

PANEL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

LANES, LANDSCAPE AND LIFE: INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION PLANNING FOR ECO-CONSCIOUS HIGHWAYS

CO-ORGANIZERS

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ABSTRACT

In 2006, eight US federal agencies signed and published Eco-Logical: An Ecosystem Approach to Developing Infrastructure Projects (Eco-Logical), which proposed that the “Eco-Logical approach,” or an ecosystem-scale approach to infrastructure development and delivery, would yield improved environmental outcomes and reduced project delivery timelines. Since the publication of Eco-Logical, national programs, policies and initiatives were introduced that support nationwide implementation of the Eco-Logical approach. Some of these initiatives include:

- U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Eco-Logical Grant Program
- Eco-Logical Signatory Agency Meetings
- Second Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2)

In addition, FHWA has been partnering with other US Federal agencies in support of initiatives that incorporate Eco-Logical principles, including: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), Executive Order 13604: Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects, Every Day Counts 2, and Transportation Liaisons Programs. In a separate effort, Governors in the western United States identified a need for a region-wide data and mapping tool that would help energy and transportation developers understand wildlife and habitat needs in the pre-planning stages of their work. To implement this vision, the Western

Governors' formed the Western Governors' Wildlife Council (WGWC) and charged them with the development of a west-wide Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) to more efficiently and effectively inform transportation and energy infrastructure, land use, and conservation planning across the West.

The West-wide CHAT, which will publicly launch in December of 2013, will provide data driven, GIS mapped, and scientifically credible information on priority fish and wildlife habitats and connectivity in a consistent and compatible fashion across 16 western states. State-based CHATs are being developed parallel to the West-wide CHAT to support finer scale assessment and project specific planning, mitigation, and conservation as desired and needed by individual states.

This session will examine the ways that the large-scale approaches offered through Eco-Logical and CHAT can inform transportation decision-making and conserve critical environmental resources and will draw connections between the related efforts. The session will feature a panel of experts and will inform attendees of the ways in which they can become involved in *Eco-Logical* and CHAT, as well as the resources and technical support available. The final 30 minutes will feature a discussion amongst the panelists about potential for both initiatives to work collaboratively and efficiently.

PANELISTS

Presenter 1: The Eco-Logical Approach and Connections to Major National Initiatives:

Julianne Schwarzer (617-494-3259, Julianne.Schwarzer@dot.gov), Environmental Protection Specialist, USDOT Volpe Center, 55 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02142, USA

Julianne Schwarzer is a Community Planner for the United States Department of Transportation Volpe National Transportation Systems Center (Volpe Center) who specializes in environmental and ecosystem planning, policy, outreach and communications. Since beginning with the Volpe Center in 2007, her work has focused on ecosystem- and watershed-scale infrastructure planning, facilitation, programmatic outreach and technical assistance. Julianne has worked with agencies including Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Coast Guard. She holds a B.F.A. in Film, Television and Radio from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and an M.C.P. in City Planning, with a certificate in Environmental Planning and Policy, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Julianne's graduate work focused on conflict surrounding urban wildlife management.

Presenter 2: Eco-Logical in Practice: SHRP2 and the Eco-Logical Approach

Fraser Schilling, (530-752-7859, fmshilling@ucdavis.edu), Researcher, Department of Environmental Science and Policy, University of California, Davis, CA 95616, USA

Fraser Schilling has three main areas of research: environmental pollution and policy, transportation & landscape ecology, and indicator system for whole system condition reporting. He is Co-Director of the Road Ecology Center and member of the Environmental Justice Project and of the Information Center for the Environment, all at the University of California, Davis. Recent studies and publications of Fraser's have addressed environmental justice issues associated with Bay-Delta decision-making and contamination, connectivity assessment and planning at multiple geographic scales and with changing impacts, and development of multi-metric system for evaluating the condition of combined social, environmental, and economic systems.

Presenter 3: Connections Between Eco-Logical and CHAT

Deb Wambach (406-444-0461, dwambach@mt.gov), Integrated Transportation and Ecological Enhancements for Montana (ITEEM) Pilot Study Manager, Montana Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena MT 59620-1001, USA

Deb Wambach graduated from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1997 with a B.A. in Conservation Biology and a B.S in Wildlife Management and Ecology. She has been employed as a District Biologist with the Montana Department of Transportation for the past 15-plus years. Working primarily in southwest Montana, Deb is responsible for identifying, analyzing, and mitigating the impacts of highway projects on biological resources including wetlands, rivers and streams, fisheries, threatened and endangered species, wildlife habitat, and wildlife connectivity. Deb served as the ITEEM Highway 83 Pilot Study Project Manager from 2008 through the completion of the process application in 2010. Outside of work, Deb enjoys the outdoor recreational opportunities abound in Montana, including camping, road trips, river floating, hiking, and fishing. She likes to garden and to cook - and loves the company of her two dogs, Piper and Ursa, and of her significant-other, Paul.

Presenter 4: Background and Overview of CHAT

Gregg Servheen (208-287-2713, gregg.servheen@idfg.idaho.gov), Wildlife Program Coordinator, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 600 S. Walnut St., Boise, ID 83707, USA

Gregg Servheen is a Wildlife Program Coordinator for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in Boise, Idaho. His chief responsibilities include land acquisition, technical assistance, habitat conservation, strategic planning, and mitigation. Gregg has a BS from the University of Massachusetts and an MS from Texas A&M University. He has been employed by the Department for more than 25 years and held positions in research, special projects, game management, and technical assistance. Gregg is former President of the Idaho Chapter of the

Wildlife Society, Idaho Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year, and leader of the Department's 2010 Federal Highways Ecosystem Initiatives Award project. He is currently Executive Board Member of the Idaho Coalition of Land Trusts, and a hunter, fisherman, hiker, and wildlife viewer.

Presenter 5: CHAT in Practice

Laura Canaca (623-236-7602, lcanaca@azgfd.gov) Project Evaluation Supervisor, Arizona Game and Fish Department, 5000 West Carefree Highway, Phoenix, AZ 85086, USA

Laura Canaca is the Project Evaluation Program Supervisor at Arizona's Game and Fish Department. She is responsible for ensuring that relevant projects are evaluated for their impacts to wildlife, and has been integral in the development of Arizona's public, online priority habitat mapping system - HabiMap Arizona™. Laura and her team have been key contributors to the technical development of west-wide crucial habitat information through the WGA's CHAT project.