

Biological Environment



Wildlife

Evaluation of wildlife habitat relates to preserving, protecting, and enhancing sensitive wildlife, fish, plants, and their habitat while operating, maintaining, and improving the transportation system.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

No-Action

- No wildlife habitat effects or additional opportunity for wildlife crossings

General Purpose Lanes

- Minor habitat loss for mule deer and elk
- Additional travel lanes would increase difficulty for wildlife movement across the highway
- Foraging behaviors for raptors may be temporarily affected
- Minor reduction to raptor foraging habitat
- Inactive swallow nests under existing bridges would be disturbed
- 12.5 acres of Black-tailed prairie dog habitat would be eliminated
- Minor, temporary disturbance to aquatic resources during construction
- Additional wildlife movement opportunity under improved South Platte River bridge

Tolled Express Lanes (Preferred Alternative)

- Minor habitat loss for mule deer and elk
- Additional travel lanes would increase difficulty for wildlife movement across the highway
- Foraging behaviors for raptors may be temporarily affected
- Minor reduction to raptor foraging habitat
- Inactive swallow nests under existing bridges would be disturbed
- 14.3 acres of Black-tailed prairie dog habitat would be eliminated
- Minor, temporary disturbance to aquatic resources during construction
- Additional wildlife movement opportunity under improved South Platte River bridge

MITIGATION

- New bridge over the South Platte River provides a wider crossing under C-470 including a natural substrate on the east side of the river to better accommodate wildlife movement
- Post-construction replacement vegetation under the bridge to would serve to attract ungulates to cross under C-470
- Existing chain link fence that extends from the South Platte River along the north and south side of C-470 would be replaced to serve as deer fence
- Re-survey for bird nests prior to construction. If nests are found within 1/3 mile of construction, restrict construction in these areas during breeding season
- Bird nests found under existing bridges would be removed during the non-nesting season. Alternately, netting would be installed under bridges to prevent nests from being constructed
- Avoid and minimize impacts to prairie dog colonies. Relocate and/or remove prairie dogs where avoidance is not possible



Threatened and Endangered Species

Federally threatened and endangered species are protected under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act of 1973.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

No-Action

No effects

General Purpose Lanes

- Loss of black-tailed prairie dog colonies results in minor reduction to bald eagle prey and habitat for the burrowing owl

Tolled Express Lanes (Preferred Alternative)

- Loss of black-tailed prairie dog colonies results in minor reduction to bald eagle prey and habitat for the burrowing owl

MITIGATION

- Re-survey project area for bald eagle nests prior to construction
- Install perching posts for hunting roosts, nesting platforms to encourage eagle nesting, and plant groundcover vegetation for eagle prey
- Relocate some prairie dogs within the eagles' three-mile foraging area
- Survey for burrowing owl presence prior to construction. If burrowing owls are found, plan construction to avoid impacting those areas between March 1 and October 31
- Develop additional mitigation with USFWS and CDOW if seasonal restrictions on construction are not practicable



C-470 CORRIDOR PROJECT