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New Wildlife Crossing Fund Will Raise \$500 Million to Combat the Biodiversity and Climate Crisis By Accelerating the Building of Wildlife Crossings Across the World

LOS ANGELES (February 15, 2023) — The National Wildlife Federation’s #SaveLACougars campaign and an expert set of committed partners are celebrating the launch of The [Wildlife Crossing Fund](#) – a campaign that aims to accelerate the building of wildlife crossings across California, the United States, and the world and reconnect lands for our collective future. The fund has set a fundraising goal of a half a billion dollars from private philanthropy to leverage with public dollars and advance the building of these critical infrastructure projects – launching an extraordinary public private partnership.

The announcement was made at the “P-22 Celebration of Life” event on Saturday, February 4 at the Greek Theater in Los Angeles, with founding partner members and a video by State of California Governor Gavin Newsom. Images of the special on-stage moment and an inspirational video on the unprecedented conservation effort can be [found here](#).

Recognizing the growing momentum and widespread support for the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing being built outside of Los Angeles, Beth Pratt of the National Wildlife Federation led the effort to create this new fund. As one of its founding partners, the Annenberg Foundation has provided a conservation challenge grant that invites donors everywhere to support the effort. In addition to the National Wildlife Federation, founding partners behind the movement include the California Natural Resources Agency, Dayna Bochco, and ARC: Animal Road Crossings.

“This is a landmark day for conservation all across the world. With the launch of The Wildlife Crossing Fund the founding partners are making clear: We need to reconnect the ecosystems that have been shattered, disrupted, and disconnected,” said Wallis Annenberg, Chairman, President and CEO of the Annenberg Foundation. “Wildlife crossings are a simple but profound idea – a patch of grass where there was once a patch of asphalt; a walkway where there was once only roadway. But the effect is transformative, and it is nothing short of environmental rejuvenation. I am especially proud that the Annenberg Foundation could help to promote this idea. After all, the very best philanthropy is one that inspires and unites and galvanizes – because that means its effects will be magnified a thousandfold.”

The Wildlife Crossing Fund is part of the legacy that the beloved P-22 mountain lion leaves behind. His journey across multiple 10-lane freeways and the decade he spent in Griffith Park was miraculous. Mountain lions require upward of 100 square miles of habitat to access prey, shelter, and mates. Hemmed in by freeways and urban sprawl on all sides, P-22 endured an isolated existence on just nine square miles. His whole life, he suffered the consequences of trying to survive in unconnected space, right to his final days when being hit by a car led to his tragic end.

“Not on my watch – is what I vowed over a decade ago when I learned about the threat of extinction to the Los Angeles area mountain lion population. And through an inspiring public private partnership, with leaders like Governor Newsom and Wallis Annenberg, we made the impossible happen – building the world’s largest wildlife crossing over one of the busiest freeways in the country,” said Beth Pratt, California Regional Executive Director for the National Wildlife Federation. “I am honored to

lead this fund with the founding partners so we can have more of an impact. There are so many wildlife crossing projects in California and beyond that could break ground tomorrow – we just need the funding. I am committed to raising a half a billion dollars to help make these projects and more happen. Again, I vow, not on my watch – these crossings are real and practical solutions that will give a future to wildlife. Together, we can make a true difference.”

“The Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing is a world-class example of what’s possible when philanthropic organizations, conservation leaders, and the public sector work together for solutions to the wildlife crisis. This new fund will ensure that the L.A. crossing is not a one-off project, but rather a success that we replicate again and again to protect people and wildlife alike, reconnect fragmented ecosystems, and ensure wildlife like P-22 can safely traverse our built landscapes,” said Collin O’Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. “We are proud to join with the Annenberg Foundation and the State of California to launch this important fund that will catalyze solutions across the continent to ensure people and wildlife thrive together.”

“P-22 inspired and mobilized people around the world to protect nature and wild animals. Now, his legacy will drive a growing movement to connect these animals across our roads and communities,” explained California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot. “In California, we’re all in on the inspirational partnership between philanthropy and government that the Wallis Annenberg Foundation has catalyzed. California is committing more than \$100 million to match philanthropic investment in the newly announced Crossing Fund. Working all together, we will show the world how people and nature can thrive together.”

Studies have shown that roadway infrastructure fractures and disrupts ecosystems, wreaking havoc on wildlife and creating hazards for drivers. The Wildlife Crossing Fund will allow for the creation of infrastructure and landscape connectivity projects across California, the United States and beyond for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity, the safety and welfare of communities – all while addressing climate change through adaptation and resilience.

Wildlife crossings also come with vast economic benefits. As the organization [ARC: Animal Road Crossings](#) published in a recent report, “every year in the United States, there are 1-2 million wildlife-vehicle collisions that cause 200 human fatalities, 26,000 injuries, and cost \$9.7 billion.” The costs of collisions to society often outweigh the costs of building wildlife crossing structures. Placing structures along road segments with as few as 5.1 deer collisions per mile per year creates net benefits.” As green infrastructure projects, wildlife crossings also offer economic stimulus that provides jobs and other benefits to the economy. Caltrans estimates that in transportation, for every \$1 billion spent, 13,000 jobs are created, and a Florida DOT study found that the state’s transportation projects were estimated to yield an average \$4 of benefits for every \$1 invested.

“To honor P22’s legacy, to reconnect people and nature, we need to hold fast to what he taught us. As much as we need science, innovation, and community engagement, the most important thing we can do is to lead with landscape. A protected landscape is a connected landscape, and good design is done in the spirit of coexistence and kinship for the benefit of wildlife and people,” said Nina-Marie Lister, ARC Solutions Partner, Professor of Urban Planning and Director of the Ecological Design Lab at Toronto Metropolitan University, and Visiting Professor of Landscape Architecture, Harvard University, Graduate School of Design. “ARC is excited to work with the State of California because it has shown it can lead the way. We are ready to go forward and go global, so we can create a system of connected and protected landscapes, together.”

“We know about the importance of connected landscapes from science, but P-22 and his extraordinary experience in Los Angeles connected our hearts and minds – and it is from our hearts that we are moved to create and change the world for the better,” said Jeremy Guth, ARC Solutions Co-Founder and Steering Committee and Trustee of the Woodcock Foundation. “At Animal Road Crossings, we are dedicated to best practices and innovation for the next generation of wildlife crossings, including the extraordinary crossing that is being constructed in Los Angeles. Now, as one of the founding partners of the Wildlife Crossing Fund – we are excited to be part of the movement that will build a far brighter future for both people and nature.”

The Wildlife Crossing Fund follows a successful private-public partnership and decade-long effort that resulted in the building of the world's largest crossing in Los Angeles. The Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing broke ground in April 2022, it will reconnect an integral wildlife corridor in California's Santa Monica Mountains over 10 lanes of highway, helping to save a near-extinct local population of mountain lions. Slated for completion in 2025, the monumental structure will serve as a global model for urban conservation.

The [National Wildlife Federation](#) is America's largest conservation organization with over 6 million supporters nationwide, uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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