

**EXECUTIVE TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY**

DATE: Monday, June 30, 2008

TIME: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: Department of Natural Resources
Executive Director's Conference Room, Suite 3710
1594 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, Utah

THOSE PRESENT:

Larry Crist, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Michael Styler, Department of Natural Resources
Bruce Bonebrake, Division of Wildlife Resources
John Njord, Utah Department of Transportation
Carlos Braceras, Utah Department of Transportation
Jim McMinimee Utah Department of Transportation
Shane Marshall, Utah Department of Transportation
Becky Stromness, Utah Department of Transportation
Bill Sinclair, Department of Environmental Quality
Cheryl Heying, Division of Air Quality
Butch Waidelich, Federal Highway Administration
Bryan Cawley, Federal Highway Administration
Edward Woolford, Federal Highway Administration
Julie Lewis, Utah Department of Transportation

ITEM ONE: CHAIR WELCOME

Butch Waidelich called the meeting to order and welcomed those attending. He thanked the Department of Natural Resources for hosting the meeting. Butch said Jason Gipson, Wilson Martin, Robin Coursen, and John English asked to be excused from today's meeting.

Butch asked if there were additional agenda items to be discussed. He said UDOT and FHWA would sign a Memorandum of Understanding, State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions, in the meeting today.

Butch said Shane Marshall recently moved to a position in the UDOT Region Three Office, and Greg Punske has accepted another position in the FHWA Office in Texas. Butch thanked Shane and Greg for their service on the ETEC Committee. Ed Woolford will attend future ETEC Meetings for FHWA, and UDOT will name Shane's replacement in the Environmental Division in a couple of months.

ITEM TWO: HOST PRESENTATION – IMPORTANCE AND SCIENCE OF

WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

Mike Styler said they decided to give a presentation to ETEC Members regarding “Wildlife and Roads in Utah: Problems and Solutions.” He introduced Bruce Bonebrake, Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR), who provided the presentation. Bruce distributed a packet of information on wildlife crossings.

Bruce said traffic volume and speed are up. He reviewed U.S. and Utah Road Ecology Statistics and Utah animal-vehicle collision hot spots. Accidents involving animals and vehicles kill about 210 people per year in the United States.

Bruce reviewed some solutions underway, such as (1) SAFETEA-LU Section 6001 Provisions; (2) Utah Wildlife Crossings, escape ramps, and innovations; and (3) a UTRAC research project on wildlife and roads.

Bruce discussed permeability, which is the ability of many species to move across terrestrial and aquatic landscapes. Transportation must address permeability. He also discussed dimensions and crossing structure type and size. Bruce provided examples of stellar wildlife crossing projects. He discussed placement of projects, fencing and ramps, and connectivity analyses.

Bruce discussed the need to dedicate positions at UDOT and DWR to coordinate on wildlife crossing projects. He reviewed the duties of DWR and its Habitat Section, and he also reviewed the duties of a UDOT Project Engineer. He provided suggestions on how we could get dedicated positions in these two agencies and gain support for expensive highway projects for wildlife crossings.

Bruce reviewed a case study on the I-15 Wildcat Project, what happened with this project, and its successes. The elk population has increased considerably in Utah in the last 20-30 years. Bruce provided a comparison of three DOTs (Utah, Washington, and California) showing population, square miles, interstate miles, and the number of their DOT Biologists. Bruce reviewed a project in Washington--the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project. He reviewed how Washington received legislative support for this project through a billboard project created by school children. Bruce discussed support they are receiving from the Western Governors Association regarding wildlife corridor projects.

Butch thanked Mike and Bruce for their presentation.

ITEM THREE: STATUS OF SOUTH LAYTON INTERCHANGE EIS

Shane Marshall reported on the status of the South Layton Interchange EIS. He reviewed the project study area and the purpose/need for this project. Shane reviewed the build alternatives summary and the impacts associated with those alternatives. The preferred alternative includes a full interchange over I-15 at Milepost 330; a grade-separated railroad overpass over the UPRR as part of the new interchange; a new five-lane roadway from Fort Lane

to Flint Street (750 South connection); removing the existing partial Layton Interchange; and removing the existing at-grade railroad crossing at 900 South and constructing a cul-de-sac. One of the concerns is there has been an announcement that Intermountain Health Care may build a hospital in this area.

Shane presented visuals (south and north) of the existing and proposed views for this area. He reviewed the summary of key impacts, Section 4(f) impacts, and wetland impacts for the preferred alternative. The FEIS should be released by August 2008 and a Record of Decision by September 2008.

ITEM FIVE: UDOT AND FHWA RISK ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Bryan Cawley provided a presentation on the 2008 UDOT and FHWA Transportation Risk Assessment. Bryan discussed the Utah Transportation Program and management strategy. He referred to the “2008 Risk Management Report and Mitigation Strategies” that was included in the agenda packet.

Bryan reviewed the programs they are currently reviewing for risk assessment. The Annual Risk Assessment includes areas of probability and areas of magnitude. Bryan reviewed the participation rate in 2007 and 2008. In 2007 they received an overall 68 percent response rate, and in 2008 an overall 59 percent response rate. Bryan explained the graphs on risks, probability, magnitude, etc., gained from the survey. Risk statements and mitigation examples were provided.

Becky Stromness gave a presentation on the Environmental Program Risk Assessment. She presented graphs on environmental measures, such as EISs ahead/behind schedule, EAs ahead/behind schedule, etc. Becky reviewed risk statements and mitigation for environmental issues for 2006, 2007, and 2008. She said they have had some delays on projects recently where the project manager waited until the last minute for the environmental process. Some of these are due to inexperience of the project managers. There has also been a high turnover rate of environmental staff. Becky said last year, they outlined important steps for staff to follow in the environmental process to ensure projects are not delayed.

In conclusion, the Risk Assessment should help UDOT and FHWA determine where risks are located and how they will resolve those issues. Butch suggested we make extra effort in future studies to ensure the SHPO, EPA, etc., participate in the survey. Becky said in the future, we should provide better feedback to our consultants. We are mainly an oversight division, with consultants doing the environmental work.

ITEM SIX: OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS

Butch provided a background on the Memorandum of Understanding, State Assumption of Responsibility for Categorical Exclusions, between FHWA and UDOT. Butch and John signed the MOU. ETEC members were provided an unsigned copy of the MOU. Shane said the MOU was posted in the Federal Register and received two comments. UDOT will take the signed MOU and get the necessary signature from the Attorney General's Office.

ITEM SEVEN: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

Butch asked the ETEC members for input on future agenda items. The following items were suggested:

- Report on BRAC by Dianne Nielson, the Governor's Energy Advisor.
- DEQ report on PM 2.5 and Ozone.
- Greenhouse Gas Template.
- Update on SR-92.
- Update on Mountain View Corridor.
- Update on I-15 in Utah County.

John mentioned that State Government would change to a four-day workweek beginning August 4, 2008.

The next ETEC Meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 27. Julie Lewis will send an E-mail inquiry to ETEC Members regarding this date. Larry Crist said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would host the next meeting.

ADJOURNED AT 1:20 p.m.