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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. Integrate conservation planning into transportation planning.**

- Transportation planners, at the state and MPO level, should locate and utilize existing landscape-level conservation plans in their own planning efforts.
- In those states that have yet to adopt a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, individuals should contact the state fish and game agency and state environmental protection agency to offer support for such a plan. Using conservation plan mapping, transportation officials and MPOs can plan future road and highway projects that avoid sensitive and protected areas.
- Use conservation plans to identify mitigation sites or banks in advance of project impacts.
- Provide adequate training on the incorporation of conservation planning to field and administrative staff, as well as transportation planners.
- Sponsor pre- and post-planning monitoring to determine the effectiveness of planning initiatives.
- Inform and involve the public through communication and outreach tools.

### **2. Use conservation banking in concert with large scale conservation plans to mitigate for unavoidable impacts of transportation.**

- Use conservation banking when avoiding and minimizing impacts is impossible and when consolidating mitigation is biologically preferable to onsite mitigation.
- Create a revolving fund from which transportation officials can make interest-free withdrawals to acquire land that can be banked for mitigation purposes. Money would be reimbursed to the fund from project funding.
- Use existing conservation plans to determine the most valuable lands for banking. These include statewide comprehensive wildlife conservation plans, regional conservation plans, endangered species recovery plans and critical habitat designations.
- Site conservation banks strategically, with a particular conservation objective in mind.
- When establishing conservation banking in your state, develop a statewide MOU among all resource and action agencies involved.

### **3. Coordinate with resource agencies early, substantively and continuously throughout transportation planning and project development.**

- Fund full-time employees at relevant agencies to work exclusively on environmental and cultural resource reviews for transportation projects.
- Establish Environmental Review Committees composed of high-level representatives from

each of the relevant federal and state agencies.

- Hold regular meetings of the Environmental Review Committees to discuss upcoming projects and identify potential conflicts and impacts.

#### **4. Build wildlife crossings where necessary to repair ecological damage and restore habitat connectivity.**

- Conduct habitat connectivity studies to determine where passageways are needed. Locate structures in existing migration routes.
- Retrofit existing roads with wildlife passageways. Consider the full range of options, from at-grade, non-structural approaches to land bridges.
- When planning, designing and building wildlife crossings, ensure the future viability of habitat on either side through acquisition or easements.
- Conduct post-construction monitoring on the effectiveness of passageways.
- Increase the use of signage to make motorists aware of wildlife in the area.
- Reduce speed limits in wildlife areas.

#### **5. Provide alternative transportation and maintain roads on public lands in a manner consistent with surrounding natural resources.**

- Practice context-sensitive solutions in roads and highways on public lands. Retrofit existing roads to reduce their intrusion on the landscape and increase habitat connectivity.
- Weigh the need for additional roads against the increased impact on natural resources.

- Increase public awareness of wildlife needs through reduced speed limits, signage and informational pull-outs.
- Reduce the need for individual motorized access to public lands by improving multi-modal infrastructure, such as bike paths, hiking trails and trams.

#### **6. Use only native species in right-of-way vegetation management on public lands.**

- Use only native species in roadside vegetation management.
- Develop and adopt integrated roadside vegetation management plans.
- Coordinate and compile vegetation inventories, classification systems, plans and implementation strategies for roadsides.
- Establish a statewide invasives clearinghouse to provide data, information and technical assistance to land and resource managers, action agencies, and developers.
- Provide additional training in removing invasive species and reestablishing native flora on rights-of-way.
- Develop educational programs and provide informational materials for the general public, landowners, government employees, and board members as part of a program for integrated roadside vegetation management.
- Sponsor pilot projects on the removal and prevention of roadside invasives, as well as native species restoration.
- Conduct research and monitoring of project sites for invasives.
- Reward managers and communities for exemplary efforts in the eradication of invasives and restoration of native species.