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CROSSING**
FUND

Reconnecting Lands For Our Collective Future

Contacts:

Nadia Gonzalez, National Wildlife Federation at 310-409-8931 and nadia@puentestrategies.com

Kirsten Macintyre, California Natural Resources Agency at 916-502-4946 and kirsten.macintyre@resources.ca.gov

**Road Trip Will Explore Connectivity Across California and Unveil
“California Wildlife Reconnected” Campaign to Reconnect Wildlife and Protect Biodiversity**

*In partnership with California Governor Gavin Newsom, and at a press conference led by California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot on **Wednesday, August 21st at 9:00 a.m. PDT** – the team will share details of a new public-private partnership initiative to build more wildlife crossings.*

LOS ANGELES (August 19, 2024) — The National Wildlife Federation’s [#SaveLACougars Campaign](#), [Big Cat Voices](#), [ARC Solutions](#), and [The Wildlife Crossing Fund](#) are officially on the road again for stage two of the [Wildlife Crossings Across America](#) tour – a series of road trips that will explore and generate awareness for the need to build more wildlife crossings and connectivity projects in California, across the United States, and beyond.

Stage two of the road trip will focus on California, cover almost 2,000 miles, and feature over two dozen stops across the state. It all began this afternoon, August 19th, at the California and Nevada border with a visit to a proposed wildlife crossing along Highway 395 near Honey Lake. Everyone is invited to follow the team and learn about each connectivity project on the route by visiting the dedicated website at WildlifeCrossingFund.org/RoadTrip.

Central to the goal of the trip is the official launch of *California Wildlife Reconnected*. The Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing, which broke ground on Earth Day in 2022, has proven the transformative power of public-private partnerships in bringing connectivity infrastructure projects to fruition. *California Wildlife Reconnected*, a partnership originated by Governor Gavin Newsom, the California Natural Resources Agency, Caltrans, The Wildlife Crossing Fund, and the National Wildlife Federation, seeks to scale this successful collaborative model to build more wildlife crossings and improve wildlife movement across the state.

"California's unmatched natural beauty and biodiversity are at the heart of who we are as a state. With the launch of *California Wildlife Reconnected*, we're taking bold steps to bridge the gaps that have long divided our landscapes," said Governor Newsom. "Wildlife crossings are more than just infrastructure; they are essential to our 30x30 commitment to conserve 30 percent of our lands and coastal waters by 2030. These crossings serve as vital lifelines, connecting people to nature, and wildlife to its natural habitat – ensuring that our national treasures thrive for generations to come."

"Wildlife crossings are a great win-win for people and nature," said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. "They reduce traffic accidents and enable animals to move safely across their habitat. As climate change stresses our ecosystems, habitat connectivity has never been more important. In California, we're planning and building more crossings

fueled by investments from our Governor, Legislature, and philanthropic leaders. This bold new initiative promises to build momentum to build more crossings in months and years to come. There's no time to waste."

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Director Tony Tavares said, "Caltrans understands the delicate balance that must be struck between the movement of people and goods throughout our vast state and the movement of all fish and wildlife. The state highway connects us to various natural phenomena, such as the Sierra Nevada, the high desert, the coastal redwoods, and the Pacific Ocean. However, it can also create barriers for native species that live within those same places. That's why we are committed to researching, restoring, and renovating passageways throughout the state. We have already delivered more than 20 wildlife under-crossings, and we are investing in over-structures that assist larger animal populations. Caltrans engineers, planners, and scientists are working together every day to provide a safer, more equitable, and more sustainable transportation system for all animals that call California home."

In addition to the originating partners, the founding advisory team for *California Wildlife Reconnected* includes a group of expert NGO's and practitioners in the field of connectivity: ARC Solutions, The Nature Conservancy, Planning and Conservation League, Rock Design Associates, Wildlife Conservation Network, Wildlands Network, Fearless Advocacy, and Pathways for Wildlife. The California Department of Natural Resources will host at their headquarters the first gathering of *California Wildlife Reconnected* on March 21, 2025, which will advance the state's connectivity efforts by fostering collaboration with the many organizations, agencies, communities and people undertaking the work.

The Wildlife Crossing Fund, a non-profit dedicated to raising half a billion dollars from private philanthropy for wildlife crossings and connectivity projects, has committed to securing the financial support for *California Wildlife Connected* needed to leverage public conservation dollars to catalyze implementation of projects. Philanthropist Wallis Annenberg has already pledged a \$10 million-dollar matching grant to The Wildlife Crossing Fund, and \$2.2 million dollars have already been raised toward the match from Joan Randall, the Donald Slavik Family Foundation, and the Wildlife Conservation Network.

"Through our California Wildlife Program, we at the Wildlife Conservation Network are energized to partner with The Wildlife Crossing Fund to address critical wildlife connectivity challenges across the state, said Neal Sharma, Senior Manager at the Wildlife Conservation Network. "This is just the beginning of a comprehensive effort to leverage substantial funding, drive policy improvements, and strengthen public-private collaborations to protect California's biodiversity and ensure the safe passage of wildlife for generations to come. To help launch this partnership, the Wildlife Conservation Network has pledged \$1 million to the Wildlife Crossing Fund, which will be further leveraged by additional investments from WCN's California Wildlife Program and other funding partners. Together, we're advancing proven and innovative solutions to reconnect habitats and safeguard the future of wildlife."

"Roads are devastating to wildlife—it breaks my heart every time I see an animal killed by a vehicle. It's been the honor of a lifetime working to bring the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing to fruition, but how can I morally stop with one? We need to make the world safer for wildlife and I am committed to raising the needed funds to ensure more crossings happen rapidly," said Beth Pratt, California Regional Executive Director for the National Wildlife Federation and founder of The Wildlife Crossing Fund. "I cannot thank Wallis Annenberg and the Annenberg Foundation enough for sharing this vision, and pledging the first \$10 million match toward these important efforts. We can start funding projects tomorrow as soon as we meet the match—and we are calling on philanthropists to step up and help us bridge the \$7.8 million gap."

Pratt will lead the road trip team with returning experts including wildlife photojournalist and National Geographic Explorer Steve Winter, environmental journalist and author Sharon Guynup, and Renee Callahan and Marta Brocki of ARC (Animal Road Crossing Solutions). At each stop, the team will meet with local groups working on connectivity projects for wildlife, such as the imperiled monarch butterfly in Mariposa, a threatened mule deer migration route along Highway 395, and a roadway in the San Jose area where newts in the thousands are killed every year from vehicle traffic. One of the last stops of the road trip will be the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing. Now under construction in the city of Agoura Hills, the monumental

conservation structure is slated for completion in 2026. When completed, it will be the largest of its kind in the world and serve as a global model for urban wildlife conservation.

The first road trip in the Wildlife Crossings Across America series happened in September of 2023, where the team drove over 3,000 miles and featured the monumental Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing and connectivity projects in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, New Orleans, and Florida.

For more on the Wildlife Crossings Across America road trip, visit: WildlifeCrossingFund.org/RoadTrip. You can also experience real-time updates by following [Beth Pratt on Facebook](#) and her [Twitter Account](#).

Complete “Wildlife Crossings Across America” Road Trip Schedule

Date	Connectivity Project Location
Mon, August 19	U.S. Route 395, California and Nevada Border
Tues, August 20	Highway 50, Spooner Summit, Lake Tahoe Basin
Wed, August 21	Press Conference with Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot, Sacramento <hr/> Sonora Pass Yosemite Toad Crossing, Yosemite Valley
Thurs, August 22	Tioga Pass Toad Crossing, Sierra Nevada Mountains
Fri, August 23	Mariposa Creek Parkway Monarch Corridor, Mariposa Critter Creek Wildlife Station, Yokuts Valley State Route 152, Pacheco Pass US-101, San Benito County
Sat, August 24	Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve, Morgan Hill Highway 17, Lexington Reservoir Highway 17, Laurel Curve Highway 101, Gaviota Pass
Sun, August 25	State Route 118 Undercrossings US 101, Conejo Grade State Route 118, Alamos Canyon Interstate 15, Temecula
Mon, August 26	Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing, Agoura Hills Interstate 5, Tejon Pass Highway 58, Tehachapi
Tue, August 27	U.S. Route 395 Wildlife Crossing & Wildlife Crossing Workshop, Mammoth Lakes

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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