

## **AN ARIZONA SUCCESS STORY: A FOUR-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP THAT PROMOTES ECOLOGICAL SUCCESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

It is through partnerships that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) has overcome many obstacles. This presentation will focus on a partnership ADOT shares with three federal agencies (Federal Highway Administration, the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service). Arizona has a wide variety of unique landscapes, ranging from the Sonoran and Mohave Deserts, to mixed conifer forests. Interconnecting these landscapes is a complex network of highway corridors managed by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Highways consist of pavement, constructed slopes, bridges, drainage structures, fencing, signs and intersections associated with these roadways. These corridors typically disturb resources such as wildlife, hydrology, vegetation and aesthetics. Addressing this disturbance requires the design, construction and maintenance of measures that minimize and mitigate these impacts. This partnership integrates resource management concerns into the interdisciplinary process of planning, design, construction and maintenance of transportation corridors using a context sensitive approach. In these times of financial constraint and smart government (doing more with less); innovation and ecological success has been strengthened as a result of working together. Partnering is a process of collaborative teamwork. Topics frequently discussed in the partnership include long range planning, the development process, habitat connectivity, roadway design and construction, material source use, visual aesthetics, environmental streamlining, vegetation management (i.e. seeding, noxious and invasive species, mowing etc.), drainage design and construction, landscape restoration, storm water pollution control, construction and maintenance operations. Through partnering, the four agencies have benefited by overcoming numerous obstacles, streamlining processes and establishing and maintaining open lines of communication. Key aspects to the partnership that will be highlighted include the Memorandum of Understanding, the Guidelines document “Guidelines for Highways on Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service Lands”, the use of multidisciplinary teams, the use of an Executive Steering Committee and an annual meeting that highlights successes and lessons learned. The Guidelines for Highways on Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service Lands provides a method to maintain and pass on institutional memory as agencies and staffs change.