



Planning Connections - February-March 2019

CDOT planning news you can use.

Wildlife Valuation Tool Included in Mitigation Study for Regions 3 and 5



Foraging elk herd. (Colorado Parks and Wildlife photo)

Each year in Colorado, nearly 4,000 vehicle-wildlife crashes cost the state economy \$66.4 million, not including the value of wildlife killed. Sixty percent of these vehicle-wildlife collisions occur on the Western Slope (Regions 3 and 5), home to the largest herds of migratory elk and deer in North America.

CDOT, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Jacobs Engineering Group developed a study that should be released soon, *West Slope Wildlife Prioritization Study*, to identify areas of frequent wildlife-vehicle crashes where targeted mitigation could have the greatest impact. The study focuses on the creation of models based on crashes, habitat, wildlife movement patterns, and anticipated future conditions to identify and map prioritized highway segments on the Western Slope according to their risk of wildlife-vehicle collisions.

The study includes a wildlife valuation tool that allows state employees to factor in the value of deer and elk killed on highways in Colorado for benefit-cost analyses of various mitigation measures. The study showed that the value is \$2,061 for each deer killed and \$2,392 for each elk killed in a vehicle crash. The valuation tool uses an economic theory of contingent valuation, a survey-based economic technique used to assign dollar values to non-market resources, such as wildlife or other environmental values. The wildlife valuation tool includes the willingness of hunters to pay beyond hunting fees or trip expenses, the average number of deer and elk hunting licenses sold to residents and non-residents 2014-2016 (the most recent data), and expenditures by non-residents on hunting trip-related expenditures (gas, food, and lodging). An automated tool - [a benefit-cost worksheet](#) - can assist in evaluating potential wildlife-highway mitigation projects using: (*Continued on page 2*)

- Current CDOT Traffic and Safety methods and valuations for safety grant applications to the state;
- Current U.S. Department of Transportation methods and valuations for federal grant applications; or
- Hybrid benefit-cost methods and valuations for planning and prioritizing mitigation projects.

Jeff Peterson, wildlife specialist at CDOT headquarters, said the study team did a great job valuing wildlife. “Previous work only focused on how much it would cost to repair a vehicle after a collision with wildlife, but this study went further and tried to value the animal itself based on its value to society. A much needed and often ignored viewpoint, in my opinion.” Jeff was one of about 17 CDOT employees who served on the study team, which also included Bryan Roeder (project manager) of the Applied Research and Innovation Branch, Oana Ford of the Multimodal Planning Branch, Mark Rogers of Region 3, and Tony Cady of Region 5.

Aeronautics Division Launches Aviation System Plan, Economic Impact Study



The Aeronautics Division of CDOT does not own any airports. Instead, it functions as a funding agency for airports eligible for federal funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Housed at the Front Range Airport, the Aeronautics Division operates under a board separate from the Transportation Commission. Some CDOT employees may not even know the division is part of CDOT.

That lack of visibility is being rectified in public meetings and webinars with groups such as the State Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC)

Some words that come up when Coloradans think of aviation are depicted above.

and the CDOT Planning Coordination and Statewide Transportation Plan Implementation Committee. The meetings and webinars are part of Aeronautics Division’s launching of its new Colorado Aviation System Plan and Colorado Aviation Economic Impact Study. Under the leadership of Scott Storie of the Aeronautics Division and Pam Keidel-Adams of the consultant firm of Kimley-Horn, the economic impact study is targeted for completion by December 2019 and the aviation system plan by April 2020.

Former CDOT Employee Heading Front Range Passenger Rail Commission

The Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission has selected Randy Grauberger, a former 28-year CDOT employee, as its first project director.

The 2017 state law that created the Commission charged it with the responsibility of developing Front Range Passenger Rail service, including overseeing planning, public outreach, implementation strategies, and related activities. The Commission is to work with Amtrak, *(continued on page 3)*

the BNSF Railway, Kansas and New Mexico to ensure continuation of Amtrak's existing Southwest Chi service through southeastern Colorado. Operating under an initial budget of \$2.5 million, the Commission will closely coordinate with CDOT to improve transportation options along the Interstate 25 corridor. "Getting ahead of the immense population growth and development along the Front Range is a key priority for CDOT," said CDOT Executive Director Shoshana Lew. "We need to put clear options on the table through a real-time collaboration between CDOT and the Commission."

Before re-joining CDOT, the Colorado School of Mines graduate served as senior transportation planning manager at the engineering firm WSP. While at CDOT, Grauberger served in a number of planning positions, including as branch manager in the Division of Transportation Development.

Updates in Brief

New Division Director: An 8-year employee of CDOT, Rebecca White, became the new director of the Division of Transportation Development in March. She has spent the bulk of her time at CDOT working on the Central 70 Project, most recently as deputy director of outreach and external programs that involved implementing mitigation activities in the Record of Decision and leading media and community relations. Before joining CDOT, Rebecca worked at the Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C. for about a decade, focusing mostly on transportation and climate change. Before that, she worked for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) writing land use plans for the BLM's first conservation areas and national monuments. She and her husband have two children, ages 13 and 10.

TRAC Leadership Addition: The Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) now has a vice chair: Craig Blewitt, director of Mountain Metropolitan Transit in Colorado Springs. The TRAC elected Craig, the sole candidate, at its meeting on March 8. Craig will assist Chair Ann Rajewski with TRAC leadership duties.

Transit Project Selection: The TRAC approved establishment of a three-member, short-term subcommittee of the TRAC to provide input to the Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) on transit project selection for approximately \$38 million in SB 17-267 funding. Serving on the committee will be Ann Rajewski, TRAC chair and executive director of the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies, and David Averill of the San Miguel Authority for Regional Transportation. The TRAC will select a third person at a later meeting.

Mid-Year Reviews Beginning: Mid-year reviews of the work of the five metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) begin in April. Teams made up of planning liaisons from the Multimodal Planning Branch, regional planners, and representatives of the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration review will meet with each MPO.

Transportation Commission and STAC

- [Summaries](#) of recent Transportation Commission meetings are on the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC) webpage.
- Notes on past STAC meetings are available [here](#) or from the STAC packets for the following month.

Thanks to the following persons for articles and updates in this issue: Oana Ford, Marissa Gaughan, and Kathleen Collins. Please send suggestions for planning items to gail.hoffman@state.co.us. Copies of past issues of Planning Connections are available [here](#) under Planning Process.