

## WSDOT receives award for environmental work

We've always been concerned with wildlife-vehicle collisions, but over the last decade our work to improve habitat connectivity has moved the planning and implementation of connectivity features into a more prominent position, drawing positive attention from state and federal agencies, as well as outside organizations.

The [Wildlife Society](#) presented a Conservation Award to our Environmental Services Office this month during a joint meeting of the society's Washington Chapter and the Society of American Foresters.



Kelly McAllister of the Environmental Services Office holding the Wildlife Society's Conservation Award.

The Environmental Services Office team has been pivotal in providing leadership and technical expertise on habitat connectivity, and many others in the agency have had a part in this. Highlights of their work include:

- Creating and co-leading the [Washington Habitat Connectivity Working Group](#). The group completed a statewide habitat assessment of state highways, allowing us to develop a map of priority investments for both wildlife-related safety and habitat connectivity.
- Developing habitat connectivity retrofit projects; examples include a combined [fish and wildlife passage](#) on US 97 in Klickitat County and a culvert replacement under [US 2 at Deadman Creek](#) in Spokane, which has heavy use by white-tail deer.
- Conducting research to assess the ability of existing bridges and culverts to function as wildlife passages.
- Partnering with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, tribes and citizen groups to address issues with elk. The elk are fitted with GPS enabled collars and monitored by WDFW and volunteers to track where the animals are crossing the highway.
- The information will be used to develop strategies for reducing elk-vehicle collisions.

Congratulations to [Environmental Services Office](#) and the [Biology Branch](#)!