



Highway 17 Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project

Project Description

The Highway 17 Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project is a joint project from Caltrans, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and resource agencies to construct a wildlife undercrossing on Highway 17 near Laurel Road in Santa Cruz County.

The Santa Cruz Mountains are home to a variety of wildlife species including endangered and threatened species. The area of Highway 17 at Laurel Road has been identified as a critical linkage for two core wildlife habitat areas on either side of the highway.

Highway 17 is the major freeway connection between the San Francisco Bay Area and the Monterey Bay Region through the Santa Cruz Mountains. More than 65,000 vehicles travel the highway each day (24 million vehicles a year). The dense traffic, concrete median barriers, and lack of culvert undercrossings or bridges make Highway 17 a major barrier for wildlife moving through the Santa Cruz Mountains. Many wildlife (including mountain lions, bobcats, and deer) have been hit trying to cross Highway 17 near Laurel Road.

Highway 17 at Laurel Road is built over a large natural drainage, an ideal place to install a bridge to allow animals to travel beneath the highway. At the project location, 460 acres of mostly undeveloped land on both sides of the highway have been preserved in a conservation easement by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

For information, contact Aaron Henkel, Caltrans District 5 Project Manager, 805-549-3084.



Project Highlights

- ▶ Provides safe passage for wildlife to cross under Highway 17 near Laurel Road
- ▶ Bridges two core wildlife habitat areas on each side of Highway 17
- ▶ Highway 17 at Laurel Road is built over a large natural drainage, an ideal place to install a bridge to allow animals to travel beneath the highway
- ▶ Collaborative project between the Regional Transportation Commission, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Caltrans

Project Costs and Funding

Estimated Project Cost	\$11,539,000
Funding Sources	
Measure D (Highway 17)	\$4,000,000
Measure Financing	\$1,000,000
State Highway Operation and Protection Program	\$4,539,000
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County	\$2,000,000

