Wildlife Walkways

Facilitating Wildlife Passage through Fish Culverts

Minor, inexpensive design modifications to fish passage structures can facilitate movement of a wide variety of wildlife species, helping connect habitat, remove barriers, and reduce mortality caused by wildlife-vehicle collisions. These simple additions can have a large beneficial impact to our native mammals, amphibians, and reptiles, many of which are species of greatest conservation need.

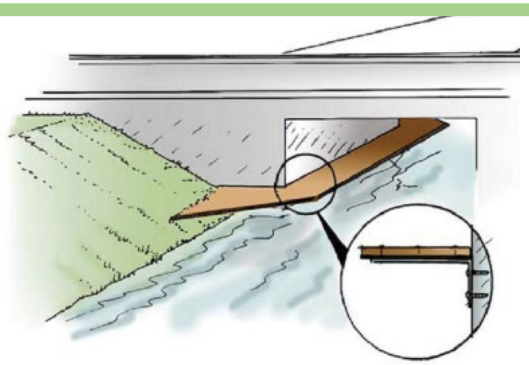
Wooden walkways are cost-effective and can be added to new construction or used to retrofit existing culverts. Ramps help connect the walkways to adjacent dry habitat.

Poured concrete ledges are another option. These ledges are long-lasting and can be poured on site or incorporated into pre-fabricated structures.

Simple rock ledges can provide elevated, dry passage for wildlife. The gaps between rocks can provide refuge for small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates.

PVC tubing placed alongside walkways can encourage passage of small wildlife species that need additional cover to feel secure.

Helpful links:
[FHWA Wildlife Crossing Structure Handbook]
[Combining Aquatic and Terrestrial Passage Design]



Wildlife walkway schematic, illustrating elevated platform above the culvert's high-water line and access ramps to adjacent dry habitat.

- Wildlife walkways can be constructed of a variety of materials, including rock, wooden boards, poured concrete, PVC, and galvanized steel.
- Wildlife walkways should run along both sides of the culvert.
- Ledges should be installed well above normal water flows, with access ramps to adjacent dry habitat.
- Walkways should have a minimum width of 1.5 ft (0.5 m). Wider walkways support a greater diversity of wildlife species.
- Access ramps should have a slope of less than 30°.
- Culverts spanning 1.2 times the ordinary high-water mark may provide dryland passage for a diversity of small- and medium-sized wildlife species without additional modifications

For more information, contact the ODFW Wildlife Connectivity Coordinator: Rachel.E.Wheat@odfw.oregon.gov