



Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Policy & Safety First Research Programs

Request for Proposals
FFY 2026

Wildlife Crossing Hotspot Analysis, Phase 2

Request for Proposals Timeline and Information

March 25, 2026	Issue Date of this Request for Proposal (RFP). This RFP has been posted at: http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/rfps-and-proposals .
	Please read the Proposal Preparation Instructions as this document has been updated recently and contains important information, including tables and templates, necessary for writing a proposal for submission.
April 15, 2026 4:30 PM (CST)	Questions regarding this RFP are due by this date and time. Questions need to be submitted electronically with the project name to: research@dot.wi.gov . Questions received after this date and time will not be considered.
April 24, 2026 4:30 PM (CST)	Responses to Questions will be posted on the WisDOT Research and Library website at: http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/rfps-and-proposals .
May 11, 2026 4:30 PM (CST)	Proposals are due by this date and time. Proposals must be submitted electronically in a PDF version to: research@dot.wi.gov . Proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.
June 2026	Award and Deny letters will be sent by email to all proposal submitters (only lead investigator will be notified).

Project Budget and Schedule

\$225,000.	Project Budget shall not exceed this amount. Matching funds will not be considered in the proposal evaluation process. Proposals which exceed this amount will be disqualified.
24 Months	Period of Performance / Duration of Project
August 3, 2026	Anticipated Start Date of Project
June 5, 2028	Researcher's Final Report due
July 31, 2028	Anticipated End Date of Project
Policy or Safety First	WisDOT Research Program
	For more information regarding this RFP contact the WisDOT Research Program at: research@dot.wi.gov .

NOTICE: Submission of a proposal does not guarantee an award. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received; however, in the event WisDOT does award a project, such award will be based on uniform evaluation criteria.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Policy & Safety First Research Programs Request for Proposals

Wildlife Crossing Hotspot Analysis, Phase 2

Acronyms and Definitions

COP – Close-Out Presentation

DMP – Data Management Plan

PI – Principal Investigator, lead researcher

POC – Project Oversight Committee comprised of subject matter experts who are the main point of contact with the PI

RFP – Request for Proposal

R&L – WisDOT Research and Library Unit providing administrative support

WCOA – Wildlife Crossing Opportunity Areas

WDNR – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

WisDOT – Wisconsin Department of Transportation

WVC – Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions

WWAP – Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan

Documents and Templates Referenced in this RFP

Documents and Templates referenced in this Request for Proposal can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Research Requests for Proposals Page at:

<https://wisconsin.gov/pages/about-wisdot/research/default.aspx>

[Policy & Safety First Proposal Preparation Instructions](#)

[Proposal Budget Worksheet](#)

[Proposal Summary of Hours](#)

[Commitments of Research Staff](#)

[DOA-3027 Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information Form](#)

[Policy & Safety First Meeting Information](#)

[Policy & Safety First Final Report and Close-Out Presentation \(COP\) Information](#)

Background and Problem Statement

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is committed to finding solutions that minimize the number of deaths, injuries, and crashes on our roadways and reduce impacts to wildlife. According to data in the WisTransPortal system, there were over 17,500 documented wildlife-vehicle collisions, resulting in over 700 injuries and 5 deaths in 2025. While deer collisions are well-documented, there is significantly less data on other wildlife-vehicle collisions as those are less likely to result in reported crashes. Wildlife road mortality can increase when habitats are bisected by roadways.

This project seeks to improve safety for motorists and wildlife along Wisconsin's state highway network through the development of a highway prioritization framework, identification of Wildlife Crossing Opportunity Areas (WCOAs), and refinement of a Wildlife-Vehicle Collision (WVC) mitigation decision support tool.

A literature review and stakeholder outreach activities are anticipated to be critical foundational elements of the research project. This project will leverage previously identified wildlife crossing hotspots along Wisconsin roadways to develop a geospatial-based prioritization framework that can be integrated into WisDOT's facilities development process. Intersecting habitat and connectivity opportunities will be identified using existing data sources and geospatial analysis. The effort will culminate into the development of WCOAs, which will represent priority opportunity areas for motorist safety and wildlife connectivity.

The project will enhance an existing WVC mitigation decision support tool framework to provide the Department an implementable mitigation evaluation process for highway improvement projects.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this project are:

Objective 1: Conduct a focused literature review.

This literature review will:

- Seek to understand habitat suitability and connectivity requirements for various species. This will inform the habitat mapping methodology and the external stakeholder engagement with natural resource agencies.
- Gather lessons learned from other state DOTs for developing and implementing WVC highway segment prioritization models and analyses as well as decision support tool frameworks.

Objective 2: Collaborate with Stakeholders. Understand the priorities and considerations from various technical areas within WisDOT to allow alignment of the project with WisDOT facilities development process. Gather insights and recommendations from external state and federal agency partners regarding WVCs and habitat connectivity.

Objective 3: Identify Habitat Connectivity Opportunities. Complete a habitat assessment, focused on identification of habitat for the species of conservation concern identified by Huijser and Bell (2025) in close proximity to the Wisconsin State Highway Network (Interstates, US highways, state highways), considering opportunities for improving habitat connectivity through mitigation solutions.

Objective 4: Develop a WVC prioritization framework & geospatial output of prioritized highway segments. The outreach activities outlined in **Objective 2** will be used to identify various parameters and ranking criteria to facilitate the development of a WVC prioritization strategy and written framework for WisDOT that works within the existing framework of WisDOT's facilities development process (FDM Chapter 3).

Objective 5: Develop Wildlife Crossing Opportunity Areas (WCOAs). Utilizing habitat data (**Objective 3**) and the prioritized highway segments (**Objective 4**), develop a geospatial output that depicts the intersection of these layers, creating Wildlife Crossing Opportunity Areas. The database should minimally categorize the potential safety benefit to the traveling public and/or a conservation benefit for species in the area if the action were to incorporate a mitigation solution.

Objective 6: Enhance the WVC mitigation decision support tool and aid in implementation of the tool through development of written guidance and training materials. Improve upon and finalize a detailed WVC mitigation decision support tool as well as supplemental guidance to facilitate WisDOT's ability to incorporate WVC mitigation considerations into future project-level decision making efforts.

3 Research Approach - Scope of Work/Work Plan/ Experimental Design

3.1 Task 1: Literature Review & Executive Summary

Conduct a comprehensive literature review and assessment of current practices other State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) are utilizing to inform:

- WVC highway segment prioritization framework, including parameters, prioritization methodology, and other elements/strategies that could aid in the completion of **Task 4**.
- Habitat identification methodologies and prominence utilization by species type of various habitat configurations to inform the habitat connectivity analysis in **Task 3**.
- Decision support tool refinement, including methodologies and parameters developed by other states for mitigation evaluation and selection to inform external stakeholder engagement activities in **Task 2**.

Deliverable: Literature review and 2 - 4 page executive summary will be provided to the POC for review prior to beginning Task 2.

3.2 Task 2: Collaboration with Stakeholders

Collaborate with relevant WisDOT stakeholders such as Safety Engineers, Asset Management, Planning and Programming, and Maintenance staff to understand agency-specific priorities (e.g. safety, maintenance) related to WVCs beyond the cost-benefit analysis conducted by Huijser & Bell (2025). Information will be solicited regarding mitigation solutions.

The effort will also include engagement and collaboration with relevant external stakeholders, such as other state/federal wildlife/natural resource agencies to help further inform the highway segment prioritization framework and habitat mapping methodology.

Additionally, outreach will be conducted with other state Departments of Transportation that are identified during the literature review as having a decision support tool. This outreach will be focused on understanding the practical implications, limitations, and successes encountered by

other states who have successfully adapted some iteration of a decision support tool to help further inform the enhancement of the mitigation decision support tool originally developed by Huijser & Bell (2025).

Deliverables:

- ***Develop a written plan for stakeholder outreach. The plan must include a list of proposed participants, proposed methods for collaboration (e.g. meetings, surveys, etc.), expected outcome/results, and a strategy for how the information will be used to develop and refine the WVC prioritization, habitat mapping, and mitigation decision support processes. POC approval of the outreach plan is required before outreach commences.***
- ***Prepare a technical memorandum summarizing the findings of the stakeholder outreach conducted and provide to the POC prior to beginning Task 4.***

3.3 **Task 3: Conduct Habitat Assessment**

Using geospatial analysis methods, identify habitat for the species of conservation concern identified by Huijser and Bell (2025) on or near the Wisconsin State Highway Network (Interstates, US highways, state highways) to inform WCOA identification and mitigation evaluation. The analysis will minimally involve obtaining and utilizing data such as the Conservation Opportunity Areas and Association Scores from WDNR's 2025 WI Wildlife Action Plan, WDNR Natural Communities polygons, soil types, and land cover datasets. To the extent practical given the available data, habitat connectivity will be incorporated into the analysis and mapping.

Deliverable: A geodatabase feature class containing habitat features and attributes that will further support Task 6.

3.4 **Task 4: WVC Highway Segment Prioritization**

Based on the literature review and outreach activities conducted in **Task 1 & 2**, develop a WVC prioritization strategy and framework. The framework will include various parameters and ranking that works within the existing framework of WisDOT's facilities development process and will leverage the wildlife crossing hotspot highway data developed by Huijser & Bell (2025). Create a geospatial output of prioritized highway segments.

Deliverables:

- ***Written framework for highway segment prioritization that will be incorporated into the final report.***
- ***A geodatabase feature class containing prioritized highway segments and attributes that will further support Task 6.***

3.5 **Task 5: Interim Report**

Prepare a written interim report summarizing the habitat analysis and the highway segment prioritization framework. This report should provide a detailed discussion as to how these efforts were informed by **Tasks 1 and 2**. This report, in part or full, can be integrated into the final research project report.

Deliverable: Written interim report summarizing preliminary results of Tasks 3 & 4 to be provided to the POC for review prior to beginning Task 6.

3.6 **Task 6: Develop Wildlife Crossing Opportunity Areas (WCOAs)**

Utilizing the WVC highway segment prioritization methodology established in **Task 4**, WCOAs shall be identified by cross referencing the habitat assessment with priority highway segments. The WCOAs may be established through geospatial analysis by identifying areas where habitat connectivity can be restored or enhanced through the implementation of mitigation measures. This layer should provide a visual reference for project development staff to identify if their proposed action overlaps with an identified WCOA. Attributes must indicate if there would be a safety benefit to the traveling public and/or a conservation benefit associated with the incorporation of a wildlife crossing mitigation opportunity.

Deliverable: Create a geospatial feature class with attributes to showcase WCOAs on or near the state highway system.

3.7 **Task 7: Decision Support Tool**

Improve upon and finalize a detailed WVC mitigation decision support tool; building upon the tool developed for WisDOT by Huijser & Bell (2025). The specific format (e.g., word document, spreadsheet, GIS tool) is open to researcher recommendation. This tool should help project development staff work through how to determine and evaluate appropriate mitigation methods by project type if their project is occurring within a defined WCOA. Leveraging insight from **Task 2**, this tool and associated guidance should be specific to highway project type, consider various parameters developed in the WVC highway prioritization framework **Task 4**, and incorporate habitat and species-specific considerations for projects occurring within a defined WCOA.

Deliverable:

- ***A detailed WVC mitigation decision support tool.***
- ***A supplemental written guidance document that provides project development staff detailed steps to interpret and implement the decision support tool on individual transportation projects.***
- ***A PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes that can be used by WisDOT staff as a training module for the decision support tool.***

3.8 **Task 8: Project Final Report**

The research team will prepare and submit a Final Report following the timeline and requirements detailed in the *Policy and Safety First Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Information*. The final report will include a summary of the project background and problem statement, research objectives and approach, best practices, recommendations, and interpretations developed during the project as well as discussion of implementation options.

The POC members will review this report. Questions and commitments will be submitted to the researcher and will require edits and revisions, or a response and explanation in a Summary Report. The Final Report will be considered complete and approved when the POC chair accepts all revisions and responses. Any data files collected for the GIS analysis, and/or stakeholder outreach (e.g., survey) should be included for future use, analysis, and interpretation.

Deliverable: Develop a final written report that documents the entire research effort and findings, inclusive of identified implementation challenges and opportunities for future research. Relevant portions of the literature review and interim report may be incorporated

into this final report at the researcher's discretion. The report should clearly articulate the highway segment prioritization methodology, the habitat and WCOA identification process, and detailed interpretation of findings from the stakeholder outreach efforts.

3.9 **Task 9: Close-Out Presentation (COP)**

The research team will have a 1-hour meeting to present a 30 - 40 minute PowerPoint presentation followed by discussion. The presentation includes a summary of the background and problem statement, research objectives and approach, best practices, recommendations, and interpretations developed during the project.

4 **Required Testing/Equipment/Materials**

N/A

5 **Required Travel and Meetings**

WisDOT will only fund travel expenses if they are included in the research project proposal budget.

5.1 **Travel for Tasks and/or Field Work**

Travel is not required for the research project.

5.2 **Meetings**

A kick-off meeting, periodic progress meetings, and a close-out presentation are required. Meetings are anticipated to be virtual. Please see the *Policy & Safety First Meeting Information* for additional information.

Travel will not be required for meetings.

5.2 **POC Meetings**

At the start of the project the POC Chair, lead PI and R&L will determine points in the project where discussions and decisions are needed. One hour to 1½ hour-long meetings will be set for the full POC, the researchers, and R&L staff at those times, based on meeting needs. The researcher will typically have a short presentation with relevant information and progress updates.

5.3 **Check-In Meetings**

If there are gaps of more than 3 months between meetings, check-in meetings of 20-30 minutes may be scheduled for the POC Chair, lead PI and R&L staff. A presentation is not expected at check-in meetings. Check-in Meetings may also be requested at any time as needs arise.

5.4 **Close-Out Presentation (COP)**

WisDOT welcomes a virtual Close-Out presentation; however, the researcher may present the results in person, paid by contract funds, if included in the project budget.

5.5 **Conferences**

Attendance at conferences is not expected to be a part of WisDOT research projects. If attendance at a conference is necessary for the project, the proposal must include justification and travel details.

WisDOT will NOT fund travel expenses apart from what is included in the research project proposal budget.

6 **WisDOT/POC Contribution**

WisDOT will provide the following support through the Project Oversight Committee (POC) to support the successful completion of the project:

- Work will be conducted with project oversight by WisDOT staff and the Project Oversight Committee (POC). The POC members support the successful completion of the project.
- The research team may assume that WisDOT staff/POC members can contribute a maximum of 100 hours over the project's duration.
- The research team will not assume the availability of WisDOT staff or equipment in the proposal. If WisDOT or another entity donates equipment or staff time, a commitment letter must be included in the proposal.
- The POC will coordinate access to WisDOT materials used in laboratory test programs, if needed.
- The POC will also coordinate access to WisDOT databases, if needed.
- The POC will also assist in facilitation of access to WDNR or other state agency or affiliate data, if needed. The researchers will not need to include a budget for data from WisDOT or WDNR. If the researchers obtain data from other sources, associated costs will need to be included in the research budget.

7 **Traffic Control** (if needed)

N/A

8 **Deliverables – Required Project Documentation**

8.1 **Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs)**

A 1-2 page summary of project activities, next steps and expenditures for the quarter. WisDOT will provide the QPR template. See *Quarterly Progress Report Information* at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Research Requests for Proposals Page (link on page 2.)

8.2 Quarterly Invoices

Invoices are submitted quarterly. See *Invoice Information* at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Research Requests for Proposals Page (link on page 2.)

9 Deliverables – Reports and Presentations

9.1 Meeting Updates & Interim Reports

Meeting updates are typically short PowerPoint presentations.

Interim reports may include the Literature Review and others as designated. Interim reports are flexible in format and length. These may be papers, graphs, tables, surveys, or other formats. The POC and researcher will determine what format and length is most appropriate for each report.

9.2 Project Final Report Requirements, Process and Timeline

The Final Report for the research project will go through three stages as it is reviewed by the POC and edited by the researcher(s): Project Report, Revised Report and Approved Final Report. For full details please see *Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information*.

9.3 Research Data

All research data will be identified and made available per the Data Management Plan (section 16).

WDNR NHI data are considered confidential and are exempt from the Wisconsin Open Records Law (s. 23.27(3)(b) and subch. II, ch. 19, Wis. Stats.).

Reports, Presentations and Deliverables		
Researcher, please keep this table in the Proposal.		
Task	Report / Presentation	Description of Deliverable
All	POC Meeting Updates	Throughout the project, PowerPoints, interim reports and meeting updates are requested to be emailed to R&L 1 week before POC meetings for POC review and preparation for meeting discussion.
1a	Literature review	Literature Review which will be provided to the POC for review.
1b	Executive summary	Executive summary (2-4 pages) will be provided to the POC for review prior to beginning Task 2.

2a	Stakeholder outreach written plan	Develop a written plan for stakeholder outreach. The plan must include a list of proposed participants, proposed methods for collaboration (e.g. meetings, surveys, etc.), expected outcome/results, and a strategy for how the information will be used to develop and refine the WVC prioritization, habitat mapping, and mitigation decision support processes. POC approval of the outreach plan is required before outreach commences.
2b	Stakeholder technical memorandum	Prepare a technical memorandum summarizing the findings of the stakeholder outreach conducted in Task 2. The memo will be provided to the POC prior to beginning Task 4.
3	Habitat geodatabase feature class	A geodatabase feature class containing habitat features and attributes that will further support Task 6.
4a	WVC highway segment prioritization framework	Written framework for WVC highway segment prioritization that will be incorporated with the appropriate level of detail into the interim & final reports.
4b	WVC highway prioritization geodatabase feature class	A geodatabase feature class containing prioritized highway segments and attributes that will further support Task 6.
5	Interim report	Written interim report summarizing preliminary results of Tasks 3 – 4 and outlining the prioritization framework that was developed. Report to be provided to the POC for review prior to beginning Task 6.
6	Wildlife Crossing Opportunity Areas (WCOAs) geodatabase feature class	A geodatabase feature class containing WCOAs with attributes describing the motorist safety and/or conservation benefit associated with the incorporation of wildlife crossing mitigation.
7a	Decision support tool	A detailed WVC mitigation decision support tool.
7b	Decision support tool guidance document	A supplemental written guidance document that provides project development staff detailed steps to interpret and implement the decision support tool on individual transportation projects.
7c	Decision support tool training PowerPoint presentation	A PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes that can be used by WisDOT staff as a training module for the decision support tool.
8a	Project Report	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L <i>See Policy & Safety First Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Information.</i>
8b	Final Report and Summary Document	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L
9	COP Presentation	<i>See Policy & Safety First Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Information.</i>

Deliverables – Research Results and Implementation Plan

WisDOT seeks to fund research with high implementation potential. Implementation potential will be tracked throughout the lifecycle of this research project and may include changes to expected implementation. The research plan must include specific statements describing anticipated research results and an assessment of implementation potential.

10.1 Research Results

Proposals should detail the research results in terms of a specific deliverable(s).

10.2 Implementation Plan and Deliverables

This section also includes an implementation plan to address the planned implementation type(s) indicated in the RFP. While the plan may change as the research progresses, at a minimum the proposal should indicate:

- The product expected from the research.
- The stakeholder or intended audience that will most likely be impacted by the research results.
- Potential impediments to implementation.
- Activities necessary for successful implementation.
- Implementation deliverables
- Measures of success
- Data collection requirements

Please see the *Policy & Safety First Proposal Preparation Instructions* for specific directions related to Research Results and Implementation including completing the table below.

Provide information and details regarding the deliverables included in the Implementation Plan and Deliverables table.

Implementation Plan and Deliverables		
Researcher, please add and describe implementation plans and keep this table in the Proposal.		
Successful implementation of this research will be achieved through the development of the following items:		
Implementation Type	Description	Researcher's Anticipated Deliverables/ Products/ Activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Model:	A geospatial model identifying WVC highway segment prioritization, habitat analysis, & WCOAs. The model is intended to help visualize conservation, safety, cost, and other benefits that may arise from the incorporation of wildlife crossings for various species on the state highway network.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Design Method or Guidance:	The project is intended to develop a method for highway segment prioritization which will then support the development of a decision support tool guidance and associated training for use by project staff. This decision support tool shall help project development staff work through how to determine and evaluate appropriate mitigation methods by project type if their project is occurring within a defined WCOA.	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Product Implementation:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend Future Studies:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Revise a Specification:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inform Policy:	Through the project deliverables, this research will inform WisDOT's WVC/mitigation policy in accordance with the established facilities development process.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

11 Project Schedule

The duration of the research project is provided on page 2 of this RFP. The researcher will provide a work schedule which should be based on the assumed contract start date.

11.1 **Summary of Hours**– The proposal must include template *Summary of Hours*

11.2 **Gantt Chart** - The project schedule must include a Gantt chart.

12 **Budget**

12.1 **Budget Worksheet**

The researcher will completely fill-in the Excel *Budget Worksheet* template.

12.2 **Budget Justification**

The researcher will provide a detailed description of costs related to travel, materials and supplies and other direct costs. See *Policy & Safety First Proposal Preparation Instructions* for details.

13 **Qualifications of the Research Team**

The proposer will provide information on the qualifications and background of the research team. This is anticipated to be a brief listing or paragraph of qualifications. Only the information contained within Section 13, Qualifications of the Research Team, will be considered for proposal review and scoring.

If the researcher would like to also include a full CV, it may be added as an attachment to the proposal. The attachment will not count as part of the page limit and will not be considered for proposal review and scoring.

14 **Other Commitments of the Research Team**

The proposer will complete the **Summary of Commitments** in *Commitments of Research Staff*.

15 **Facilities and Information Services**

The proposer will provide their laboratory and technical certifications for project related activities.

16 **Data Management Plan**

The research team will include a Data Management Plan (DMP) documenting all field/laboratory data and analyses to ensure accessibility and transparency of research data as required by the USDOT per the Public Access Plan (<https://ntl.bts.gov/ntl/public-access/creating-data-management-plans-extramural-research>). All research data will be identified and made available per the Data Management Plan. See *Proposal Preparation Instructions* for details.

17 **References**

The proposer will provide references of the research team.

18 **Proprietary Information in Proposal**

DOA-3027 Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information Form

Any restrictions on the use of data contained within a proposal must be clearly stated in the proposal itself. Proprietary information submitted in response to a request will be handled under applicable Wisconsin procurement regulations and the Wisconsin public records law. Proprietary restrictions usually are not accepted. However, when accepted, it is the proposer's responsibility to defend the determination in case of an appeal or litigation.

Any material submitted in response to this request that the proposer considers confidential and proprietary information, and which qualifies as a trade secret, as provided in s. 19.36(5), Wis. Stats., or material which can be kept confidential under the Wisconsin public records law, must be identified on a *Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information form (DOA-3027)*.

Proposal prices cannot be held confidential.

19 **Public Records**

WisDOT intends to maintain an open and public process in the solicitation, submission, review, and approval of procurement activities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, records may not be available for public inspection before issuance of the award of the proposal.

The proposer shall retain all records produced or collected under an awarded contract for five (5) years following final payment under the contract and allow access to such records in accordance with requirements established under 49 Code of Federal Regulations 18.42, subch. II of Chapter 19, Wis. Stats. and Chapter 16, Wis. Stats.

20 **Evaluation Criteria**

The Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Matrix are in the *Proposal Preparation Instructions*.

End of Request for Proposal