

TERC meeting notes Oct 12, 2017

At CPW

Bill Haas – facilitator

Thank CPW and CDNR for hosting.

Providing safe passage for people and wildlife is the theme.

Tom Kroening, Deputy Regional Manager for CPW – This facility is available to everyone here.

Welcome to CPW – we are excited about this topic and is a springboard from the summit that we had with CDOT. This is a journey that is started and embraced by our agency and their commission. WE are aware of the barriers to financial support for this effort. This is the most important thing this agency is working on. The time is right.

John Cater – FHWA Administrator – Thanks for everyone here – we are all busy and it is good to take this time to talk about viable safe travels. It is good to talk about collaboration to accomplish this.

Mike Lewis – Deputy Director at CDOT and cohost with John. Sometime in all of our lives, planets sometimes align and this topic is one of those at this time. The Governor pointed out the success of the SH 9 results and asked if this is real. There are many opportunities in the state to do this kind of mitigation as well. Money is always an issue but if we can show a benefit, then maybe we can get land owners engaged and work together to do more of this kind of mitigation.

Brandon Marrete – CPW

Perry Edman – RTD

Susan Wood – RTD – lots going on with FastTrack's and the 16<sup>th</sup> St mall.

Jennifer Shuler – EPA 8 in Denver – recently had Doug Benevencho will be joining them on Monday. Their office will now report to the office of policy instead of enforcement. The sent out a national survey to get feedback on their work and the NEPA process to support streamlining nationwide. Early engagement is something that came out of this.

Lisa Lloyd – NEPA reviewer for EPA. She has been attending the I-25 S. meetings.

Tylor Ward – CDR – conflict

\_\_\_\_\_ USFS – Review of the Federal Lands MOU video – it is going to be a nice produce.

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Stephanie Gibson – Env Prog manager at FHWA – There were 2 notices of proposed rulemaking. 1) about NEPA assignment – which we are not working on in CO, 2) Make some adjustments in the NEPA regulation to allow the RR to use these regulations along with FHWA and FTA.

Tom Kroening – Deputy regional manager – CPW – oversee 14 parks, he works with developers.

Bob Randell –Exe Director

Susan Thomson

David Singer – CDOT – There is an event Transportation and Environmental Professional training in March 6-7– there is currently a call for abstracts this month for topics that you would like to share with this group.

Megan Parking – CPW trails – grant administrator. Working with CDOT to address the road widening and projects for all this growth. And for Section 6f properties.

Becky Jacobson – Bike/Ped program – They are teaching how to design bike/ped facilities

Deb Perkins-Smith – DTD Director – Give a shout out for all agency staff that make this all happen. It was good to help with the summit and the MOU.

Rick – CDPHE APCD –

Jane Hann – CDOT Env Programs Branch Manger

Bill Haas – Program development team leader – FHWA

\_\_\_\_\_ - NFRMPO – Working with Rocky Mt National park to develop a transportation plan.

Sarah Martin – NFRMPO – Land use and water planning

Amanda – RQAC – 2017 was a good year where we qualified for a one year extension in our maintenance area – there was only one monitor that did not meet the goals but they think it was due to wildfires. They have been working with APCD – hoping to gain attainment in 2018.

Michelle Cowardin– CPW – Support area 8 office – here to talk about SH9 project

Carrie – CPW – I 25 s. project.

Dean Riggs, CPW Deputy Regional Manager

Gina MacAfee – HDR – Have worked on wildlife underpasses and overpasses – working on a corridor for these mitigations.

Catherine Ventling – NEPA specialist in the western slope out of Grand Junction – currently hiring an RPEM

Van Turan – USACE – Coordinate with CDOT to address concerns between the agencies.

Alicia Nolan – FHWA assistant division administrator – also echo about the staff working together and collaboration to get here.

Larry Squired – Region 8 – Provide support for our stakeholders to help them coordinate in these endeavors

Tony Cady – CDOT RPEM in Rr5 – Durango - What to thank our excellent consultants that are working on these projects.

Alex -

\_\_\_\_\_ work for Bob Rangel

Pricilla Stantards – CPW audio visual

Martinez – CPW audio support.

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Signing of the Recreation Trails MOU – This MOU is an immediate outcome of a program review FHWA did with CPW and DNR, and this MOU was identified as a need to formalize roles and responsibilities. There are very few states that have such an MOU in place. Cindra from FHWA was a main person involved in pulling this together. There was a big sift in staffing in the middle of the program review. Betsy Jacobson did a lot of work on this MOU as well. Thank everyone that was involved. There was a lot of funds found as part of this review so more projects could be supported. The signing of the MOU was performed, photos were taken, and there was a cake to seal the deal.

Look on the TERC website for info on agendas and this photo of all the TERC members will be posed there.

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Host Presentation – SH9 Wildlife & Safety improvements – Michelle Cowardin, Wildlife biologist, from CPW –

### Get Slides

10.5 mile S. of Kremmling – completed in 2 phases 1) Phase I completed in 2016 and 2) phase 2 was completed in 2017. In CO the overpasses are preferred, in WY, the underpasses are preferred.

There are overpasses, underpasses, cattle guards, jump-outs, and fencing. There were 16 fatalities along this stretch of road, but not all were due to wildlife – some was due to narrow shoulders and lack of guard rail.

2005-2015, Blue Valley Ranch collected 600 carcasses data along this stretch of the road. It is a 25000 acre ranch along both side of the highway. In 2001, BVR approached CDOT to improve safety along this roadway. There was not enough money for a design – so BVR collected data and gave some design funds to help move this effort along. Grand County applied for a RAMP grant – BVR provided a \$4M match to get these funds. The other \$5M needed for match was collected over 60 days. They received \$36M in RAMP funds in Oct 2013. Kirkland Construction did the work. CDOT commission put more funds in to meet the \$49M price-tag. 22% or \$11M were for wildlife features.

Now conducting 5-years of monitoring to see how this is performing. Maintaining fencing is important. This monitoring will go from 2015 to 2020. Not that much elk yet, but moose, big horn sheep, pronghorn, bob cat, mule deer, bear& Mt. Lions (using culverts). They modified the deer guards to be a round rail design and added 5 more – and these are not being walked on by deer, unlike the flat rail deer guards where the deer might attempt to cross them. In the first year, there were 7000 movements across the roadway. They were shooting for 80% success by year 5 and after year 1, they were already at this goal.

Eagle and Summit Counties have been looking at landscape connectivity. They are working with CDOT, CPW. So far, 3 areas have been identified as possible overpass/underpass locations. Q: About the going forward part – talk about successes for other models or other things to pursue for finding funding sources. CA has the MT Lion and are doing grass roots funding, and other states like AZ and NM are passing legislation to help fund these kinds of structures. Q: what is the scope of physical space needed,

can it stay within the ROW? No. Even with wide highway ROWs, there may still be a need to purchase ROW. You also need to think about future land planning. R5 Tony Cady said that the underpasses at 550/160 all required a bump out in ROW so the wildlife can see the other side as they look into the structure so there is grading that is required. It is important to lock in the corridor with conservation easements.

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2017 Colorado Wildlife & Transportation Summit – Dean Riggs, CPW Deputy Regional Manager and Tony Cady CDOT R5 RPEM.

### Get Slides

Dean Riggs - This included the Mule deer Strategy where there is a decline in mule deer in the western US. So how does road kill play a part in this decline? Loss of human life and animal life – 200 people/yr killed in these crashes. 2016 Western Slope Wildlife Prioritization Study. This will be an effective study to expand this statewide.

Tony Cady to talk about the Wildlife & Transportation Summit. CDR and associates helped coordinate this summit. There was a 2 day meeting held in Silverthorne in June. There were 5 key themes 1) Develop an Action plan to move forward 2) create partnerships 3) data and technology – ID data gaps and data sharing. 4) Determine consistent funding and increase staffing, 5) Education and public outreach regarding wildlife and transportation issues in CO. CPW put together a film about the summit and it was shown during this presentation. [Insert site for video.](#)

In r5, there have been many underpass needs identified. Due to funding, only a few of these have been built. Seven of these are completely designed and ready to go as soon as funding is identified. Using wildlife movements, road kill data to identify these possible locations. There is a prioritization of these locations as well, and include other wildlife that would be also benefitted. The Southern Ute at US 160 Lake Capote Wildlife crossing study and the S. Ute donated additional funding to help fund another overpass at this location as well. Tuesday there was a meeting to flush out the steering committee to help move forward and are looking for USFS, BLM, CPW partnerships and hope the TERC can help identify staff that can participate from their agencies. Q: What is the public reaction and awareness on the western slope? There is some, and it is gaining momentum because of SH9, and it getting around with NGO folks. There is a land owner on SH 13 that is pretty supportive. He runs semis up and down that segment of highway so could be a partner in future efforts. They might even want to move livestock across the highway and use the overpasses to do this. Tony is seeing a mixed bag of awareness – one land owner was happy, others might be concerned about wildlife damage on their property and threatened to fence the opening of any underpasses. Some are willing to donate ROW though. County commissioners say they would show up but hardly any did show up to the summit. There is a huge opportunity to reach out to this group. The concern is more about cost vs outcome. There are 2 initiatives = Safe Passage, and Wildlife on the Move on variable message boards. Tried to reduce nighttime speed but got no success regarding the effectiveness of this initiative. With RoadX, bringing technology to the roadways, maybe bring detectors to have real time messages? There is an App for reporting of wildlife on the road, but this encourages texting and driving. Jeff Peterson is the wildlife coordinator for CDOT and he coordinates with the regional maintenance in reporting roadkill that they have to move off the road. Q: What about cost savings to the travelling public? CDOT is looking at improving this cost evaluation. We are finding as well that property owners do not mind so much being

approached by CPW instead of CDOT. If we can get the automobile insurance agency support, this would be really helpful.

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Brandon Marette, Land Use Coordinator from CPW in the NE region. So what is happening in the east? He talked about the mission of CPW – part of which is for others to serve and stewards of the natural resources as well. They evaluate wildlife impacts and recreational opportunities and make recommendations regarding possible mitigations that can be considered. Q: is it a stated goal to help encourage wildlife movements? Yes – but can it be it is part of the stated objects or goal for NEPA documents? Possibly. Then he showed a map for 4 PEL/NEPA projects on corridors throughout the state. They are running cameras to help identify species and hotspots for crossing. What structures are best serving an area regarding the need at that location? Looking at vegetation cover right next to the road that can hide wildlife that will try to cross from the motorist point of view. One area being considered for an underpass is between the rest areas – there is a meadow on the west side and on the east, there is a high slope that can help an underpass be installed. WB PPSL and Floyd Hill there are Big Horn sheep that hang out near the roadway. WestConnect PEL Study at C470 and Kipling north to Boulder via US 6 and SH 93. How do you get the wildlife to cross to a safe habitat, and not into a developed community? US 34 – west of Loveland to Greeley PEL – this area needs overpass/underpass considerations and may include trails considerations.

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David Singer – NEPA/PEL status – There are a lot of active studies statewide 8 PEL, 14 NEPA documents (5 are local agency), He wanted to touch upon I-25 south and are asking a lot of the team and the stakeholders, maybe if you are asked with multiple projects, this I-25 S. project needs to go to advertisement by the end of next fall and maybe give this project a priority in your consideration. Not wanting to skip over any processes, but there is a sense of urgency to get this area fixed. For US 50, the combined FEIS/ROD is coming out soon and it will be nice to have this project completed – but it is a tier 1 project so not project will be built out of this directly.

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FHWA/FTA will be hosting the next TERC meeting finding the Flexibility in the Process as a possible theme. Anyone willing to host the June meeting – maybe CDOT should host in their new building.

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Closing remarks – Thanks for everyone coming – the leads are not really who make this all happening, it is all of you folks that do this so thank you. John thanks the presenters. Dean said that the sportsman were involved in the process. Bill reinforced that the TERC is a big deal and not comment in other states.

The professional Society has a meeting in Grand Junction this Feb. Please contact Michel Cowardin.