

# Wildlife Sub-Group Meeting #4 Minutes

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16 July 2019 / 1 PM - 4 PM / Teton County Library

## STAKEHOLDER ATTENDEES

**Nick Hines** (Facilitator)

**Chris Colligan** (Greater Yellowstone Coalition)

**Jack Koehler** (Friends of Pathways)

**Amy Ramage** (Teton County)

~~Heather Overholser~~ (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)

**Jon Mobeck** (Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation)

### 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)

## ACTION ITEMS

- WYDOT will check to see if another DOT has installed fence up to the pavement using breakaway posts or something similar.
- Chris and the County (Amy) will look at setting up an electro mat test project with goals and design criteria to determine if electromats would be feasible in Teton County. The test was recommended to be done on a county road. Would be looking at maintenance concerns, snowpack effectiveness, etc.
- Chris was going to call and ask some questions about the electro mat system and electric fence. Questions are below in the minutes.
- WYDOT to provide current fence estimate. Completed and attached.

## MINUTES

Jon Mobeck was voted on to be part of the committee due to his wildlife knowledge and experience with wildlife in this area.

### Old Business

1. June 12, 2019 Minutes – Corrections/Comments?

Minor corrections made to parking spaces in Stilson and clarification on guardrail on crossing priority #1.

### Wildlife Sub-group Recommendations and Updates:

#### 1. Fencing

- a. **CHANGED Recommendation**– From intersection north on WY 390 to approximately RM 0.32 (South of Raven Haven Rd, north of River Springs Dr)
- b. **CHANGED Recommendation** – From intersection east on WY 22 to approximately RM 3.96 (Pratt Road)
- c. From intersection west on WY 22 to approximately RM 4.9 (near Wenzel Lane)
- d. Recommend 8' woven wire fence with wood posts.

Discussed different types of fence to include electric fence, electric mesh, coloring the fence wire, steel posts, fiberglass posts and colored wood posts. Decided that it was best to present these options to the main group to further discuss.

More info was needed on these regarding upfront and long term costs, maintenance costs, and whether an electrician is needed to repair the fence.

WYDOT posed the question if we should fence out Stilson based on the future developments proposed there. Showed a map of the latest proposal. It was mentioned that the EA for Stilson stated that the triangle was not used by wildlife, based on a scat survey. The group determined it is viable habitat and movement area for moose and the group did not want to fence the area off. It was proposed to fence out the corner piece of trees from the rest of the development and that was turned down as well. The group decided

that Teton County residents are comfortable with wildlife and must find a way to co-exist in this area. The fence will be installed on/near the highway right-of-way (ROW).

On WY 390 and on Wy 22 the plan is to fence the pathways outside of the ROW. So the pathway will be on the side with the wildlife.

WYDOT did suggest clearing and grubbing on WY390 to help make wildlife more visible by the end of the proposed fence. It was not clear if the clearing and grubbing would happen on this project or earlier on a separate project.

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

- a. WYDOT will pay for a Wildlife structure at the selected location.

3. Priority 2 (East of Snake River Bridge)

- a. WYDOT will pay for extending the bridge east to improve wildlife crossing

4. Priority 3 (WY 22 crossing West of WY 390/WY 22 intersection)

- a. The wildlife crossing location on the attached figure was adequate to the group. The County will need to pay for this structure. A letter of request for an agreement to render services (ARS) from the County would need to be sent to WYDOT.

5. Priority 4 (WY 390 Crossing)

- a. Location 4b on the attached sheet was chosen as the location on WY 390. The County will need to pay for this structure. A letter of request for an ARS from the County would need to be sent to WYDOT.

6. Pedestrian crossing

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

Was not further discussed at this meeting.

## **New Business**

1. End Treatment Options - Chris

- a. Bring as close to the pavement as possible
- b. Boulder fields
- c. Electromats

- d. End at steep slopes/ natural features that act as barriers are good places to end
- e. High levels of human disturbance are good places to end
- f. Straight roads with good visibility are good places to end
- g. Chris did not find anything clarifying whether lighting was effective. Concern about drivers being blinded by the lights. Community might be opposed to lights.

Question was brought up if we can look at experimental options like using animal detection and electro mats across the road. The mats are min of 1.8 meters wide built into the road section. Other ideas were boulders, jersey barriers or bring the fence in to the pavement.

WYDOT expressed concern with bringing obstacles into the clear zone of the road. Question was asked if WYDOT can build a breakaway fence post in the ROW, with wire panels on each section? Could this project be the first to verify if this works? **WYDOT will check to see if anyone has done something like this.**

Animal deterrents can also be things that move. Can we experiment with bags or flags?

WYDOT has done some studies on bags in the past. WYDOT was not comfortable with doing research on this stretch of road as it is one of the busiest in the state. WYDOT was open to research on other roads, possibly county roads, in Teton.

Signage at end treatments was a common theme that Chris found in his research. Continuously lit and flashing signs can be used.

Question asked if you link the signs to something or leave them on all the time. Maybe use them in combination with animal detection system. WYDOT has not had great success with animal detection systems in the past. It was brought up that there are other types of systems now too like area cover animal systems, lidar, radar or doppler systems.

Another option is advanced telemetry systems - Percentage of animals in the herd have a collar (ex. 2.5%) and then when the collared animal is close, it triggers a flashing sign or signal. Probably not the best solution for this project but may work on the feed ground.

It was discussed that Teton County should try some of these techniques and fund them. As long as it's not a hazard to animals or the traveling public, people, etc.

**Look at trying an electromat on a county road as a test run for this project.**

**Would be looking at maintenance concerns, snowpack effectiveness, etc.**

**Recommended to set up test project with goals and design criteria to determine if they would be feasible in Teton County.**

**Questions for Chris to ask about Electromat and animal detection system**

ElectoMat concerns

- Snow cover on the highway
- Soft spots in the snow on the road and plows
- Service point requirements
- Long term maintenance of overlays - pavement preservation
- Maintenance by an electrician
- Longevity/durability
- Gap between pavement and fence - what do you do

Electric Fence Concerns

- Up front costs
- Maintenance costs
- Service points for each segment when there is a break in the fence
- Service point requirements
- Long term costs
- Monthly electric bill
- Maintenance by an electrician
- Yearly maintenance costs
- Longevity/durability
- Height required for moose

Aly - presented two figures of the current moose collaring project. Moose are crossing the road but appears they are not crossing that often. Had discussion on why that might be.

As more data is collected it was discussed to look into a more detailed analysis of the data. Possibly getting the times the moose are crossing the road and then compare to the traffic counts for that time. This might help

determine if the road is acting as a barrier or if the moose are just avoiding it due to better habitat away from the road.

Brief review of the process

- This group will make recommendations to the main stakeholders. Then WYDOT will review.

Next meeting - Possibly Sept if needed.

### **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) - June 12, 2019
- ✓ Wildlife Subgroup Meeting (#3) - June 11, 2019
- ✓ Need all Bridge recommendations by July 1, 2019
- ✓ Wildlife Subgroup Meeting (#4) - July 16, 2019
- ❑ Stakeholder Meeting (#5) - July 24, 2019
- ❑ Need all Wildlife Crossing recommendations by September 1, 2019
- ❑ Public Meeting - expected Sept 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