



**National Parks Conservation Association®**  
*Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®*

Grand Teton Field Office  
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December 18, 2009

Wyoming Department of Transportation  
 Attn: Delbert A. McOmie- Chief Engineer  
 5300 Bishop Blvd.  
 Cheyenne, WY 82009

Dear Mr. McOmie,

On behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), I am writing in support of the Wyoming Department of Transportation's application for a system of wildlife migration structures from the TIGER Fund's Discretionary Grant program. We particularly support the proposed overpasses, underpasses and fencing on US Highway 191 at the Trappers Point area that would directly affect wildlife migrations to and from Grand Teton National Park.

National Parks are shared valued resources that have been protected at the highest level of government for the betterment of our country and its citizens. For the past 90 years, the NPCA has represented national interests by working with local communities and with state and national government to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations. NPCA represents more than 325,000 members across the United States and speaks on behalf of their passion for our protected spaces.

NPCA believes that America's national parks and historical sites embody the American spirit and help define our nation's character. They are windows to our past, homes to some of our rarest plants and animal species, and places where every American can go to find inspiration, peace, and open space. Within our parks, wildlife are protected by habitat preservation and societal laws, but when animals migrate out of the national parks they are vulnerable to lost and/or fragmented habitat, obstructions to movement such as roads and fences, and completely or partially blocked migration corridors, due to expanding human development and infrastructure.

Grand Teton National Park's pronghorn herd represent the remnants of an iconic species in our nation's great Western parks, and are among few pronghorn populations that still migrate. These pronghorn are part of the ever-dwindling world-wide phenomenon of long distance migration. With only 300 hundred animals remaining in the Grand Teton herd of antelope, scientists say the Grand



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Teton pronghorn band is threatened. The key to preserving the park's pronghorn lies in protecting their historic migration corridor between the park and their winter range 100 miles to the south in the Upper Green River Basin. This region's oil and gas boom, and associated residential and commercial development have created lucrative employment opportunities for our Wyoming communities, but have also led to an increase in roads and fences that fragment and, in some places, eradicate pronghorn habitat. The bottle-neck area of Trappers Point requires the installation of wildlife crossing structures in order to reduce the impacts of increased traffic and wildlife/vehicle collisions on the migration pattern of pronghorn antelope.

Wildlife, including the pronghorn antelope, generates significant economic value for the communities around Grand Teton National Park, as well as elsewhere in Wyoming. Wyoming communities have the unique opportunity to guide their growth so that it safeguards wildlife, a unique, natural and economic resource. WYDOT's proposed wildlife migration system of underpasses, overpasses, and wildlife friendly fencing are a necessary and forward-thinking step in Wyoming's infrastructure development.

Without proactive policies and planning like WYDOT's proposed system of wildlife migration structures, American's risk losing to extinction wildlife species, like the Grand Teton pronghorn band, from America's great Western parks. Funding WYDOT's highway projects will help ensure that our children and grandchildren get to experience the thrill of observing one of the fastest animals on the face of the earth within the sanctuary of our National Park System. NPCA and our members eagerly anticipate the funding and installation of WYDOT's mitigation projects.

Mr. McOmie, we applaud your department's recognition of the importance of wildlife habitat connectivity and the effect that roadways have on these historically important migration patterns. The NPCA supports WYDOT's efforts to provide a system of wildlife migration structures throughout the state, particularly at Trappers Point, that would help safeguard the passage of the symbolic Grand Teton pronghorn band to and from the Park. Thank you for all of your hard work to preserve our state's magnificent wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Sharon Mader

Grand Teton Program Director