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BACKGROUND INFORMATION: WILDLIFE CORRIDOR OVERLAY ZONE

Board of Supervisors Agenda, January 24, 2017, 1:30PM

The proposed Wildlife Corridor Overlay Zone has been studied in various forms by the County for several years. The Board of Supervisors will decide whether to initiate the processing of the new zone at its January 24th meeting at 1:30PM. The public can speak at the meeting or email comments to: Brian.Palmer@ventura.org. The staff report for this item will be posted on the [County of Ventura webpage](http://www.ventura.org) on January 19th.

Based on sophisticated mapping from the South Coast Missing Linkages Project (a collaborative effort by the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, California State Parks, the State Resources Agency, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, and South Coast Wildlands, among others), the Ventura County Wildlife Corridor Zone would act as an overlay zone that would add standards for development, such as building setbacks, night lighting, and fencing, in order to enable and not impede the movement of wildlife and the connectivity of habitat in existing corridors.

The ability for wildlife to cross between large natural land masses is critical to their survival. Some species, including mountain lions in the Santa Monica Mountains, are essentially on an island of nature surrounded by freeways, roads and urban development that limit their ability to roam. This constriction of movement threatens wildlife by reducing genetic diversity and increasing incidents of roadkill. Establishing safe passage along existing wildlife corridors can make the difference as to whether species continue or decline in our region.

Unobstructed wildlife corridors can also enhance public safety. If development chokes off a wildlife corridor, wildlife disperse into urban areas. Protecting wildlife corridors keeps wildlife away from urban areas, reducing interactions between wildlife and people, and wildlife and domestic animals. The Wildlife Corridor Zone can also be used to identify areas and implement measures to reduce car collisions with animals.

Ventura County is fortunate to have a development pattern of open space buffers between cities, and it is here in the unincorporated county where the wildlife corridors exist. Seeing that these corridors continue unobstructed is a key component of Ventura County's environmental stewardship.