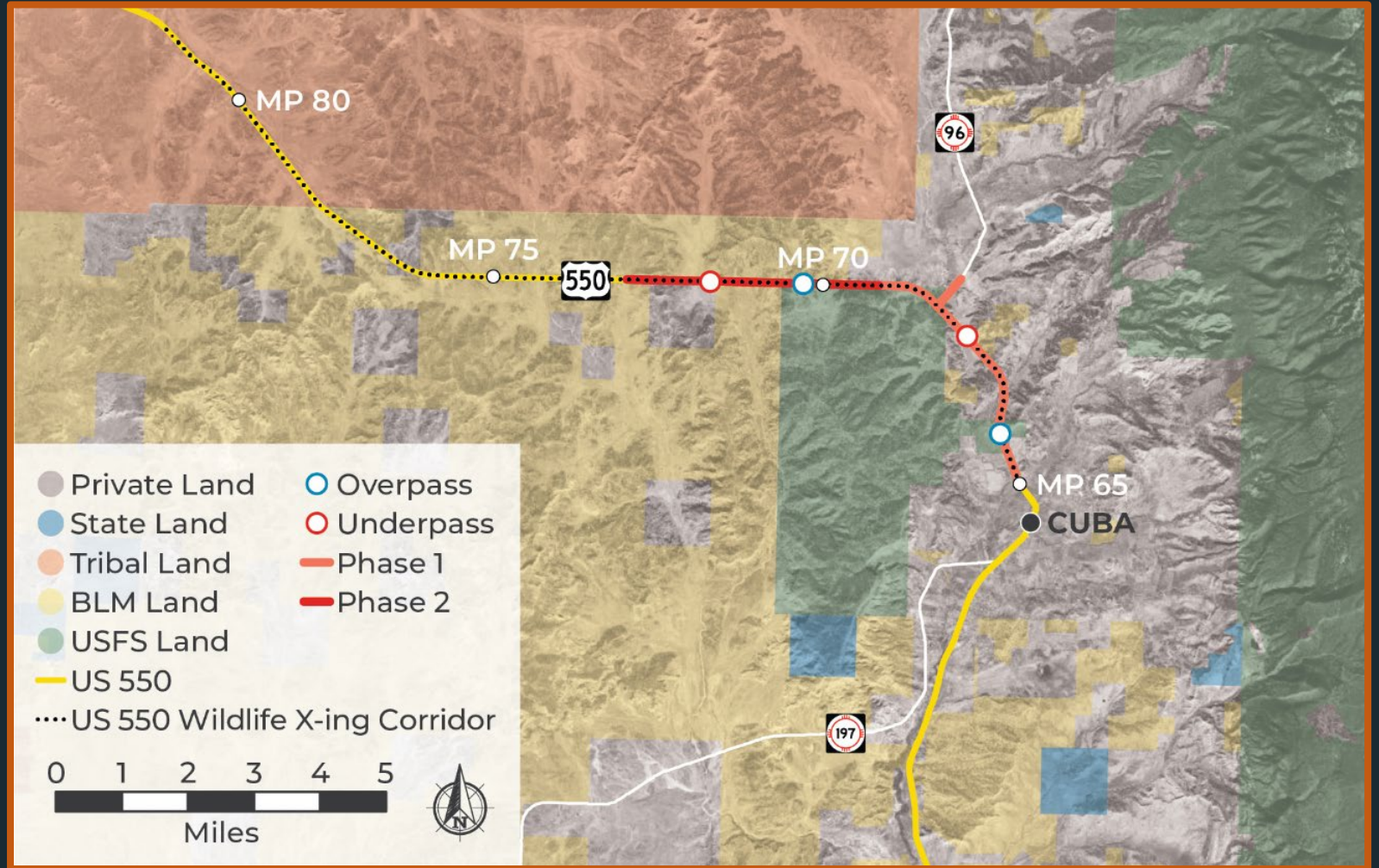
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)
- Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight and Highway Projects (INFRA)
- Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program
- Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)





# What's next?

- US-550 north of Cuba
- US 70 Bent/Mescalero
- I-25 Watrous
- US-70 San Augustin Pass
- I-25 Glorieta Pass
- I-25/US 550 at Bernalillo/Santa Ana



**THANK YOU**

