



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART A. APPLICATION INFORMATION

FY 2022-23

Grant Category (select only one)

Sustainable Communities (MPOs with sub-applicant, RTPAs, Transit Agencies, Cities, Counties, Tribes, other Public Transportation Planning Entities)

Strategic Partnerships (MPOs and RTPAs only)

Sustainable Communities Competitive
(11.47% Local Match requirement)

Strategic Partnerships (FHWA SPR Part I)
(20% Local Match requirement)

Sustainable Communities Competitive Technical
(11.47% Local Match requirement)

Strategic Partnerships Transit (FTA 5304)
(11.47% Local Match requirement)

Application Submittal Type (more than one may be selected)

New

Prior Phases

Re-Submittal

New Application

Continuation of a prior project.
If so, list the project title below.

Re-submittal from a prior grant cycle.

How many times has an application
been submitted for this project?

PART B. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title and Location

Project Title

Project Location
(City)

Project Location
(County)

PART D: Funding Information

1. Is the applicant proposing to meet the minimum local match requirement or an over-match? Use the Match Calculator to determine the appropriate match. [Match Calculator](#)

Minimum Local Match Over-Match

2. What is the source of Local Match funds being used?

(MPOs – Federal Toll Credits, PL, FTA 5303, and Sustainable Communities Formula cannot be used to match Sustainable Communities Competitive)

Local Transportation Funds Local Sales Tax Special Bond Measures

Other, specify:

Grant Funds Requested	Local Match (Cash)	Local Match (In-Kind)	Total Local Match	% Local Match	Total Project Cost



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART C. CONTACT INFORMATION*

	Applicant	Sub-Applicant	Sub-Applicant
Organization (legal name)			
Dept./Division			
Street Address			
City			
Zip Code			
Phone Number			
Executive Director Name			
Title			
Executive Director E-mail			
Contact Person Name			
Contact Person Title			
Contact Phone Number			
Contact E-mail			

*Use additional pages if necessary.

PART D. COMPLIANT HOUSING ELEMENT

City/County Applying for Sustainable Communities Grants	Yes	No
Does the City/County have a compliant Housing Element?		
Has the City/County submitted Annual Progress Report to the California Department of Housing and Community Development for calendar years 2019 and 2020?		



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PART E. LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

Use the following link to determine the appropriate legislative members in the Project area.

Search by address: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

State Senator(s)		Assembly Member(s)	
District	Name	District	Name

PART F. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

List all letters of support received for the proposed project.

Name/Agency	Name/Agency



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

GRANT APPLICATION SIGNATURE PAGE

If selected for funding, the information contained in this application will become the foundation of the contract with Caltrans.

To the best of my knowledge, all information contained in this application is true and correct. If awarded a grant with Caltrans, I agree that I will adhere to the program guidelines.

Applicant				
Authorized Official (Applicant)				
Print Full Name	Mark Watkins			
Title	Interim Executive Director			
Signature	Mark Watkins	Digitally signed by Mark Watkins Date: 2021.10.26 14:48:56 -07'00'	Date	10/26/21
Sub-Applicant(s)*				
Authorized Official (Sub-Applicant)				
Print Full Name	David Szymanski			
Title	Superintendent, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area			
Signature	DAVID SZYMANSKI	Digitally signed by DAVID SZYMANSKI Date: 2021.10.25 11:38:31 -07'00'	Date	10/25/21
Authorized Official (Sub-Applicant)				
Print Full Name				
Title				
Signature			Date	
Authorized Official (Sub-Applicant)				
Print Full Name				
Title				
Signature			Date	

*Use additional pages if necessary.



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

PART G. APPLICATION NARRATIVE

FY 2022-23

Project Information

Organization (legal name)	
Project Title	
Project Area Boundaries	

Application Narrative

1. Project Description (10 points)

Briefly summarize project in a clear and concise manner, including why the project is necessary, major deliverables, parties involved, and any connections to relevant local, regional, and/or State planning efforts. **Do not exceed the space provided.**



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

2A. Project Justification (15 points)

- Describe the problems or deficiencies the project is attempting to address, as well as how the project will address the identified problems or deficiencies
- List the ramifications of not funding this project
- Clearly define the existing issues surrounding the project (e.g., transportation issues, inadequate transit services, impacts of heavy trucking on local streets, air pollution, etc.)
- Competitive applications support the need for the project with empirical data
- Describe how this project addresses issues raised
- Define the public benefit
- Explain how the public was involved with identifying issues
- Describe the impact of not funding the project
- **Do not exceed the space provided**



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

2A. Project Justification (continued)



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

2B. Disadvantaged Communities Justification (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the project area or portions of the project area are defined as a disadvantaged community, including Native American Tribal Governments and rural communities
- Explain how the proposed project addresses the needs of the disadvantaged community
- Describe how disadvantaged communities will benefit from the proposed planning project
- The tools in Grant Application Guide, Appendix A, are intended to help applicants define a disadvantaged community. Cite data sources, the tools used, and include a comparison to the statewide thresholds that are established in each tool

2C. Disadvantaged Communities Engagement (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Describe how the proposed effort would engage disadvantaged communities, including Native American Tribal Governments and rural communities. Include specific outreach methods for involving disadvantaged communities
- Describe how disadvantaged communities will continue to be engaged during the next phases after the proposed planning project is complete, including project implementation. See Grant Application Guide, Appendix A, for best practices in community engagement



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION

NARRATIVE

3. Grant Specific Objectives (Total 35 points)

Integrate the following Grant Program Considerations (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 1.2) in the responses for 3A-G below, as applicable:

- Caltrans Strategic Management Plan
- California Transportation Plan (CTP)
- Modal Plans that Support the CTP
- Title VI and Environmental Justice
- Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure

3A. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal encourages local and regional multimodal transportation, housing and land use planning that furthers the region's RTP SCS (where applicable)
- Demonstrate how the proposed effort would coordinate transportation, housing, and land use planning components of the project to inform one another (i.e., regular coordination meetings between responsible entities, joint community meetings, letters of commitment from all relevant implementing agencies, etc.)
- Explain how the proposed effort would contribute to shifts in land use towards more sustainable and equitable communities, such as more affordable housing near transit or more compact regional development patterns (Reference Grant Application Guide, Chapter 2.2, for example project types)



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

3B. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points)- Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal contributes to the State's GHG reduction targets and advances transportation related GHG emission reduction project types/strategies (i.e., mode shift, demand management, travel cost, operational efficiency, accessibility, and coordination with future employment and residential land use, etc.)

3C. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal supports other State goals, including but not limited to:
 - State Planning Priorities (Government Code Section 65041.1)
 - Climate Adaptation Goals (Safeguarding California)
 - Goals and Best Practices cited in the 2017 RTP Guidelines, Appendices K and L



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

3D. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal encourages stakeholder involvement
 - List the stakeholders involved in the planning effort (e.g., first responders, community-based organizations, local housing and public health departments, transit agencies, and partners including State, federal, local agencies)
 - Explain how stakeholders will be involved throughout the project

3E. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal involves active community engagement
- Describe the specific public outreach methods/events that will be employed in the project
- Explain how public input will inform the project
- Describe how the effort will survey the public at the end of each outreach event to gauge effectiveness of these activities for the planning effort



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

3F. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal assists in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Objectives (Grant Application Guide, Chapter 1.2): Sustainability, Preservation, Accessibility, Safety, Innovation, Economy, Health, and Social Equity, as applicable

3G. Grant Specific Objectives (5 points) - Do not exceed the space provided

- Explain how the proposal ultimately results in funded and programmed multimodal transportation system improvements. Applicants should discuss next steps for project implementation, including timing for programming improvements that would result from the planning effort



Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES - GRANT APPLICATION
NARRATIVE

<p>4. Project Management (Total 30 points)</p> <p>See Scope of Work and Cost and Schedule samples and checklists for requirements (Grant Application Guide, Appendix B), also available on the Caltrans grants website: https://dot.ca.gov/programs/transportation-planning/regional-planning/sustainable-transportation-planning-grants</p>
<p>4A. Scope of Work (15 points)</p>
<p>4B. Cost and Schedule (15 points)</p>

SCOPE OF WORK

Project Information	
Grant Category	Sustainable Communities Competitive Technical
Grant Fiscal Year	2022-23
Project Title	U.S. 101 Conejo Pass Area Wildlife Tracking Study
Organization (legal name)	Ventura County Transportation Commission

Introduction

The Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) proposes to study wildlife movement throughout the Conejo Pass Area (see map). The project is necessary to evaluate current wildlife connectivity and make recommendations for maintaining and improving it throughout this critical region. The project includes GPS collaring to radio track multiple species and monitoring of wildlife use through remote cameras in existing crossing points and areas in the vicinity of the freeway. Because the Santa Monica Mountains are nearly isolated from other natural areas (Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) General Management Plan) and are intersected by the US 101, this makes the Santa Monica Mountains a virtual island, vulnerable to losing biodiversity and forming genetic defects. Without these studies, the efficacy of measures to improve wildlife connectivity the region would be unknown and genetic diversity in the region would continue to dwindle.

Major deliverables include the collection and analysis of data on wildlife movement and distribution relative to the freeway and crossing points, resulting in a Final Report on wildlife crossing and connectivity.

Project Stakeholders

The work under this project will be performed by the National Park Service staff of the SMMNRA as a subrecipient under VCTC, under the lead of Dr. Seth Riley, Wildlife Ecologist and Branch Chief for Wildlife. Caltrans District 7 environmental staff will be closely involved in reviewing the study output, using their experience with the Liberty Canyon wildlife corridor. Other agencies that will review the results include the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Overall Project Objectives

We will monitor four current wildlife crossing points along this stretch of 101 with remote cameras to evaluate potential use by wildlife, we will measure wildlife occurrence in the vicinity of these crossing points on both sides of the freeway using remote cameras, we will also monitor wildlife occurrence along the grade where there are no crossing points currently but they are being proposed, and we will obtain detailed movement data for a number of species, specifically mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, gray foxes, and mule deer. The focus of the capture and GPS-tracking activities will be along the Conejo Grade, particularly in the area from Camarillo Springs Road to the west and the weigh station at the top of the grade to the east, where there is natural habitat on both sides of the road. This monitoring will allow us to make recommendations

on wildlife crossing improvements in this area, to help facilitate wildlife adaptation to climate change and thus reduce climate impacts on the surrounding community. VCTC working with Caltrans will consider the findings of this study to identify locations for improved wildlife crossings of U.S. 101 in the Conejo Pass Area, with particular attention to opportunities to implement these improvements as part of other freeway improvement projects such as the U.S. 101 Widening currently in the environmental analysis phase.

Summary of Project Tasks

Task 01: Project Administration

Upon finalization of the grant agreement, VCTC will coordinate a kick-off meeting involving Caltrans and National Park Service staff as well as other parties as appropriate. As the study moves forward, VCTC will work with National Park Service to process quarterly invoices and provided quarterly progress reports.

Task Deliverables
Kick-off meeting with Caltrans - Meeting Notes, quarterly invoices and progress reports.

Task 1: Remote Camera + Accessories Acquisition

NPS staff will acquire 44 Reconyx remote digital cameras for monitoring wildlife movement, camera accessories, (security boxes, batteries, memory cards),

Task Deliverables
Acquisition of 44 digital cameras and accessories

Task 2: GPS Collar, Air Time, Trap Transmitter Acquisition

NPS staff will acquire GPS collars and associated monthly GPS air time in the following quantities: bobcat (6), coyote (6), gray fox (4), mountain lion (4), deer (including ear tags – 6). NPS staff will acquire 10 trap transmits and associated monthly GPS air time.

Task Deliverables
Acquisition of 26 GPS collars and 6 deer ear tags with GPS air time
Acquisition of 10 trap transmitters with GPS air time

Task 3: Remote Camera Placement

NPS Staff will place the remote cameras at potential existing wildlife movement areas along U.S. 101 in the Conejo Pass area, including Calleguas Creek, Conejo Creek, Conejo Grade Culvert, Camarillo Springs Road Undercrossing, and at selected locations between the Conejo Grade Culvert and the Conejo Pass Truck Weighing Station.

Task Deliverables
Completed installation of 44 remote wildlife movement cameras.

Task 4: Animal Capture + GPS Collaring

NPS Staff will capture bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, gray foxes, and deer for GPS collaring.

Task Deliverables
Successful placement of GPS collars on wildlife.

Task 5: Monitoring of Collared Animals and Remote Cameras

A. Wildlife Detection and Highway Crossing Point Monitoring

- 1) The National Park Service will monitor a total of four (4) potential wildlife crossing points along the 101 Freeway between the weigh station at the top of the grade and the Calleguas Creek Underpass. Crossing points include the Conejo Grade Culvert, the Camarillo Springs Road Underpass, the Conejo Creek Underpass, and the Calleguas Creek Underpass. NPS will monitor crossing points using remotely triggered cameras.
- 2) Cameras will be used to monitor the crossing points, to determine crossing and detection rates at the crossings themselves, as well as in adjacent natural areas in the vicinity of each crossing, to determine which species are in the general area and measure their detection rates. At the crossing points, cameras will be secured in steel containers mounted to crossing walls or on posts near crossings and pointed in the best direction to capture any animals using the crossing. The number of cameras to be placed at each crossing point will vary depending on its size and complexity. In natural habitat, cameras will be mounted on posts along wildlife trails. Cameras will be checked regularly to download pictures and change batteries and memory cards.
- 3) Cameras will also be placed in natural areas near the freeway between the Conejo Grade Culvert and the weigh station at the top of the grade, to determine wildlife use of these areas where potential new crossings are being considered.
- 4) Cameras will be deployed for (at least) one (1) full year to capture the full range of seasonal changes in animal movements, activity, reproduction, and dispersal.

B. Wildlife Movement Monitoring

- 1) NPS will intensively monitor the movements and activities of individual animals to characterize movements and habitat use near the highway, determine frequency of road crossing, and identify potential highway crossing points.
- 2) NPS will make good faith efforts to trap and radio-collar bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, gray foxes, and mule deer in the vicinity of 101, specifically in the Conejo Pass Area from the Weigh Station to Camarillo Spring Road. NPS cannot guarantee that it will capture all species, specifically mountain lions, because of

their great mobility and low density, but NPS has been successful in catching mountain lions throughout the region in the past. NPS will use remotely downloadable GPS collars for all species, to obtain detailed and highly accurate movement information near the road.

- 3) GPS location data retrieved from the collars will be used to determine wildlife movement patterns in the vicinity of the road, determine how often animals cross the road to establish a crossing rate for US 101 for different species, map crossing locations, identify important road crossing locations that may not be identified by the road mortality surveys or that fall outside of our monitored crossing points, as well as identify important wildlife habitat adjacent to US 101.
- 4) This monitoring will also occur during the same timeframe as the camera monitoring, although capture activities are limited to a certain time of year particularly for bobcats, but for other species as well (generally October through mid-February, with July-September also possible) and carnivore capture rates, particularly for mountain lions, can be very unpredictable.

Task Deliverables
Monitoring of collared wildlife movement for one full year
Monitoring of cameras for one full year

Task 6: Data Analysis and Report Preparation

- A. Photo Data Compilation: All photo data will be downloaded and tagged with the species, number of individuals, and direction of travel. It will then be entered into a photo database, and reviewed for accuracy.
- B. Tracking Data Compilation: Wildlife location data will be downloaded and entered into a database. The location points will be mapped and compared to standard movement patterns and rates for the species in order to identify and remove any clearly erroneous points.
- C. Analysis of Data: Once all data collection has been completed and the data have been reviewed for accuracy, NPS will analyze all of the data for the final report, including monitoring information from all three components (crossing points, vicinity cameras, and animal movements).
- D. Final Report: NPS will provide a final report (Contract Close-Out report) to Caltrans about the findings from the work after the conclusion of analysis of collected data. The final report will follow the outline of a scientific paper and will include a relevant

discussion and conclusions regarding the impacts of this section of US101 on wildlife connectivity and recommendations for potential crossing points.

Task Deliverables
Completed remote camera photo database file
Completed GPS tracking database file
Final Report, including discussion, conclusions, and recommendations

Task 7: Project Support Including Vehicles and Equipment

This task provides for the ongoing National Park Service (NPS) staff support for the project, as well as miscellaneous equipment provided by NPS including use of vehicles, traps and trapping supplies, receivers for radio tracking, antennas, GPS units, computer, storage, etc.

California Department of Transportation
Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
COST AND SCHEDULE

Grant Category Sustainable Communities Competetive Technical
Grant Fiscal Year 2022-23
Project Title U.S. 101 Conejo Pass Area Wildlife Tracking Study
Organization (legal name) Ventura County Transportation Commission

Task #	Task Title	Grant Amount*	Estimated Local Cash Match*	Estimated Local In-Kind Match*	Estimated Total Project Cost*	FY 2022/23					FY 2023/24					FY 2024/25									
						J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
1	Project Administration (no more than 5% of total grant funds)	\$0	\$0	\$22,000	22000																				
2	Remote camera + accessories acquisition	\$25,300	\$0	\$3,193	\$28,493																				
3	GPS collar, air time, trap transmitter acquisition	\$70,410	\$0	\$3,000	\$73,410																				
4	Remote camera placement	\$28,192	\$0	\$0	\$28,192																				
5	Animal capture+GPS collaring	\$28,193	\$0	\$72,860	\$101,053																				
6	Monitoring of collared animals and remote cameras	\$115,590	\$0	\$0	\$115,590																				
7	Data analysis and report preparation	\$59,205	\$0	\$27,077	\$86,282																				
8	Project support, including vehicles and equipment	\$0	\$0	\$51,788	51788																				
Totals		\$326,890	\$0	\$179,918	\$506,808																				

* Use only whole dollars in the financial information fields. Dollar amounts must be rounded up/down and decimals should not be shown.
 Does your agency plan to request reimbursement for indirect costs? Yes No If yes, what is the estimated indirect cost rate? _____
 Does your agency plan to use the Tapered Match approach for invoicing purposes? Yes No

California Department of Transportation
Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program
THIRD-PARTY IN-KIND VALUATION PLAN

Grant Category - Sustainable Communities Competitive Technical

Grant Fiscal Year - 2022/23

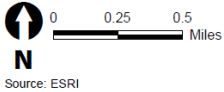
Project Title U.S. 101 Conejo Pass Area Wildlife Tracking Study

Organization National Park Service
 (legal name)

Task #	Task Title	Third-Party In-Kind Contribution	Name of Third-Party In-Kind Match Provider	Fair Market Value Determination	Fair Market Value or Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Estimated Cost
1	Project Administration (no more than 5% of total grant funds)	\$22,000	National Park Service	Based on personnel costs for relevant federal employees	Variable	520	\$22,000
2	Remote camera + accessories acquisition	\$3,193	National Park Service	Based on personnel costs for relevant federal employees	Variable	60	\$3,193
3	GPS collar, air time, trap transmitter acquisition	\$3,000	National Park Service	Based on personnel costs for relevant federal employees	Variable	55	\$3,000
4	Remote camera placement	\$0					\$0
5	Animal capture+GPS collaring	\$72,860	National Park Service	Based on personnel costs for relevant federal employees	Variable	1400	\$72,860
6	Monitoring of collared animals and remote cameras	\$0					\$0
7	Data analysis and report preparation	\$27,077	National Park Service	Based on personnel costs for relevant federal employees	Variable	400	\$27,077
8	Project support, including equipment and vehicles	\$51,788	National Park Service	Personnel costs plus equipment costs	Variable	300	\$51,788
Total In-kind Match:							\$179,918

Explain how the third party in-kind match will be documented for accounting purposes:	Match is estimated based on previous work on similar projects. NPS employees do not associate hour with specific tasks, but match will be estimated based on time spent assisting with this Conejo Pass Wildlife Connectivity project, beyond what is covered by grant funds.
--	---

Map of Project Area



Project Area Map – U.S 101 Conejo Pass Area

Source: ESRI

Figure 1. Project Area Photo



Figure 2. Conejo Grade Panorama



Figure 3. Wildlife Vehicle Collisions

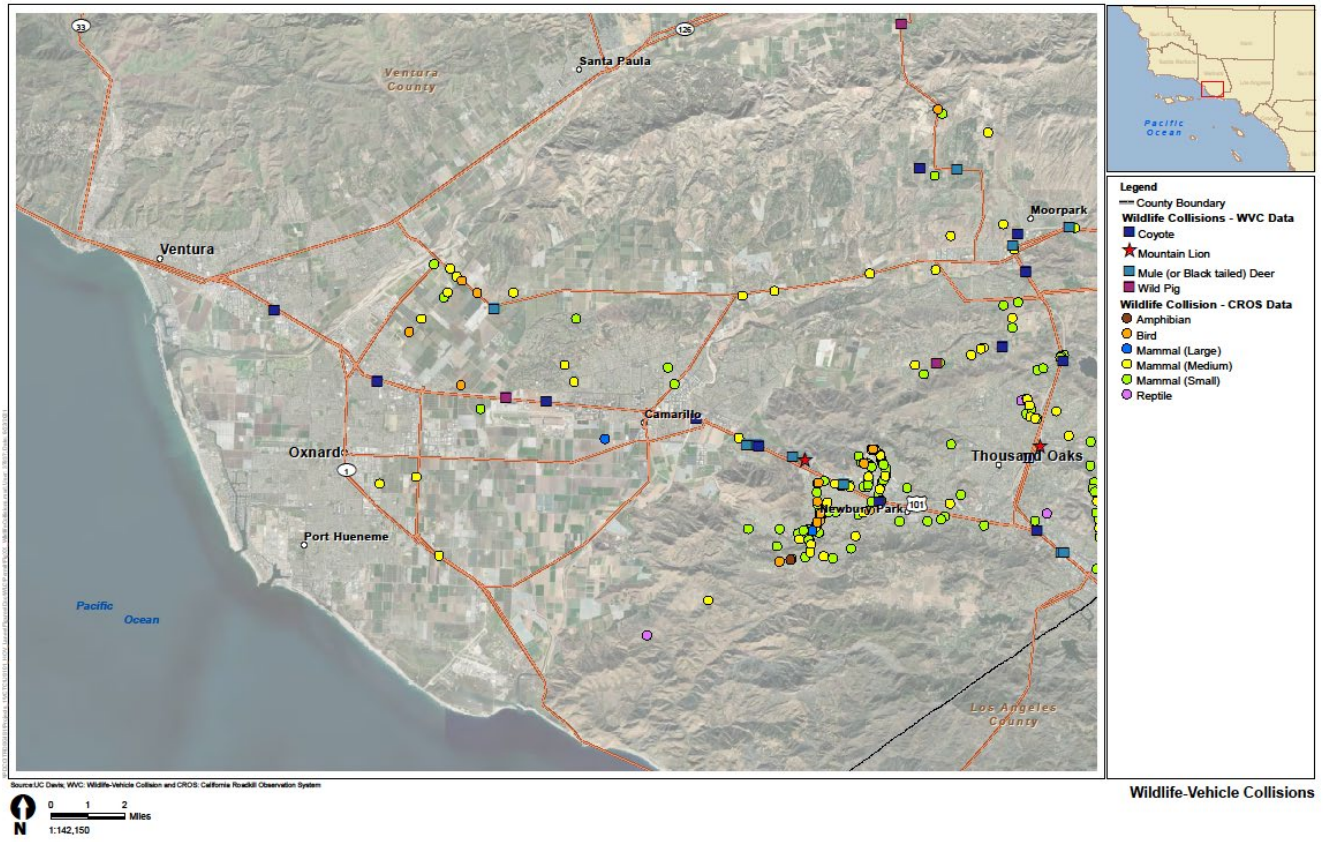
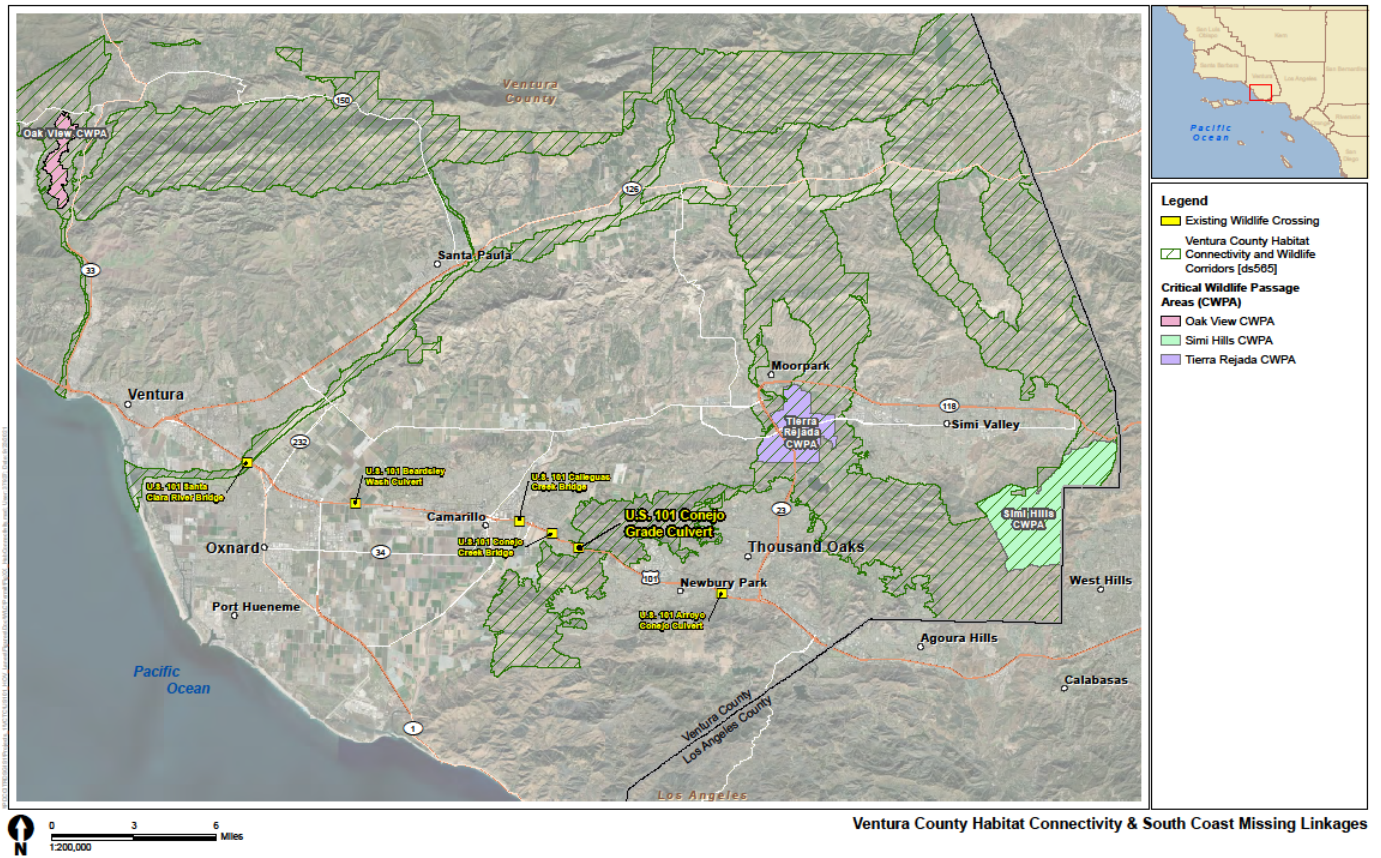


Figure 4. Ventura County Habitat Connectivity





COUNTY of VENTURA

Board of Supervisors

**SUPERVISOR
LINDA PARKS**
Second District, Chair

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
LINDA PARKS, CHAIR
MATT LAVERE
KELLY LONG
ROBERT O. HUBER
CARMEN RAMIREZ

October 8, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010

Re: Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the U.S. 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study

Dear Mr. Watkins:

On behalf of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to offer this letter of support for the Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor.

VCTC has embarked on a crucial project to improve a 27-mile segment of U.S. 101 from State Route 23 in Thousand Oaks to State Route 33 in Ventura. Called "Our Future 101," the project is a partnership between VCTC, Caltrans, four local cities and the County of Ventura. The goals of the project are to improve existing infrastructure, reduce congestion and accommodate future growth, all while minimizing environmental impacts.

In addition, this project presents an exciting opportunity for a partnership between VCTC and the National Park Service (NPS) to study the movement and behavior of wildlife along U.S. 101.

The scope of the proposed improvements includes the Conejo Pass and Calleguas Creek between the cities of Thousand Oaks and Camarillo. This stretch of highway is bordered by open space that is home to mountain lions, coyotes, and other wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and the Santa Susana Mountains to the north.

NPS has long desired to monitor wildlife movement along this corridor but has lacked sufficient resources to do so. A Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to fund such a study could shed light on the ability of animals to cross U.S. 101 and access new territory, movement that is critical to genetic diversity and long-term survival of species. The study will help determine how to provide a passage for wildlife movement through this corridor.

For these reasons, we wholeheartedly support VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant.

Sincerely,

Linda Parks, Chair
District 2 Supervisor

Claudia Bill-de la Peña
Mayor

October 14, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010

**RE: VENTURA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION APPLICATION
FOR A CALTRANS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING GRANT FOR THE U.S. 101 CONEJO PASS/CONEJO
GRADE WILDLIFE TRACKING STUDY**

Mr. Watkins:

On behalf of the City of Thousand Oaks, I am writing in support of the Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor.

VCTC has embarked on a critical project to improve a 27-mile segment of U.S. 101 from State Route 23 in Thousand Oaks to State Route 33 in Ventura. Called "Our Future 101," the project is a partnership between VCTC, Caltrans, four local cities and the County of Ventura. The goals of the project is to improve existing infrastructure, reduce congestion and accommodate future growth, all while minimizing environmental impacts.

In addition, this project presents an exciting opportunity for a partnership between VCTC and the National Park Service (NPS) to study the movement and behavior of wildlife along U.S. 101.

The scope of the proposed improvements includes the Conejo Pass and Calleguas Creek between the cities of Thousand Oaks and Camarillo. This stretch of highway is bordered by open space that is home to mountain lions, coyotes and other wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and the Santa Susana Mountains to the north.

NPS has long desired to monitor wildlife movement along this corridor but has lacked sufficient resources to do so. A Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to fund such a study could shed light on the ability of animals to

cross U.S. 101 and access new territory, movement that is critical to genetic diversity and long-term survival of species. The study will help determine how to provide a passage for wildlife movement through this corridor.

The City of Thousand Oaks recognizes the critical importance of wildlife corridors. The City is surrounded by open space featuring untouched hillside areas, creeks, oak woodlands and native plants and wildlife, including large mammals such as deer, bobcats, coyotes, and mountain lions. The open space is managed and protected by the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA), which is a joint partnership between the City and the Conejo Recreation and Park District. The City's Open Space Element, which is part of the City's General Plan, specifically acknowledges the importance of wildlife corridors and provides important policy tenants to support their preservation. Moreover, the City is bisected by the U.S. 101, which often precludes wildlife movement from Santa Monica Mountains to Santa Susana Mountains. This partnership and subsequent study is essential to learning more about wildlife movement to support their preservation and survival.

For these reasons, the City of Thousand Oaks supports VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant.

Sincerely,



Claudia Bill-de la Peña
Mayor

cmo:660-40/10121 VCTC Sustainable Communities Grant.ml





City of Camarillo

601 Carmen Drive • P.O. Box 248 • Camarillo, CA 93011-0248

Office of the City Manager
(805) 388-5307
FAX (805) 388-5318

October 18, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010

RE: Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the U.S. 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study

Dear Mr. Watkins:

On behalf of the City of Camarillo, I am writing in support of the Ventura County Transportation Commission's application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor.

VCTC has embarked on a critical project to improve a 27-mile segment of U.S. 101 from State Route 23 in Thousand Oaks to State Route 33 in Ventura. Called "Our Future 101," the project is a partnership between VCTC, Caltrans, four local cities and the County of Ventura. The goals of the project are to improve existing infrastructure, reduce congestion and accommodate future growth, all while minimizing environmental impacts.

In addition, this project presents an exciting opportunity for a partnership between VCTC and the National Park Service (NPS) to study the movement and behavior of wildlife along U.S. 101.

The scope of the proposed improvements includes the Conejo Pass and Calleguas Creek between the cities of Thousand Oaks and Camarillo. This stretch of highway is bordered by open space that is home to mountain lions, coyotes and other wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and the Santa Susana Mountains to the north.

NPS has long desired to monitor wildlife movement along this corridor but has lacked sufficient resources to do so. A Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to fund such a study could shed light on the ability of animals to cross U.S. 101 and access new territory, movement that is critical to genetic diversity and long-term survival

of species. The study will help determine how to provide a passage for wildlife movement through this corridor.

For these reasons, the City of Camarillo supports VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Ramirez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg Ramirez
City Manager

cc: Camarillo City Council

California Department of Transportation

RON KOSINSKI
100 SOUTH MAIN STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012
RON.KOSINSKI@DOT.CA.GOV



October 20, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010

RE: Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the U.S. 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study

Dear Mr. Mark Watkins:

On behalf of Caltrans Division of Environmental Planning, I am writing in support of the Ventura County Transportation Commission's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor.

VCTC has embarked on a critical project to improve a 27-mile segment of U.S. 101 from State Route 23 in Thousand Oaks to State Route 33 in Ventura. Called "Our Future 101," the project is a partnership between VCTC, Caltrans, four local cities and the County of Ventura. The goals of the project are to improve safety on the existing infrastructure, reduce congestion and accommodate future growth, all while minimizing environmental impacts.

In addition, this project presents an exciting opportunity for a partnership between VCTC and the National Park Service (NPS) to study the movement and behavior of wildlife along U.S. 101.

The scope of the proposed improvements includes the Conejo Pass and Calleguas Creek between the cities of Thousand Oaks and Camarillo. This stretch of highway is bordered by open space that is home to mountain lions, coyotes and other wildlife in the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and the Santa Susana Mountains to the north.

The proposed project will help VCTC understand current wildlife connectivity through this critical region and assist with identifying and evaluating opportunities for wildlife crossing and improved connectivity to protected open space on either side of the U.S. 101 Freeway in the Conejo Pass Area.

Mr. Mark Watkins, Interim Executive Officer

October 18, 2021

Page 2

The research and monitoring of wildlife in the Conejo Grade Area has been a high interest with many resource agencies including the National Parks Service. A Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to fund such a study could shed light on the ability of animals to cross U.S. 101 and access new territory, movement that is critical to genetic diversity and long-term survival of species.

For these reasons, Caltrans District 7 Division of Environmental Planning, supports VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant.

Sincerely,



RON KOSINSKI

Deputy District Director

Caltrans Division of Environmental Planning



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
King Gillette Ranch
26800 Mulholland Highway
Calabasas, California 91302
Phone (310) 589-3230 Fax (310) 589-3237

October 22, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 East Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, California 93010

**Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans
Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the Proposed
US 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study**

Dear Mr. Watkins:

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) supports the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass and Conejo Grade of the US 101 Freeway corridor.

The proposed grant will help VCTC understand current wildlife connectivity through this critical region and assist with identifying and evaluating opportunities for wildlife crossing and improved connectivity to protected open spaces on either side of the US 101 Freeway in the Conejo Pass area.

Ventura County's recently adopted Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor Ordinances (Ord. 4537 and 4539) specifically includes this western connection of the Santa Monica Mountains to the Santa Rosa Valley. This area is also included in the South Coast Wildland's Missing Linkage Project for the Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Connection.

Research and monitoring of wildlife in the Conejo Grade area is important for many resource agencies including the MRCA, National Parks Service, and Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. A grant to fund additional wildlife permeability studies along US 101 is critical to ensure genetic diversity and long-term survival of species such as the evolutionary significant unit of Southern California mountain lion—currently a “candidate species” under the California Endangered Species Act and afforded the same protection as a listed species.

For these reasons, MRCA supports VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Grant Planning Grant.

Sincerely,

Chad Christensen
Deputy Chief, Natural Resources and Planning



Ventura Office
532 E. Main Street, Suite 200
Ventura, CA 93001

tel 805- 642-0345
fax 805- 642-3421
nature.org

Sender's Direct Line 626-799-2445

October 25, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010

RE: Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the U.S. 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study

Dear Mr. Watkins:

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I am writing in support of the Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor.

The research and monitoring of wildlife will help VCTC understand current wildlife connectivity through this critical region and assist with identifying and evaluating opportunities for wildlife crossing and improved connectivity to protected open space on either side of the U.S. 101 Freeway in the Conejo Pass Area.

The research and monitoring of wildlife in the Conejo Grade Area have been a strong interest of many resource agencies including the National Parks Service. A Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to fund such a study could shed light on the ability of animals to cross U.S. 101 to access new territory and adapt to climate change. Landscape scale movement is critical to the genetic diversity and long-term survival of species.

For these reasons, The Nature Conservancy, supports VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E.J. Remson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

E.J. Remson
Senior Project Director



#SAVELACOUGARS



savelacougars.org

BUILDING CALIFORNIA'S FIRST FREEWAY WILDLIFE CROSSING

October 25, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010

RE: Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the U.S. 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study

Dear Mr. Mark Watkins:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Federation, I am writing in support of the Ventura County Transportation Commission's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to study wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor. The Federation is one of the oldest and largest wildlife conservation groups in the country, with 6 million supporters nationwide. Our organization provides a voice for wildlife, and is dedicated to protecting wildlife and habitat, and inspiring future generations of conservationists.

In California, the Federation works on a number of conservation projects, and our work throughout the state focuses on restoring habitat, connectivity and corridors for wildlife. We also focus on mountain lion protection in the Los Angeles area, and are also one of the primary partners in building the wildlife crossing at Liberty Canyon, which will connect a key linkage for wildlife over the 101 Freeway and help save the local population of mountain lions from extinction.

The research and monitoring of wildlife will help VCTC understand current wildlife connectivity through this critical region and assist with identifying and evaluating opportunities for wildlife crossing and improved connectivity to protected open space on either side of the U.S. 101 Freeway in the Conejo Pass Area.

The research and monitoring of wildlife in the Conejo Grade Area has been a high interest with many resource agencies including the National Parks Service. A Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant to fund such a study could shed light on the ability of animals to cross U.S. 101 and access new territory, movement that is critical to genetic diversity and long-term survival of species.

For these reasons, the National Wildlife Federation supports VCTC's application for a Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Pratt".

California Regional Executive Director
National Wildlife Federation
(209) 620-6271 prattb@nwf.org



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
South Coast Region Office
3883 Ruffin Road
San Diego, California 92123
(858) 467-4201
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



October 25, 2021

Mark Watkins
Interim Executive Director
Ventura County Transportation Commission
751 E. Daily Drive, Suite 420
Camarillo, CA 93010
MWatkins@goventura.org

Subject: Ventura County Transportation Commission Application for a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant for the U.S. 101 Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade Wildlife Tracking Study

Dear Mr. Watkins:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) South Coast Region supports the study of wildlife movement along the Conejo Pass/Conejo Grade of the U.S. 101 corridor in Ventura County. The research and monitoring of wildlife described in the Ventura County Transportation Commission's (VCTC) grant application will provide an understanding of current wildlife connectivity and identify opportunities for improved wildlife crossings surrounding the State Route 101 Freeway in the Conejo Pass area. Providing adequate connectivity to both sides of the U.S. 101 improves the genetic diversity and long-term survival of California's valuable wildlife resources.

CDFW supports VCTC's application with inclusion of close coordination and data sharing between the National Park Service (NPS) and CDFW throughout the migration study.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Erika Cleugh, Senior Environmental Scientist, Specialist at Erika.Cleugh@wildlife.ca.gov or (562) 619-5228.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Ed Pert
A87CE992DB57479...

Edmund Pert
Regional Manager
South Coast Region

cc: Christine Thompson, CDFW Wildlife Supervisor