Well-placed crossings prevent animals from becoming roadkill. Crossings help link habitat across the landscape, allowing wildlife to avoid areas of human development. Providing ways across, over, or under roads is an effective way to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. Building wildlife corridors in locations where the costs of wildlife-vehicle collisions exceed the expense of construction is a win-win solution. Costs can be measured in terms of human lives or injuries, property damage, and value of natural resources.

An overpass replaces a culvert to allow the passage of fish in Allegheny County (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.) Animal crossings do not need to be expensive overpasses. They may take the form of underpasses, wider culverts, and well-placed fencing, all of which benefit many mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and fish species.

Pennsylvania is among the top states where you are likely to hit a white-tailed deer: 1 in 52! The average deer strike insurance claim is $4,341 (State Farm Insurance, 2018). In 2017, the Pennsylvania DOT reported 5,674 deer-related crashes, resulting in 1,275 injuries and 17 fatalities (PennDOT’s Pennsylvania Crash Information Tool.)

What can be done to address this challenge? Separating animals from road traffic at collision hot spots reduces the number of accidents and lowers insurance costs. When new roads are designed or old roads upgraded, habitats can be reconnected using road crossings.