

Environment

[FHWA](#) > [HEP](#) > [Environment](#) > [KIS](#) > [View Project](#)

Search by State:

--Select State--

Search by Date:

--Sort by Date--

Keeping It Simple:

Easy Ways to Help Wildlife Along Roads

"Electric crosswalk" cuts elk roadkill by 96 percent

The nation's most advanced game crossing system is animal-activated, and it has reduced elk-vehicle collisions by 96% along a 3-mile section of SR 260 in central Arizona. Fences heightened to an average 7.5 feet direct elk toward the Preacher Canyon bridge and two underpasses. At one end of the section where fencing ends and an underpass can't be built, Arizona Departments of Transportation and Game and Fish worked with their partners and consultants to design a "wildlife crosswalk" using thermal imaging cameras and ElectroBraid fencing. Military-grade tracking software captures large-animal movement in the right of way and determines if the animal is large enough to pose a threat to motorists. If so, flashing signs warn drivers elk are about to cross the road. Since the signs flash 500 feet from the end of the fence and since they signal game crossing before it happens, drivers have plenty of time to slow down. The system has turned the signs on 97% of the time, and most drivers have braked and reduced their speed. What's more, the project cost taxpayers less than one sixth the cost of a large-animal underpass.

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[Home](#)

[Categories](#)

[Along Roads](#)
[On or Near Bridges](#)
[On or Along Waterways](#)
[On Wetlands and Uplands](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

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Flashing signs alert drivers elk are about to cross the road.

[Along Roads - Arizona](#)

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