



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Memorandum

To: Assistant Regional Directors – Ecological Services, Regions 1-8
Attn: Regional Transportation Coordinators

From: Assistant Director, Fisheries and Habitat Conservation
Assistant Director, Endangered Species

Becky Ayco
Catherine Gutierrez

Subject: Winner of the 2010 Transportation Environmental Stewardship Excellence Award

This memorandum is to announce the winners of the Transportation Environmental Stewardship Excellence Award. This Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) award recognizes employees or offices that use partnership approaches to streamline transportation project planning and environmental reviews, while promoting ecosystem sustainability. Ms. Sally Brown of the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, and the State Route 79 Realignment Project Resource Agency Group (SR Agency Group) have been selected as the recipients of the 2010 Transportation Environmental Stewardship Excellence Award.

Ms. Brown and the SR Agency Group worked together early in the permitting process to identify an alternative road alignment for a four-lane highway in Riverside County, in the State of California, that avoids severe impacts to the Salt Creek Seasonally Flooded Alkali Vernal Plain (Salt Creek Plain). The Salt Creek Plain is the most significant remaining vernal pool area in Riverside County due to its high diversity, large size, and abundance of rare and endemic biota, including five federally listed species. The locally preferred alternative would have bisected the Salt Creek Plain, severely altering the hydrologic regime upon which vernal pool habitat and associated species depend. Early coordination and environmental stewardship by all partners led to a mutually agreeable solution to protect sensitive habitat areas within the Salt Creek Plain, while providing for transportation needs in the area. The realignment project also includes four new bridge undercrossings and six new culverts to facilitate wildlife movement and provide connectivity to maintain critical ecosystem functions. The 2010 award is bestowed to Ms. Brown and the SR Agency Group in recognition of this partnership commitment to identify a cost-effective alternative that promotes ecosystem sustainability and meets the nation's transportation needs.

In addition, this year's judges have also chosen to recognize Ms. Emily Teachout with a Special Recognition for Outstanding Service award. Ms. Teachout is the senior Washington State Department of Transportation liaison with the Service, in the Washington Fish and Wildlife Office. She is being recognized for her leadership role in promoting the Service's mission

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throughout Washington State. Ms. Teachout has been instrumental in the development and completion of agreements with the Federal Highway Administration, Washington Department of Transportation, and National Marine Fisheries Service covering a wide variety of issues including early coordination, indirect effects, underwater sound, and stormwater impacts. Her efforts have improved relationships, consultation timelines, and resulted in better conservation outcomes. The Service is proud to recognize Ms. Brown, the SR 79 Agency, and Ms. Teachout for their extraordinary vision and noteworthy accomplishments to conserve fish and wildlife resources.

For more information about the nominees, please visit the Service's Web site link <http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/transportation.html> or contact Catherine Liller, National Transportation Liaison, Division of Habitat and Resource Conservation, at (703) 358-2191.