

CALIFORNIA MISSING LINKAGES 25th ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM

Venue: The California Natural Resources Agency

715 P St., Sacramento CA 95814

Thursday, January 8th from 8 AM – 5 PM

Friday, January 9th from 8 AM – 1 PM

DAY 1

Thursday, January 8th, 8 AM – 5 PM

8 – 9 AM	Registration and Optional Light Breakfast
9 – 10:30 AM	<p>Opening Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Welcome: Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency❖ Setting the Stage: Scott Morrison, Interim Executive Director, The Nature Conservancy of California❖ The Evolution of Connectivity Conservation in California: Paul Beier, Emeritus Regents' Professor of Conservation Biology, Northern Arizona University❖ State Agencies:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Melanie Gogol-Prokurat, Lead Scientist/Supervisor, CNDDB and Conservation Analysis Unit, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife▪ Juan Torres, Wildlife Connectivity Unit Supervisor, California Department of Fish and Wildlife▪ Melinda Molnar, Fish and Wildlife Connectivity Program Manager, California Department of Transportation▪ Meghan Hertel, Deputy Secretary, Biodiversity & Habitat, California Natural Resources Agency❖ Stories of Connection – Past Work, Future Vision: Jill Sherman-Warne, Executive Director, Native American Environmental Protection Coalition and Mark Higley, Wildlife Biologist at Hoopa Valley Tribe❖ California Missing Linkages Status Update: Kristeen Penrod, Director, SC Wildlands:❖ Preparation for Breakout Sessions: Trish Smith, Senior Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy
10:30 – 10:45 AM	Break and Light Refreshments
10:45 AM – 12:30 PM	<p>Morning Breakout Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Ecoregional Breakouts (7): North Coast, Cascades-Modoc, Sierra Nevada, Great Central Valley, Central Coast-Bay Area, Mojave & Sonoran Deserts, South Coast<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participants will gather to review and provide data and information on connectivity landscapes in each ecoregion, and engage in topical discussions related to science, infrastructure barriers and remediation, partnerships, land use/protection, and restoration/stewardship.❖ Statewide Breakout (1)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Participants will hold smaller group discussions on topics relevant to statewide connectivity conservation.
12:30 – 2 PM	Lunch (provided onsite) and Networking
2 – 3:30 PM	<p>Afternoon Breakout Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Ecoregional Breakouts (7): Continued❖ Statewide Breakout (1): Continued
3:30 – 4 PM	Break and Light Refreshments
4 – 5 PM	Return to Breakouts
5 PM	Day 1 Concludes
5:30 – 7 PM	Networking Reception (offsite)

DAY 2

Friday, January 9th, 8 AM - 1 PM

8 – 8:30 AM **Optional Light Breakfast**

8:30 – 9 AM **Orientation to the Day**

9 AM – 12 PM **Topical Breakout Discussions (6)**

- ❖ **Science:** What data do we have—and what do we still need—to guide connectivity planning and implementation?
- ❖ **Measuring Success:** How do we track and evaluate progress on connectivity actions, and our success in achieving desired outcomes?
- ❖ **Policy & Funding:** What policy tools and funding strategies are essential to advance connectivity?
- ❖ **Working Lands & Stewardship:** What practical actions can support connectivity across working, tribal, and conserved landscapes?
- ❖ **Multi-Benefits of Connectivity:** What ecological, economic, and social benefits does connectivity provide—and how can we manage uses to maximize wildlife benefits?
- ❖ **Partnerships and Inclusion:** How can partnership frameworks be improved to accelerate and sustain connectivity efforts?

12 – 1 PM **Report Outs from Breakouts and Wrap Up**

1 PM **Lunch (provided in to-go containers for those who need to depart at 1 PM)**

Statewide and Ecoregional Breakouts Content
Day 1: January 8, 2026

Draft Content for Statewide Breakout

1. Mapping connectivity opportunity areas at state, regional and local scales
 - Identify existing data, data gaps, and species for State and Regional Scales
 - Identify methods for evaluating statewide connectivity areas based on ecological function, values, and threats
 - Brainstorm guidance for local scale/jurisdictions
2. Conserving landscape connectivity beyond California's borders
3. Rewilding opportunities for species and habitats
4. Methods for inventory and assessment of major non-highway barriers to statewide connectivity (aqueducts, border wall, railways, canals, etc.)
5. Aligning agency, tribal, NGO, research institution activities for ecological connectivity

Content for Ecoregional Breakouts (7)

Ecoregions: North Coast, Cascades-Modoc, Sierra Nevada, Great Central Valley, Central Coast-Bay Area, Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, South Coast

Morning Session: Participants will gather in ecoregional breakout roundtables to review and add connectivity areas to large format maps. Participants will populate data into "Linkage Datasheets" for each mapped linkage, adding information related to science (past, ongoing, needed), land use change, land protection opportunities, cultural connectivity values, partnerships/capacity for implementation, barriers to connectivity, restoration and stewardship

Afternoon Session: Ecoregional groups will hold discussions on regional connectivity issues related to land protection, land use, barriers to connectivity and remediation, science/research, partnerships, restoration and stewardship practices. Participants will be led through an exercise to identify important connectivity areas within the ecoregion.