

Wildlife Sub-Group Meeting #3 Minutes

11 June 2019 / 1 PM - 5 PM / Teton County Library

STAKEHOLDER ATTENDEES

Nick Hines (Facilitator)
Chris Colligan (Greater Yellowstone Coalition)
Jack Koehler (Friends of Pathways)
Amy Ramage (Teton County)
Ross MacIntyre (River Hollow HOA)
Gary Fralick (Wyoming Game and Fish)
~~Aly Courtemanch (Wyoming Game and Fish)~~
Bob Hammond (Wyoming Department of Transportation)

Additional Attendees

Hank Doering (WYDOT Project Development)
Keith Compton (WYDOT D3 District Engineer)
Ted Wells (WYDOT D3 District Construction Engineer)
Stephanie Harsha (WYDOT D3 Public Relations Specialist)
Darin Kaufman (WYDOT D3 District Traffic Engineer)
Meg Mordahl (WYDOT - NEPA Coordinator)
Hank Rettinger (FHWA)
Bob Bonds (FHWA)
Marshall Newlin (WYDOT)
John Mobeck (Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation)

Action Items:

- Chris will evaluate how other states have implemented end features and present findings at next wildlife subgroup meeting.
- WYDOT will determine the maximum distance west of intersection on WY 22 that a structure can be constructed and still maintain 10 feet of clearance. WYDOT will present findings at the next wildlife subgroup meeting.
- WYDOT will determine optimal location for Priority 4 crossing and present findings at the next wildlife subgroup meeting.

Old Business

1. May 25 2019 Minutes - Corrections/Comments?

WGFD updated group on moose study. Data shows localized movements. Three moose are hanging around project area. It is interesting that no collared moose have been hit. One reason moose tend to stay in Jackson during the winter is due to being fed by the public.

Stakeholders requested timeline on making recommendations for end features (ends of fences, signs, electromats, etc.). WYDOT would like to discuss this today. Comments/recommendations from WGFD: lighting didn't work in Nugget Canyon; varying speed limits/portable lighting/mobile signs/vegetation removal should be looked at; recommend being strategic on location of end of fence in terms of visibility. This will be more experimental since this isn't a migration corridor or big game crucial winter range. Electromats may be problematic for WYDOT due to maintenance involved in winter. Per WYDOT, infrared detection on the side of the road did not work at Trapper's Point and Kemmerer. Stakeholder group stated that newer technology exists and may be more effective. Chris will look into this and how other states have implemented end features and present findings at next wildlife subgroup meeting.

2. G&F Report Update

Wildlife Sub-group Recommendations and Updates:

1. Fencing

- a. From intersection north on WY 390 to approximately RM 0.4 (Raven Haven Rd)
- b. From intersection east on WY 22 to approx RM 3.3 (near the guardrail/irrigation ditch)
- c. From intersection west on WY 22 to approx. RM 4.9 (near Wenzel Lane)
- d. Recommend 8' woven wire fence with wood posts.

No changes to previous fencing recommendations

2. Priority 1 (WY 22 - between WY 22/390 intersection and Snake River)

- a. Wildlife only structure - narrow in length, optimize hydrology, optimize height, and access for turn lanes.

Hank discussed arched culvert. The location was moved closer to the intersection. Length would be 112 feet; guardrail will be needed on north side; south side can be extended past clear zone so no guardrail needed. Cost would be ~\$2.8M (includes materials and foundation improvements). Simple span bridge was also evaluated (greater openness ratio than arched culvert, 100 feet long, 88 feet wide plus curbs). Cost would be ~\$1.5M. More guardrail would be needed with the bridge than arched culvert. Per WYDOT, bridge will make the final decision once all information is provided and discussed with the stakeholder group. Simple span bridge is less expensive; however, it may require more maintenance long term. **Wildlife group agrees on the current location for this crossing.**

3. Priority 2 (East of Snake River Bridge)

- a. Extend bridge east to improve wildlife crossing

Bridge will be extended 64 feet and have 15 feet of vertical clearance with 1:2 slopes.

4. Priority 3 (WY 22 crossing West of WY390/WY22 intersection)

- a. County to install multi-use structure for wildlife and pedestrians. Not currently part of the WYDOT project.

Stakeholder group discussed whether a separate wildlife underpass would be a better option than a shared use structure. WGFD feels that a dedicated wildlife crossing is needed west of the intersection. Original design was 20 feet wide by 10 feet high, dedicated wildlife underpass. Structure is dependent on funding availability (SPET). Stakeholder group would like to know the max distance west of intersection on WY 22 a structure can be constructed and still maintain 10 feet of clearance. WYDOT will determine location and present findings at the next meeting.

5. Priority 4 (WY 390 Crossing)

- a. Look at multiuse (vehicles, wildlife, pedestrian) crossing under WY 390. Currently not part of the WYDOT project.

Biggest pre-cast box that can be built is 14.5 feet wide by 16.5 feet tall. WY 390 would have to be raised 15.5 feet to accommodate a box culvert at the boat ramp road. Box cannot be lowered more due to ditches on west side and wetlands to the east. Project would have to be lengthened by 730 feet on WY 390 in order to maintain a gradual slope. Wetland impacts would be 0.08 acres. Right-of-way acquisition would total 0.18 acres and construction permit areas would total 1.6 acres. Total cost would be ~\$1.7M. Benefits include improving seasonal boat ramp access and use as a wildlife underpass in the winter. Bike path tunnel would need further evaluation. Per WYDOT, County would have to fund this. WYDOT is concerned with sight distances due to the grade raise. This could pose a safety issue. Stakeholder group questioned why wetlands can't be impacted. Per FHWA, wetlands must be first avoided; then, minimized. Impacts are typically justified by improving safety. They may not agree with widening the bike path tunnel for wildlife based on the amount of wetland impacts. A stakeholder group member stated that the Stilson parking area is planned for future expansion (~1300 more parking spaces). This may affect moose behavior and become a human safety issue according to WGF.D.

Thoughts from the stakeholder group: moose data needs to be re-looked at and future development should not be a main consideration due to uncertainty of timeline. The comprehensive plan calls for wildlife permeability. The preference is to have a dedicated wildlife crossing. The pathway can be impacted if there is good reason. Priority four on previous plan set was shown (located between boat ramp road location and intersection). It appears to be the simplest option and would be a dedicated wildlife crossing. Stakeholder group suggested optimizing all four priorities. WYDOT stated that we need to do the right thing and not just put crossings in where we can. We need to be cognizant of taxpayers' dollars.

Stakeholder group would like WYDOT to determine where the crossing could be placed just north of intersection on WY 390.

Summary: We are set with Priority 1 – WYDOT funded. Priority 2 (bridge extension) – WYDOT funded. Priority 3 (\$942K) & 4 (\$1.4M – does not include inflation or engineering costs) – County funded. WYDOT needs to provide optimal design and cost estimates (openness ratio, feasibility, etc.).

6. Pedestrian crossing

- a. Recommended improving access under the west side of the snake river bridge for those who walk on the levee.

SPET – two options (one for intersection and one for wildlife crossings); staff decides how the money is spent. WYDOT's schedule on design: Grading Plans due in November 2019; at that time, design needs to be finalized (pre-cast box takes less time to design than a bridge). SPET is meeting in July to determine items on ballot (SPET funding ~\$15M); voting occurs in November.

New Business

1. Any New Business?
2. Next meeting?

July 16, 2019 (Wildlife Subgroup) & July 17, 2019 (Stakeholder Group)

Project Milestones:

- ✓ Preliminary Plans issued – October 3, 2018
- ✓ Stakeholder Meeting (#1) – December 18, 2018
- ✓ Wildlife Subgroup Meeting (#1) – January 16, 2019
- ✓ Stakeholder Meeting (#2) – January 29, 2019
- ✓ First Public Meeting – February 21, 2019
- ✓ Stakeholder Meeting (#3) – April 24, 2019
- ✓ Wildlife Subgroup Meeting (#2) – April 25, 2019
- ❑ Stakeholder Meeting (#4) – scheduled June 12, 2019
- ❑ Wildlife Subgroup Meeting (#3) – scheduled June 11, 2019
- ❑ Wildlife Subgroup Meeting (#4) – July 17, 2019
- ❑ Stakeholder Group Meeting (#5) – July 18, 2019.
- ❑ Need all Bridge recommendations by July 1, 2019
- ❑ Need all Wildlife recommendations by September 1, 2019
- ❑ Grading Plans – expected Nov 2019

- ❑ Stakeholder Meeting - expected Nov/Dec 2019
- ❑ Right-of-way/Engineering Plans - expected July 2020
- ❑ Stakeholder Meeting - expected July/August 2020
- ❑ Right-of-way/Engineering Plans - expected Oct 2020
- ❑ Final Plans - expected April 2021
- ❑ Project Letting late 2022 or early 2023
- ❑ Construction Spring 2023