

POSTER PRESENTATION

OUTREACH MATTERS! HIGHWAY WILDLIFE MITIGATION OUTREACH ACTIVITIES ON THE FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION AND SURROUNDING AREAS, MONTANA

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ABSTRACT

On the Flathead Indian Reservation in northwest Montana, there are 41 fish and wildlife crossing structures (WCS) and 16.6 miles of wildlife fencing along a reconstructed 56-mile segment of U.S. Highway 93 North, also referred to as the 'the People's Way.' The People's Way Partnership is a collaboration of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), and Defenders of Wildlife, with most funding from small private or non-profit foundation grants. Our mission is to effectively communicate the conservation value of the wildlife mitigation measures along US 93 North. The partnership was created when we recognized that many people in the region were not sufficiently aware of the value or efficacy of the mitigation measures.

We have undertaken numerous outreach efforts to increase knowledge of and support for healthy, connected wildlife populations and to promote a sense of environmental stewardship among residents living near US 93 North. These efforts can serve as a model for successful educational activities aimed at generating support for wildlife-highway mitigations.

We gave presentations to 950 children (from kindergarten to high school) in the region about the highway project. We combined these presentations with a drawing contest to encourage the children to think about the importance of WCS for human and wildlife safety. This outreach effort was important, as there are many children who never travel outside of their towns and thus do not see the structures, connecting children not only to a larger scientific concept but also to community conservation efforts on their own Reservation. The pivotal role the CSKT played in the development and subsequent monitoring of the WCS was also emphasized in our talks, which can be a source of pride and empowerment. Students submitted over 340 posters. A judging event included representatives from federal and state transportation and natural resource management agencies, CSKT, and road ecology academics. A selection of the drawings was

displayed at an art gallery event in Missoula. An awards ceremony further involved the public and media. We plan on creating additional outreach materials using the art.

Several other outreach activities have been undertaken. A large outreach poster was designed and printed to display photos of the diversity of wildlife species using the WCS. We created an informational brochure detailing the history of the project and the purpose of the WCS. We give these materials to agencies, classes, and the general public with frequent requests for additional copies. In addition, we provide numerous public-friendly, interactive presentations to classrooms, agencies, and organizations throughout the area. We are currently creating permanent educational signs for the traveling public at pertinent locations along the transportation corridor. We envision our efforts will lead to increased citizen, institutional, and governmental support for more sustainable highway practices throughout the West and the United States.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Kylie Paul currently works for Defenders of Wildlife in Missoula, Montana, advocating for science-based conservation efforts for wolverines and other forest mesocarnivores. She received a Bachelor of Individualized Studies focusing on Environmental Science, Environmental Studies, and Leadership at the University of Minnesota and earned her MS in Environmental Studies at University of Montana. Her thesis focused on road ecology, assessing citizen science's ability to document wildlife along roadways (Road Watch in the Pass) to help reduce wildlife-highway conflicts – on which she has presented a poster and presentation at several ICOETs in the past. She has many years of field research experience working with a variety of taxa and over ten years of experience in natural resource research, conservation, and outreach efforts for various organizations and agencies. For several years, she has coordinated outreach efforts with the People's Way Partnership, a unique partnering of Defenders of Wildlife, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and Western Transportation Institute of Montana State University (www.peopleswaywildlifecrossings.org).

Whisper Camel-Means is an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), currently working as a Wildlife Biologist for CSKT Wildlife Management Program. Her main focus has included US 93 pre-construction consultation, monitoring wildlife mitigation effectiveness (US 93 post-construction), and wetland mitigation projects. She received her BS in Wildlife Biology (2003) from the University of Montana and her MS in Fish and Wildlife Management (2007) from Montana State University. Her MS was part of US 93 pre-construction wildlife monitoring efforts, focusing on which land cover variables were common in locations where deer were crossing and getting hit on the highway. She was also involved in other aspects of pre-construction wildlife monitoring headed by Western Transportation Institute. Whisper is an active member of The Wildlife Society (TWS) on a national and state level. During 2009 she was accepted in and completed work for the TWS Leadership Institute, elected president of the Montana Chapter of TWS in February 2010, and in 2011 she received certification as a Certified Wildlife Biologist. She is past Chair of the Flathead Reservation Fish and Wildlife Board. Other club affiliations include the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society and past membership in the Society of Conservation Biologists.

Marcel Huijser received his M.S. in population ecology (1992) and his Ph.D. in road ecology (2000) at Wageningen University in Wageningen, The Netherlands. He studied plant-herbivore interactions in wetlands for the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management (1992-1995), hedgehog traffic victims and mitigation strategies in an anthropogenic landscape for the Dutch Society for the Study and Conservation of Mammals (1995-1999), and multifunctional land use issues on agricultural lands for the Research Institute for Animal Husbandry at Wageningen University and Research Centre (1999-2002). Over the last decade Marcel has worked on wildlife-transportation issues for the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University (2002-present).

Rob Ament, M.Sc., Road Ecology Program Manager, Western Transportation Institute – Montana State University. Rob has more than 30 years of experience in ecology, natural resource management, environmental policy and organizational development. At WTI, Rob leads our efforts to research, monitor and develop solutions to minimize the impacts of roads on the natural environment – wildlife, aquatics, vegetation and technology. He is the principal investigator of several research projects and oversees 10 staff in four offices in western North America that are working on 20 active research projects. He serves on the Steering Committee for the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation, is a member of the Stakeholders Advisory Group for the Western Governors' Association's Wildlife Corridor Initiative, and in 2013 served as a judge to select FHWA's Environmental Excellence Awards.

Outreach matters! Highway wildlife mitigation outreach activities on the Flathead Indian Reservation and surrounding areas, Montana

Kylie Paul¹, Whisper Camel-Mean^{1,2}, Marcel Huijser^{1,3}, Rob Ament^{1,3}

1. People's Way Partnership; 2. Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; 3. Western Transportation Institute-Montana State University

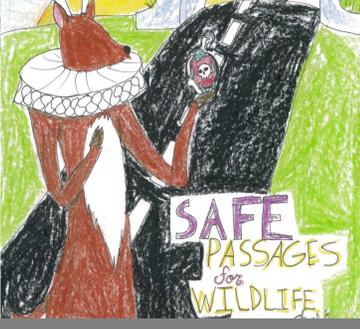
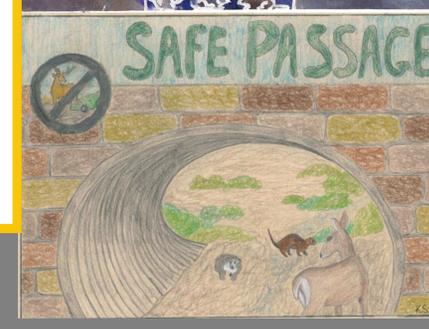
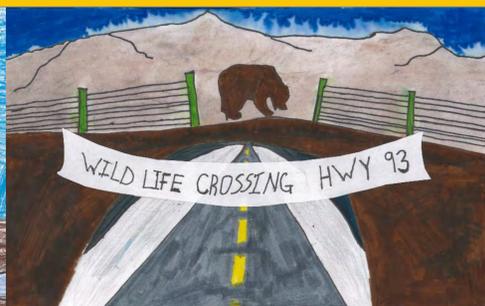
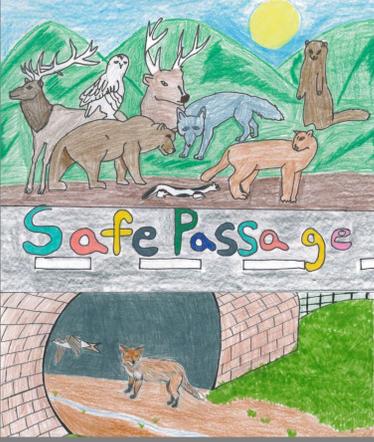
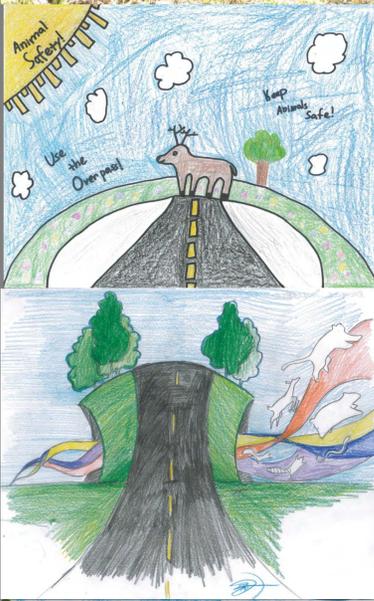


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I REALLY LOVE ANIMALS AND MY TRIBE HAS SONGS FOR EACH OF THEM. THERE'S ONE FOR HOW A SKUNK WALKS, OVER CROSSING AND UNDER CROSSING I THINK THAT THEY'RE A VERY GOOD IDEA BECAUSE LESS ANIMALS DIE FOR NO REASON.



All images courtesy of CSKT, MDT, and WTI-MSU
Art contest funded by:

DENNIS & PHYLLIS WASHINGTON FOUNDATION

www.peopleswaywildlifecrossings.org
www.facebook.com/US93PeoplesWay