



# Wildlife Connections Over Interstate 70



Cuddeback Digital Camera 11/22/06 5:28 AM Non Typical, Inc

# Benefits of Connectivity

- Ranging behavior among foraging and breeding sites
- Natal dispersal
- Genetic exchange
- Natural range shifts in response to climate change
- Continuity of ecological processes



# What is the cost of lost landscape connectivity?

- Decrease in biodiversity
- Decrease in number of animals
- Increase in 'weedy' species
- Decreased ability of ecological systems to adapt to changes in climate

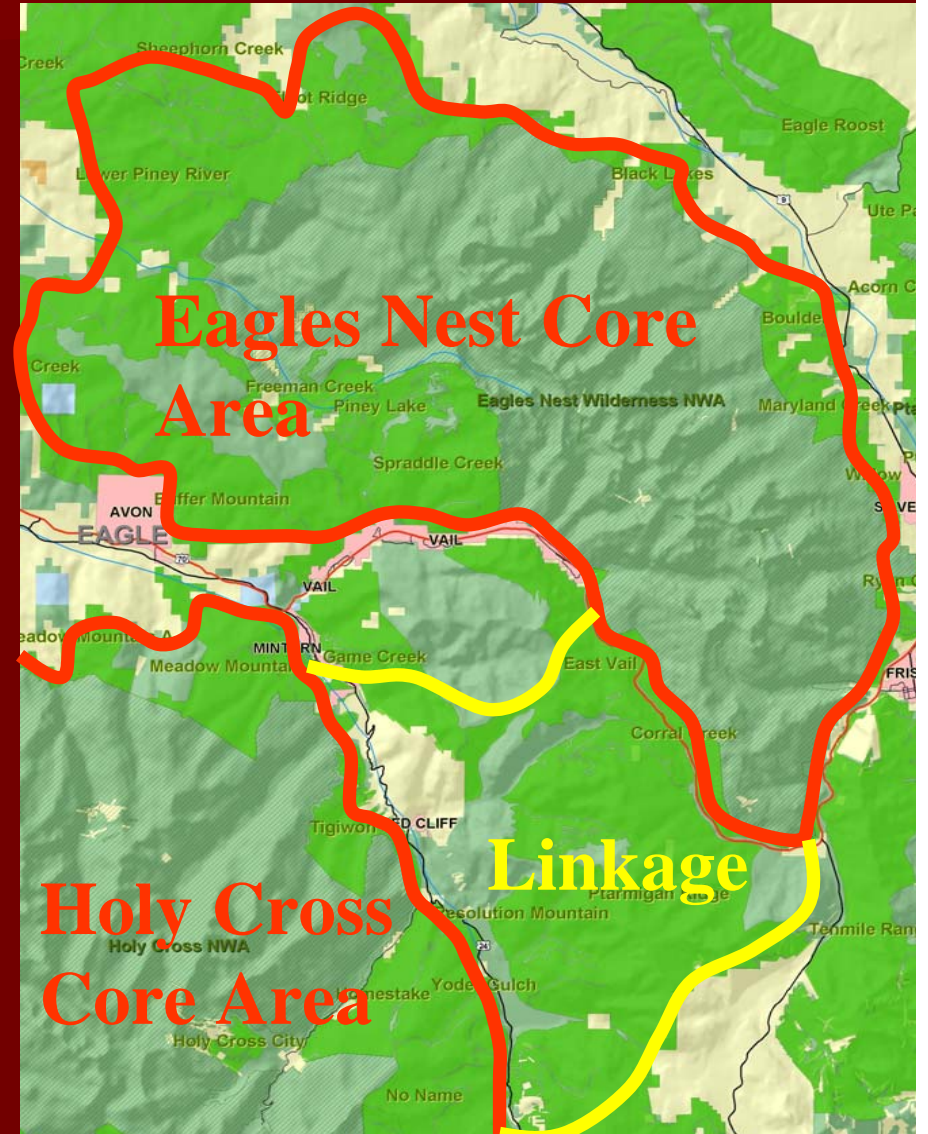
Economic and Social Costs??

# Continental Connectivity

## WILDLANDS CONSERVATION PLANNING ALONG THE SPINE OF THE CONTINENT



Continental MegaLinkages



# Habitat Connectivity for Wildlife

## Mitigation for Planned Expansion of I-70

- Vision for I-70 must include adequate considerations for capacity, transit and the environment
- Ecosystem-based planning to appropriately avoid and mitigate impacts



# ALIVE – A Landscape Level Inventory of Ecosystem Components

## Purpose:

- Guide mitigation development strategies for I-70 PEIS
- Wildlife specialists: CDOT, CDOW, BLM, USFS, USFWS

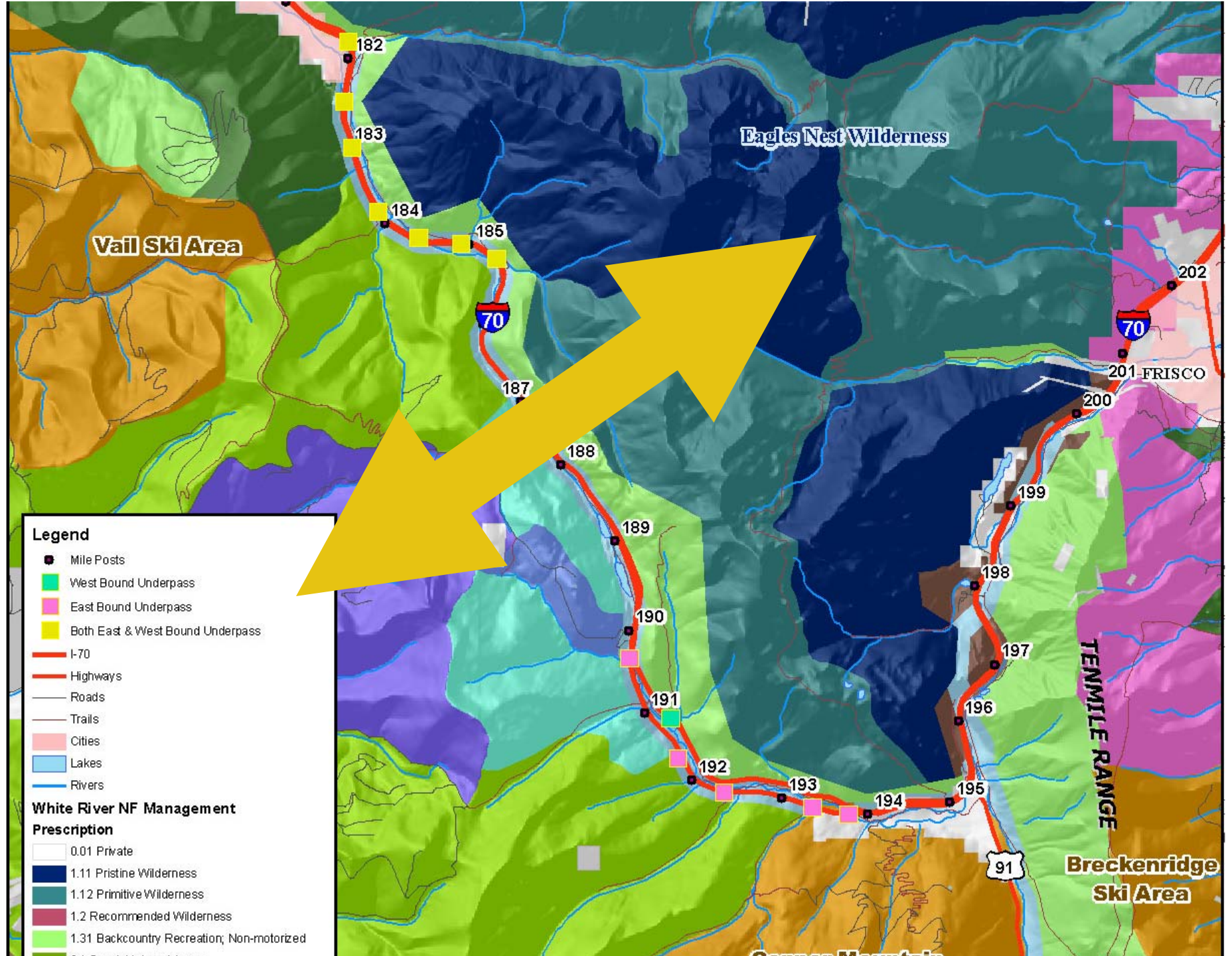
## Objectives:

- Designate key wildlife habitat
- Identify and characterize Linage Interference Zones
- Analyze specific conflict areas for wildlife
- Make recommendations for mitigating conflicts

# Vail Pass Wildlife Linkage



- Ecologically significant site
- Diversity of wildlife
- Extensive public lands

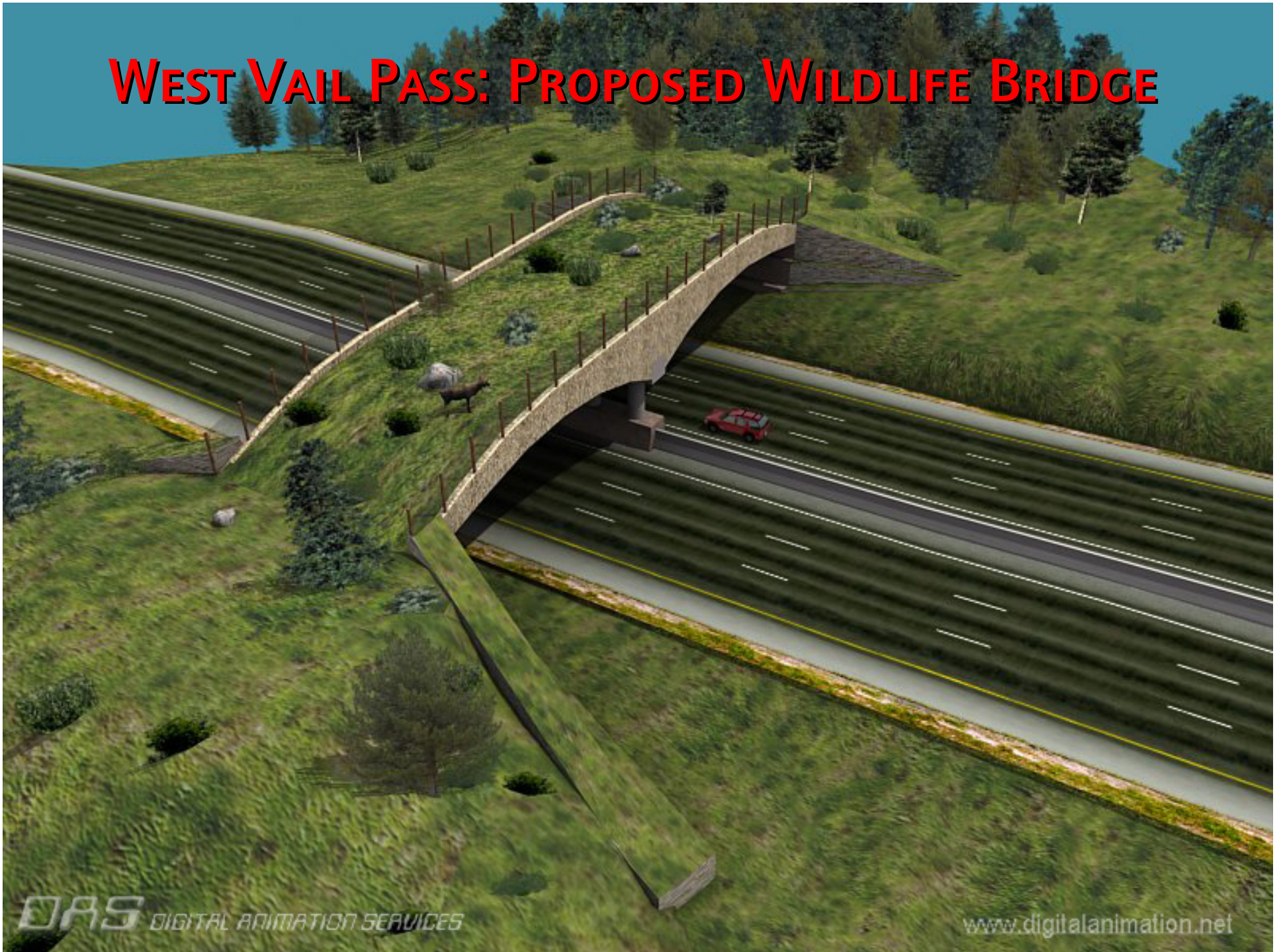


# Lions, Lynx and Bears (oh my!)



- Lynx population around Independence Pass, but no populations establishing north of I-70
- USFWS requires mitigation for lynx – successful restoration must include protecting habitat and movement corridors

# WEST VAIL PASS: PROPOSED WILDLIFE BRIDGE



# Proposed Wildlife Bridge: Status

2007

- CDOT awarded \$420K to FHU for a preliminary assessment for the wildlife bridge
- CDOT requested \$1 million from public lands highway discretionary funds.



# Citizen Science Wildlife Monitoring

- Determine rates of wildlife activity at different locations pre- and post-construction
- Digital, remotely-triggered cameras
- Stations established at existing structures and surround potential locations for wildlife bridge



# Wildlife Monitoring – I-70 Mountain Corridor

Proposal to FHWA to develop ecosystem-based mitigation measures that address aquatic and terrestrial connectivity needs:

- Identify needs and opportunities from the outset to streamline mitigation measures
- Improve transparency in environmental review and provide a forum for better public involvement in planning



# Working towards a vision of landscape-scale connectivity





[www.RestoreTheRockies.org](http://www.RestoreTheRockies.org)

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