

I-70 TRAFFIC & REVENUE STUDY ISSUES TASK FORCES

ALIVE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

▶ **Meeting Date:** *Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2013* ▶ **Time:** *2:00 –4:00 pm*

▶ **Meeting Place:** *Fossil Trace Conference Room, CDOT – Golden, Colorado*

▶ **Distribution / Attendees ('):**

▶ Paul Nikolai	Parsons	▶ Wendy Wallach	Parsons	▶ David Singer	CDOT R1 Envir. Mngr
▶ Ashley Nettles	USFS	▶ Alison Michael	US FWS	▶ Jeff Peterson	CDOT - Wildlife
Adam Springer	Clear Creek Cty Planning	Paige Singer	KMW	Elissa Knox	CPW
Francesca Tordenato	CDOT R1 Enviommental	Julia Klintsch	ECO- resolutions	Wendy Magwire	USFS – White River

	Technical Issue/Challenge	Solution	Client Benefits
1.	Verifying or Modifying assumptions to create animal crossing for Managed Lanes Alternatives. Current assumptions were 4 lane crossings only.	None Yet – Will identify mitigation for critical species and provide conservative costs for crossings.	Ensure money is adequate to mitigate wildlife crossings.
2.			

Meeting Notes

New Business

Topic #1 – Team Introductions

- Intorductions were made and included which agency task force members were representing and a short history working on this corridor or within the ALIVE Issue Task Force (ITF) concept. Paul (Parsons) will send out a list of invited Alive ITF members to everyone, in order to identify and agency representatives that may be missing.
 - Wendy W. went through list of invited members. The group suggested we add Tom Davies. Tom is with the Colorado Parks and Wildife in the Summit County area. Wendy W added him to the ITF list dated 10-24-13.
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- Topic #2 and #3 – Alternatives Presentation
 - A: Paul started the meeting by going through the project background and descrbing the purpose of the T&R study. He went through the Powerpoint dated Oct 10th which briefly describes the alternatives.
 - David Singer (CDOT)added that since the PEIS, the funding stream has dried up and there is no money to do anything on I-70. While everyone supports the PEIS alternatives, CDOT is looking for other solutions that could be funded. Wendy W. added that the purpose of this group is determine how each of the alternatives warrants wildlife mitigation relative to the Linkage Interference Zones(LIZ).

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- Paul highlighted the project termini. Wendy added these remain the same for all of these alternatives. The group looked at the cross sections. Wendy pointed out that with the managed lanes proposal, there will be new areas of barrier and the median would be filled in therefore mitigation for wildlife in terms of crossings would be much more extensive. The continuous concrete barrier runs would exist eliminating opportunities for small animals to cross. Paul showed the video explaining how the managed lanes work and pointed out areas of barrier.
- The video of the proposed managed lanes prompted a robust discussion by the group. The major issues and discussions are captured below:
- The major issue with the existing PEIS LIZ recommendations assumed that the crossings would only have to convey animals across 2 lanes of traffic and then another 2 lanes with a break in between. The direction to the wildlife biologists during the PEIS analysis was to only establish criteria for 2 lane roads, there were no assumptions made about adding more capacity to the highway.
- The task force concluded from the visual simulation animation made the group think crossings would have that wildlife would have to move under or over 7 solid lanes of traffic. Julia Kintsch (who helped complete the original analysis) stated that with these new alternatives everything is “upended”, noting with the additional pavement, we need longer structures to accommodate wildlife and the likelihood they will use it is diminished. Having 7 lanes of pavement calls for all new mitigation and there is a possibility it may not cross, it might not work for animals. Julia was going to look for precedence of similar crossings.
- Mitigation costs could significantly increase with the need for longer crossings. One reason for is the additional length is that a certain proportionality is needed for length relative to the crossing width. The longer the crossing, the wider it should be. Paul, Wendy and David pointed out that this project has the ability to lock adequate funding into the early budget to ensure enough money is included for required mitigation. Ashley Nettles (FS) noted that we are looking a lot more overpasses versus underpasses and they will be super long and costly and animals still might not use them.
- Julia is afraid that we the mitigation costs will be greatly underestimated. David S. said he understood the groups apprehension but this project is in the billions so the group should “dream big and think of a network of crossings.”
- Wendy reminded the group that this is just a study at this point in order to explore the current proposed alternatives viability and NEPA and an investment grade still would need to be completed before anything other than the PEIS recommendation could be implemented. We are not designing anything at this point in time.
- Ashley N asked Paul what is needed from this Issue Task Force. Paul responded that this group is being asked to look at the alternatives being considered in the T&R study and incorporate wildlife crossings into the design. A cost would be assigned to these crossing structures to include in the analysis.

Discussion moved to how this type of work could be done in the timeframe of the end of this year. Ashley pointed out that everyone in the team is already busy and this is a substantial amount of work. Julia pointed out that she is a consultant and does not have time to put into this unless she can get a contract to assist. A suggestion was made that Parsons provide her a contract to assist with the evaluation of crossings needed at the LIZs. The entire group agreed with this recommendation, especially given how stretched resources are and the timeframe. Paul responded that he is not able to make this decision but he would elevate it the Project Manager who has the ability to make that decision.

Topic #3 – Corridor Opportunities

A: Wendy echoed David’s earlier proposal to the group that instead of just mitigation this be considered “a network

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of crossings.” According to preliminary revenue numbers in the Parsons proposal, there will be adequate money for mitigation and this ITF’s task is to identify what mitigation and where it would occur.

- LIZ Opportunities: Alison recommended that the group go through the current LIZ for the areas and identify the primary species of interest for each LIZ and determine if the recommendations are adequate and for which alternative – or how long of a crossing. If a recommendation is considered to be not adequate, those would be identified and Parsons would assign a larger amount of money to those recommendations for the Alternatives that warrant it. David pointed out that the only locations where mitigation would occur is where a project was active. The minimum program for instance would not rebuild the entire corridor, therefore mitigation for crossings would not occur where the highway was not going to be impacted.
- Critical Environments: This is more of a critical species discussion. Some of the more critical and challenging species for this corridor include bobcats and lynx as well as large ungulates like elk and moose as well as bighorn sheep.
- Prioritization of LIZ’s: Paul asked that each member go through the list of recommendations and look at those they believe to be most critical and create a prioritized list. This could be based on location or species but a prioritized list would assist the team in the Level 2 evaluation assuming some of the Alternatives get through the level 1 screen process.
- Crossing Typologies: Paul asked that a simple typology of crossings be developed. This could be a large – medium – small ranking or something similar. This would be based on animal size and evaluated for length of crossing as well. If a typology is identified within a LIZ that a team member feels may not be adequate, upsizing that crossing is an acceptable way to handle what could be an under sized typology.
- Julia and others requestd that monitoring be included in the costs for ALIVE mitigation. Paul asked what the technical requirements for that would be. She and others felt that at a minimum it would determining how many crossing were made and when. Technology could very greatly from placing closed camera video with motion sensors at each crossing to collaring animals and tracking them. Francesca recommended that each crossing getting something built into the structure that automatically counts crossings. Paul pointed out that there will be ITS componenets up and down the corridor in the Alternatives and any monitoring could be done via that system. David agreed and saidt hat would an excellent way to provide the monitoring component. Paul asked how long monitoring would be needed – the general answer was 5 to 10 years. Paul and Wendy also thought this would potentially fall into the realm of an Enhancement, not just mitigation. This could be discussed further.

Topic #4 – Existing Project Cost

A: A questions was asked about if new ROW would be acquired for the project. Paul said the design team has told him that all the alternatives do fit within the current ROW. However, the ROW fluctuates so greatly it was hard to make a standard assumption. Jeff and Francesca felt that more ROW would likely be needed for crossing or other items such as snow-storage. Francesca pointed out that if a crossing is placed and it abuts to private property, there may need to be a cost to purchase that property to ensure the land use remains consistent with intent of the crossing and ensures the crossing long term use by animals. The team felt adding money to purchase new ROW as part of the ALIVE mitigation should be considered. Paul pointed out that the same issue could occur even if this project never happened and that type of mitigation would not occur. Paul and Wendy thought that this could fall into the Enhancement area.

B: Paul asked all the team members to provide any information they have regarding current or recent project costs. All costs would be given an inflation factor from whenever they were constructed to whenever the new project would be built.

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C: One concern with costs was that members were worried that money for mitigation would not be available once construction began and the project would be built and no-one would come back and add mitigation for crossings. Paul pointed out that mitigation would be part of the requirements for any Alternative selected and that the mitigation would be built in the project from the beginning. There would be no coming back to add crossings or mitigation because it would be just part of the project.

Topic #5 –Next Steps

A: The team decided on the next meeting time to be the 2nd or 3rd week in December 9th. Paul will set that up via a doodle poll. Ashley wanted to set up an internal wildlife biologis working meeing to go over the list of LIZ's and review their recommendations and work through issues. Some time in the corridor was anticipated. Alison Micheal volunteered to set that up and Paul will provide her the list of team members. Paul asked to be included on that list to work with the team and be in the field as well.

B: Julia will provide the current spreadsheet of all the LIZ recommendations with costs to Parsons.

Action Item Register – See Below.

These notes are an interpretation of discussions held. Please provide any additions or corrections to the originator within seven days of the date signed, otherwise they will be assumed correct as written.

► Prepared By: Paul Nikolai - Parsons Date: 11-20-13

Next Meeting: TBD - December 9th thru 20th as the target, 2013 – The group preferred face-to-face over conference call or WebX. That component can still be part of the meeting format however.

ACTION ITEM REGISTER

► *DISCIPLINE Task Force*

► Updated DATE

Item	Action	Responsibility	Due	Status
1-A	Get Alison contact list of team members	Paul	Nov 22., 2013	Closed
1-B	Add new names to contact list	Paul	Dec, 2013	Closed
1-C	Provide digital file for LIZ's to use as template	Julia	Nov 25, 2013	Closed
1-D	Modify spreadsheet of LIZ's with all alternatives on it and send to team	Paul	Dec 2, 2013	Closed
1-E	Look for recent or current project costs	Entire Team	Dec , 2013	Open
1-F	Organize working meeting to go over LIZ's	Alison	Dec.18 , 2014?	Closed

