



**SOUTHERN ROCKIES
ECOSYSTEM PROJECT**

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

July 2006 to June 2007



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

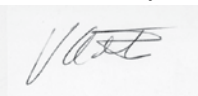
I never tire of being the President of the Board of the Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project. Each year brings new successes and ideas to protect wildlife and habitat connectivity in the Southern Rockies. I am honored to work every day with our remarkable staff and board. Together, we are privileged to devote our energies to protect the wildlife and ecological integrity in one of the most stunning and inspiring landscapes in the world.

Last year, we celebrated the initial appropriation for Colorado's first ever wildlife bridge near Vail. This year brought new and equally exciting successes. On a regional level, SREP worked with the State of Colorado as it prepared its 2035 Transportation Plan, providing the state with information on where priority landscape corridors intersect transportation corridors. SREP also provided the GIS and mapping support to Colorado's Forest Legacy, a coalition of environmental, sportsmen, and recreation organizations advocating for the full protection of Colorado's roadless forests. Although the issue of roadless protection is far from settled, Governor Ritter recently petitioned the US Forest Service to provide immediate protection to Colorado's roadless areas.

On the local level, SREP continues to provide assistance to its partners in the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance (SRCA) and the sportsmen community. For example, SREP partnered with EcoFlight to take politicians and media on a flight over Wolf Creek Pass, a critical wildlife corridor threatened by a massive 8,000 bed development. SREP also provided scientific information and mapping to numerous recreation and environmental organizations as they engaged in a number of recreation planning processes across the state.

Lastly, I cannot conclude this message without boasting about our citizen science program. We began this program in 2006 engaging Coloradans who live in and around the Vail Valley in monitoring wildlife use of a potential site for Colorado's first wildlife bridge across Interstate 70. The citizen science program not only provides high quality data, but also intimately engages citizens in connecting their community with land in a unique and enduring way.

The Southern Rocky Ecoregion is at a crossroads. Drawing people from around the world for its scenery, wildlife, and recreation, this region's natural assets are tragically also leading to its decline. Increased development and recreation are taking a toll on our habitat, streams, and even our atmosphere. The science-based work of SREP, which enables the effective advocacy of our partners, is needed more than ever to address the challenges facing our treasured mountains in the 21st century.



Vera Smith, President

MISSION

Founded in 1992, The Southern Rockies Ecosystem Project (SREP) is a nonprofit conservation science organization working to protect, restore and connect ecosystems in the Southern Rockies of Colorado, Wyoming and New Mexico.

SREP utilizes conservation science principles and geographic information system (GIS) mapping technology to identify and protect wildlands critical to the preservation of native biodiversity in the Southern Rockies.

SREP accomplishes its mission in three main program areas: 1) *Restoring Landscape Connections* - protecting and restoring connectivity for native species and their habitats; 2) *Public Lands Protection and Community Planning* - applying scientific research and data to assist community and public lands planning efforts and permanently protect wild places; 3) *Conservation Mapping* - providing GIS mapping services to local and regional conservation organizations to support their conservation efforts.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a Southern Rockies Ecoregion that is whole - a vast, connected landscape where native species thrive and natural ecological processes maintain a healthy balance. Such a holistic vision transcends political and human-made boundaries and addresses large landscapes on the ecosystem and ecoregional level. SREP realizes our vision of connecting networks of land by connecting networks of people.

LINKING COLORADO'S LANDSCAPES SOLUTIONS FOR WILDLIFE

In 2006, Linking Colorado's Landscapes – a project to identify, prioritize, and assess wildlife movement linkages throughout Colorado – was designated an Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA - www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/ecosystems/co06.htm). Linking Colorado's Landscapes was the result of a collaborative effort between SREP, FHWA, and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The project was designed to guide CDOT and other transportation organizations in the creation of more wildlife-friendly transportation networks.

The key to realizing the vision for a connected landscape lies in implementation - a multi-step process that involves flagging linkage areas early in the transportation planning process; coordinating with the appropriate regional transportation planning units to highlight the purpose and need for mitigation measures; and empowering project-level designers and engineers with both an understanding of the issue as well as the possible remedies. Partnerships through all levels of the transportation agency as well as with state and federal wildlife and land management agencies, and counties, land trusts and other local organizations are essential for on-the-ground success. Following are several examples of how SREP has worked with these partners over the past year.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

While transportation projects occur at a local-scale, the seeds for each project are planted at the statewide scale in the Statewide Transportation Plan, which is renewed every five years. Integrating concerns regarding wildlife movement and animal-vehicle collisions in the statewide vision is the first step in ensuring that these concerns are adequately addressed at the transportation project level. To assist this process, SREP overlaid the statewide linkage assessment data with the transportation corridors to determine where these concerns should be highlighted in the 2035 Statewide Transportation Plan. Based on this overlay, SREP submitted comments and attended meetings of the Transportation Planning Regions to ensure that the vision statements for each transportation corridor acknowledge wildlife concerns, where relevant. While inclusion of these concerns does not guarantee funding for mitigation measures, early consideration of habitat connectivity needs for wildlife can help to streamline wildlife crossings and highway improvement projects, before project designs are complete.

HIGHWAY 550, MONTROSE-RIDGWAY WILDLIFE LINKAGE

This stretch of Highway 550 between Montrose and Ridgway was identified in Linking Colorado's Landscapes as a high priority wildlife linkage for elk, mule deer and mountain lion. The Linkage Assessment identified the existing wildlife fencing along eight miles of highway as problematic for both wildlife movement and driver safety. This long stretch of fencing combined with a lack of adequate structures has created a substantial barrier to successful wildlife crossings over this section of roadway. Yet holes in the fencing and gaps at roadway access points have the undesired effect of allowing animals to enter the highway right-of-way where they can become trapped by the fencing.

To begin addressing these needs and opportunities, SREP, in collaboration with Ouray County, the San Juan Corridors Coalition (a local conservation organization), Ridgway State Park, the City of Ouray, the Town of Ridgway, the Division of Wildlife, and CDOT have submitted a proposal to the Gunnison Valley Transportation Planning Region for a Transportation Enhancement grant to reduce animal-vehicle collisions along this stretch of roadway. The proposal calls for closing the existing one-way deer gates, which are too small for elk use and malfunctioning due to disrepair, and replacing them with escape ramps, as well as tying in the fence ends to landscape features to discourage animals from entering the right-of-way at these locations.



AN ELK USING AN ESCAPE RAMP ON US 550 NEAR RIDGWAY, COLORADO.

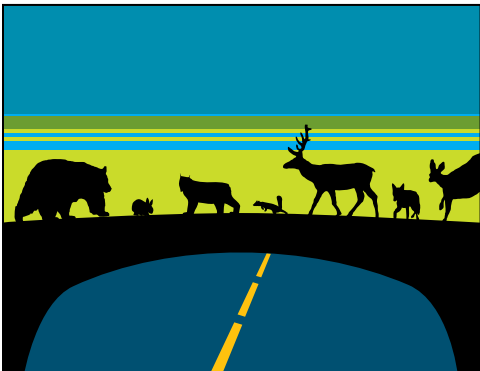
WILDLIFE BRIDGE AT WEST VAIL PASS

Vail Pass is a critical landscape-scale wildlife linkage that connects Tennessee Pass and the Holy Cross Wilderness to the Eagles Nest Wilderness area and surrounding environs. This linkage serves as one of the last remaining forested connections for wildlife moving north-south through the heart of the Rocky Mountains. Heavily developed resort areas, high levels of recreational use, and streams of passenger and freight traffic severely constrict wildlife movement.

A wildlife bridge at West Vail Pass will reconnect critical habitat and provide safe passage for a diversity of species that utilize the Vail Pass landscape for forage, reproduction, and travel.

On Monday, March 12th, 2007 CDOT awarded the initial Scope of Work for the wildlife bridge to Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU). FHU has assembled a team of biologists and structural engineers to site and design the wildlife overpass on West Vail Pass. Some of the major tasks that the FHU team will be considering during the project will be the needs of target species, known wildlife movement patterns (tracking studies and empirical evidence), surrounding vegetation, land ownership, topographic restrictions, compatibility with I-70, and compatibility with recreational resources. FHU is dedicated to seeing this ground-breaking project completed in a way that will benefit wildlife habitat connectivity while improving safety in the corridor.

CDOT has requested an additional \$1 million dollars for the wildlife bridge in FY 2007 from the Federal Highway Administration.



CITIZEN SCIENCE WILDLIFE MONITORING

The Citizen Science Wildlife Monitoring program began in Summer 2006 as a partnership between the Denver Zoo, the Gore Range Natural Science School and SREP. The program engages citizens at the local level to collect data on wildlife activity along roadways where wildlife crossings are planned. In the first year of the program, trained Citizen Scientists have used motion-triggered cameras to capture over 1,200 photographs of elk, deer, black bear, snowshoe hare, pine marten, porcupine, coyote, red fox, gray fox, rodents, and humans during the summer, fall and winter seasons.



MULE DEER "CAUGHT" ON FILM USING A SPAN BRIDGE ON I-70 THROUGH THE CITIZEN SCIENCE WILDLIFE MONITORING PROGRAM.

In the second year of the program we have doubled our capacity. Citizen Scientists are collecting data from 50 cameras on the east and west sides of Vail Pass and on Shrine Pass. Images downloaded from cameras are posted on the web so that volunteers and other interested parties can view the species caught on film at each of the camera stations. Citizen Scientists also receive a monthly email newsletter, keeping them informed of new data that is being collected, and opportunities for additional trainings or monitoring work.

Preliminary data analysis indicates where each species is most active, and suggests patterns of activity relative to elevation, human activity, and the presence of existing span bridges that act as wildlife crossings under the interstate. Paige Bonaker, a graduate student from the University of Montana assisted with the development of the program while conducting her master's research, which is comparing the efficacy of different monitoring techniques. This cost-benefit analysis of monitoring methods will help SREP and CDOT conduct more efficient monitoring programs at Vail Pass and other locations around the state. SREP's long-term goal is to expand the Citizen Science model to high priority wildlife linkages throughout Colorado.

COLORADO WILDLIFE ON THE MOVE

The Colorado Wildlife on the Move education effort was spearheaded by SREP in November 2004 to increase awareness among motorists about how to avoid dangerous and costly (average of \$2,800 per car-deer collision) collisions with wildlife. In 2006 and 2007, SREP has expanded outreach avenues, built upon existing partnerships to include humane societies, and increased the effectiveness of the program through engaging at local high schools with soon-to-be drivers.

The success of this project is largely due to our participating companies, agencies, and organizations working as distribution centers for the educational Safety Tip Sheets. Visitor centers, state patrol offices, insurance offices, car rental offices, forest service and national park visitor centers, department of transportation offices, and many others have been distributing the Safety Tip Sheets and displaying the Colorado Wildlife on the Move poster in their lobbies and welcome centers.

SREP and our campaign partners hold ongoing media events and press releases in the fall and summer months, times that have the highest incidences of animal-vehicle collisions. To date, two press events have been held and six press releases have been distributed reaching more than 5 million people. In conjunction with these press events, we have distributed 1,000 posters and almost 85,000 tip sheets.

Our Campaign Partners: Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Colorado State Patrol, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association, and AAA. Our Supporters: Animal Assistance Foundation and Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation.

DRIVE SAFELY STAY ALERT

31,824 animal-vehicle collisions were reported in Colorado's roads from 2002 to 2007-1.

10 deer	27 moose
2,500 elk	18 horses
200 bear	15 fox
101 cottontail	7 bobcat
500 coyote	1 badger
100 sheep	4 porcupine
40 snake	1 goat
2 grouse	11 kangaroo
4 weasel	11 prong
300000+ birds	11 wolf
50 mountain lion	40 chipmunk
27 skunk	1000+ chipmunk

29 people were killed

2,227 sustained injuries

26,200+ reported property damage

\$2,800 is the average cost per-vehicle accident for deer, 1-1/2 times for elk, and 2-1/2 times for moose.

COLORADO WILDLIFE ON THE MOVE

DRIVER SAFETY TIPS

- Stay alert especially at dawn and dusk
- Slow down to detect your reaction time
- Slow down and watch for animals during weather
- Listen and think before you hit any animal
- Bleed. Don't bleed.
- Be slower for animals in change direction
- Don't drink
- Don't drink while driving and don't drink and drive
- Don't drink and drive

AT NIGHT:

- Watch and think. Stop in your headlights
- Use slow flashes to improve visibility
- Don't drink or drink and drive
- Don't drink and drive

CALL COLORADO WILDLIFE ON THE MOVE AT 1-877-455-2833 FOR MORE INFORMATION

CDOT, CSF, CFW, AAA, RMI, AAFC, EAFC, SREP

CONSERVATION MAPPING

SREP continues to provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and scientific support to the member groups of the Southern Rockies Conservation Alliance (SRCA). Conservation mapping has been applied to all the primary SRCA campaign priorities including Wilderness Protection, Biodiversity Conservation, Responsible Recreation, Forest Protection, and Fire Management. GIS and conservation mapping has proved itself useful for planning, as a visualization tool, as well as understanding an ever increasingly complex land usage in the Southern Rockies. 2006 has been a record year with over 500 maps produced for SRCA member groups.



Much of 2006 was spent supporting the conservation minded members of the Colorado Roadless Area Task Force. Many maps were produced displaying the wildlife habitat, threats, and other important qualities of Colorado's roadless areas. These efforts help forge alliances between more conservation minded organizations and sportsman groups in their quest to protect the last wild places from encroachment from Oil & Gas, Mining, recreation and other threats.

SREP continues to push the boundaries of technology by updating our ArcIMS Map Server to include over 200 layers of information including land ownership, species habitat, links to GPS photo locations, and an address finder. SREP also updates the www.roadless.net website dedicated to the roadless areas of Colorado and understanding their values. SREP has also extended its GIS services to other progressive non-profits by offering discounted map making, printing, and ArcIMS hosting.

The future of GIS is exciting with SRCA deciding to consolidate the GIS services in SREP's GIS department. SREP is expecting to hire another GIS Specialist in 2007 due to such high demand!

SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS

In August 2006, SREP coordinated with EcoFlight – an Aspen-based non-profit that provides aircraft to increase environmental awareness – to take Colorado political leaders and members of the media on a flight over Wolf Creek Pass, the site of a proposed major resort development. Wolf Creek Pass has been identified as high priority linkage connecting two large wilderness areas, and is particularly important for the federally threatened and state endangered Canada lynx, recently reintroduced to Colorado in the adjacent Weminuche Wilderness. The proposed Village at Wolf Creek would destroy 287.5 acres of habitat within the linkage area, and would bring substantial increases in traffic volumes on Highway 160, creating a substantial threat to wildlife attempting to cross the highway to access habitat on the other side.

The flight provided an aerial view and a new perspective of the ecological consequences of such a proposal to Senator Jim Isgar (D-Hesperus) and an aide to U.S. Representative John Salazar. Articles were published in the Durango Herald, the Pagosa Springs Sun, and the Valley Courier (Alamosa), with radio coverage on KSUT.

SREP is also working with the San Juan Corridors Coalition (SJCC) (see page 5) to allow safe passage for wildlife across US 550. This area is a high priority wildlife linkage and has been fully assessed by SREP scientists for potential wildlife crossing mitigation measures. SREP will continue to work with SJCC, CDOT, and the Division of Wildlife to reduce animal-vehicle collisions and protect this critical wildlife linkage.



AN AERIAL VIEW OF WOLF CREEK PASS IN THE SAN JUANS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE

ITEM	AMOUNT
Individual	\$8,305
Conference-event	\$3,837
Corporate	\$5,975
GIS Services	\$1,428
Grants - corporate	\$6,082
Grants - government	\$10,000
Grants - foundations	\$211,537
Grants - non-profit orgs.	\$1,500
Interest Income	\$123
Other	\$527
TOTAL	\$249,314.00

EXPENSES

ITEM	AMOUNT
Conference-event	\$800
Contract Labor	\$13,746
Dues and Subscriptions	\$332
Insurance	\$1,832
Licenses and Permits	\$800
Meals & Entertainment	\$721
Postage and Delivery	\$1,488
Printing and Reproduction	\$13,877
Rent & Utilities	\$14,255
Service Charges	\$17
Supplies	\$6,420
Telephone/Internet	\$2,928
Travel	\$10,615
Wages	\$175,902
Other	\$294
TOTAL	\$244,027.00



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

DONORS

CORPORATE

Alpine Bank
Bass Pro Shops
Carter & Burgess
Eagle Valley Realty, LLC.
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Frontier Airlines
Felsburg, Holt and Ullevig
Grappa Fine Wines & Spirits
New Belgium Brewing Company
PBS&J
Smartwool
Wells Fargo
Wildlife Specialties, L.L.C.

FOUNDATIONS

Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado
Animal Assistance Foundation
Aveda
Denver Zoo
Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation
Educational Foundation of America
Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation
Glenwood Springs High School and El Pomar Foundation
Lois Webster Fund - Denver Audubon Society
National Forest Foundation
New-Land Foundation
Norcross Wildlife Foundation
Orton Family Foundation
Patagonia
Prentice Foundation
R.H. Crossland Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Warrington Foundation
Wildlife Conservation Society
Winslow Foundation
Wolcott Family Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation

GOVERNMENT

Colorado Division of Wildlife
Federal Highway Administration

IN-KIND

Evan Cantor
David Sparks, DAS
Denver Zoo
Gore Range Natural Science School
Wilderness Workshop

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

DONORS

INDIVIDUAL

Alice J. Shane
Amelia Whiting
Big Loft Media, Inc
Blue Horse Gallery
Brendan Watt
Carol Busch
Cassandra Gobrecht
Chris Pague
Christian Crosby
Collette & Cedrik Zemitis
Connor Bailey
Corry Westbrook
Dave Rich
David A. Kumpe
David Adamson, Ecobuild
David Armstrong
David Crumpacker
David Rose
David Torgeson
David Welch
David Wicks
Diana Cecala
Dorothy Pearson
Eileen Caryl
Erick J. Aune
Erin J Flanigan
Harold and Ingrid Becher
Harry Trickey
Heather L. McGregor
INJOY Productions
Jeffery Martin
Joanne Amter Roll
Joanne DiGiorgio
John and Carol Stansfield
Julia Kintsch
Kathryn Heet
Kelly Liken
Kim Vacariu
Kirk Cunningham
Kristi Sweeney
Kurt Kunkle
Laura Moore
Lawrence Kunkle
Linda Garvey
Linda Hess Levy
Lorraine & Dick Yeatts
Lynne Hull
Mandy Whorton
Mara DiGiorgio
Margaret Porter
Mark DiGiorgio
Martha and Peter Polson
Michele Mukatis
Michelle Zimmerman
Monique DiGiorgio
Nada Culver
Nola Chow
Norma Jean Broten
Oran and Paula Palmateer
Peggy Schneider
Peter Mackechnie
Raya DiGiorgio
Richard Grossman
Rick Whipple
Rocky Smith
Ron Mitchell
Ronni Egan
Samuel L. Sorkin
Sara Michl
Sarah L. Oakes
Sarah Seggerman
Sora DiGiorgio Pearson
Steve Welter
Stuart Halpern
Sudy Kudva
Susan Thomas
Tim Hogan
Trish White
United Title Company
Vera A. Smith
Walter or Eileen Kintsch
Walter Taylor
Willie Gibson



PRESENTATIONS

Forum: Federal Highway Administration; Lakewood CO
Title: Linking Colorado's Landscapes; June 06

Spine of the Continent meeting, Wildlands Project; Albuquerque, NM; Wildlife Bridge at West Vail Pass; September 06

Ouray County's Future; Ridgway, CO; Incorporating Conservation Measures into Transportation Planning; September 06

Regional Planning and Environmental Managers Workshop (CDOT); Fort Collins, CO; Linking Colorado's Landscapes - Phase II Linkage Assessments; October 06

Colorado Chapter of the Wildlife Society; Glenwood Springs, CO; Citizen Science Wildlife Monitoring; January 07

Aspen Center for Environmental Studies; Aspen, CO; Citizen Science Wildlife Monitoring at Vail Pass; January 07

Dos Gringos (local public forum); Carbondale CO; Citizen Science Wildlife Monitoring at Vail Pass; January 07

Transportation and Environment Resource Council; EPA, Denver CO; Linking Colorado's Landscapes: an Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative; February 07

Road Ecology Workshop; Bozeman, MT; Linking Connectivity Planning to Highway Mitigation in CO; March 07

American Zoo Association Western Regional Meeting; Denver, CO; Citizen Science Wildlife Monitoring; March 07

FHWA Federal Lands Center; Lakewood CO; Linking Colorado's Landscapes: an Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative; April 07

USFWS Green Infrastructure; Lakewood CO; Taking a Green Infrastructure Approach: Connectivity in the Southern Rockies; April 07

Spine of the Continent Workshop, Wildlands Project; Phoenix, AZ; SREP: Ecoregional Priorities; April 07

Edge Treatment Workshop: Protected Public Lands & Urban Encroachment; Chandler, AZ; Maintaining Ecological Sustainability in Public Land Management; April 07

Rocky Mountain Chapter of National Association of Environmental Professionals; Denver, CO; Habitat Linkage, West Vail Pass; April 07

International Conference on Ecology and Transportation; Little Rock, AK; Linking Statewide Connectivity Planning to Highway Mitigation; May 07

Society for Conservation Biology - North America Section
Little Rock, AK; Road Ecology in the Southern Rockies - Science, Outreach and Policy; May 07

Rural Transportation Forum; Durango, CO; Wildlife Crossings and Animal Vehicle Collisions; May 07

BOARD OF DIRECTORS STAFF

ORGANIZATIONS ARE FOR
IDENTIFICATION ONLY

Vera Smith, President
The Wilderness Society
Denver, Colorado

Jerry Powell, Secretary
Wildlife Specialties, L.L.C.
Lyons, Colorado

Rick Whipple, Treasurer
Whipple, Wood, and Associates
Denver, Colorado

Eric Aune
La Plata County
Aztec, New Mexico

Nada Culver
The Wilderness Society
Denver, Colorado

Ronni Egan
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Durango, Colorado

Willie Gibson
Evergreen Photo Alliance
Evergreen, Colorado

Kurt Kunkle
CEC
Denver, Colorado

Chris Pague
The Nature Conservancy
Boulder, Colorado

Scott Schlosser
Eagle Valley Realty
Eagle, Colorado

Trish White
Defenders of Wildlife
Washington, D.C.

Kim Vacariu
Wildlands Project
Portal, AZ

Michelle Zimmerman
Executive Director

Monique DiGiorgio
Director of Development and
Communications

Julia Kintsch
Program Director

Connor Bailey
GIS Director

SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Gary P. Beauvais
Laramie, Wyoming

Kevin Crooks
Fort Collins, Colorado

Brian Miller, Ph.D.
Watrous, New Mexico

Doug Ouren
Fort Collins, Colorado

Jerry Powell
Lyons, Colorado

Barry Rhea
Mancos, Colorado

Michael Soulé
Hotchkiss, Colorado

Dave Theobald
Fort Collins, Colorado

INTERNS

Sandy Beazley
Paige Bonaker
Jason Bastien

VOLUNTEERS

Kristina Yamamoto
Suzanne Zimmerman
Citizen Scientists



ALL ARTWORK © 2007 EVAN CANTOR; PHOTOS: BACK COVER (JIM ROBERTSON, CDOT, SJCA); FRONT COVER (ICE LAKE IN THE SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS, MONIQUE DIGIORGIO); ALL OTHER PHOTOS © SREP.



1536 WYNKOOP STREET
SUITE 200
DENVER, CO 80202
720.946.9653

P.O. Box 2461
DURANGO, CO 81302
970.946.7509

WWW.RESTORETHEROCKIES.ORG
info@RestoreTheRockies.org