
UPDATES FROM THE TRANSPORTATION AND WILDLIFE FRONT

Patricia Cramer*, Independent Researcher, Logan, UT

Robert Hamlin, Independent Researcher, Logan, UT

Multiple western states are researching how to best mitigate roads for wildlife. We will present updates to ongoing projects in Montana and Utah and several other states. Lessons learned from these projects can be applied to Montana wildlife mitigation. Recent research is learning of mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, big horn sheep, moose and other wildlife preferences for types of crossing structures. The results show support for the idea that the length of wildlife crossing structures is the most important structural dimension for mule deer success. Results also show a willingness of white-tailed deer to use bridged structures that are under 5 feet high to pass beneath roads. Elk are the “problem child” of wildlife crossing structures in several places, and are very hesitant to use any structures. Pronghorn and bighorn sheep are successfully using wildlife overpasses in three states. The efficacy of the use of double cattle guards and wildlife guards to prevent wildlife access to roads is being

examined in a Utah study. Results will be presented on the effectiveness of these and electric mats at preventing wildlife access and will help elucidate which types of guards would work for various situations. Recommendations for future mitigation types and concerns will be presented at the end of our presentation.