

Minutes of the meeting for Monday June 3, 2013

WILDLIFE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING of the Blaine Co. Transportation Committee

I. Introductions:

Angenie McCleary requested that all attendees introduce themselves. Each person introduced themselves and briefly identified their interests. Approximately 16 people were present. A sign-in sheet was passed around.

II. Update on Mortality Incident Data-Idaho Fish and Game

The new data base from IDFG is not available yet. The data provided came from IDFG's older mortality database from MP 117 (Hailey) to MP 127 (Ketchum) on SH-75 for the previous five years. There were two distinct high mortality areas.

Lili Simpson presented the data in a bar graph format. Angenie McCleary said that she would have it posted on the website.

Walter Burnside asked if there was any interest in the hotspot for deer/elk kills known to exist south of Bellevue. Angenie said that the committee would have its initial focus on SH-75.

Update on Traffic Count Data from ITD

Connie Jones handed out the traffic counts from 2007 through 2012 for the various stretches of SH-75 from Timmerman Junction to Ketchum. Existing traffic data was presented. There are street names or major intersections noted on the sheets also in order to identify locations for the counts. The large traffic counts are between Bellevue and Ketchum. These counts are annual averages, the counts do not include the peak numbers and the counts do not include the seasonally adjusted numbers for heavier summer traffic.

III. Discussion on Highway 75 Speed Limit

Walter Burnside read the Idaho statute on traffic laws for speed limits. A formal study is required and will set the speed limits for a section. By law, the formal engineering study sets the speed limits.

Bruce Christensen answered questions on how speed limits are changed by engineering study. He explained about the 85th percentile and targeting the unreasonable drivers in the top 15% for law enforcement. If speeds are set too low then it generally results in an increased severity of accidents due to the speed differential between vehicles. The engineering study looks at existing conditions including accident history, approach spacing, presence of pedestrians, intersections, vegetation, sight distance, etc.

Alan Reynolds asked about MP 117.5 to MP 119.2. Bruce said that he had done a speed study in this area about 5 years ago.

Lili Simpson asked what is the speed limit on the new section of roadway from Timber Way to Big Wood River Bridge? A gentleman responded that it will change to 45 mph heading north at Cold Springs Drive, at approximately MP 124.7 when construction is completed. (C. Jones checked after the meeting and the 35 mph at Hospital Drive at MP 125.8 remains the same proceeding north). From MP 124.7 heading south, the speed limit remains signed at 55 mph.

Lili also asked where the High Accident Locations (HAL) are in the Wood River Valley? ITD will bring this information to the next meeting.

Gene Ramsey asked about day/night differences in speed limits. Gene said this might be more acceptable to Blaine County residents. Bruce said similar to school zone differential limits.

Mark Caywood said that the community is environmentally concerned and will need community education to sell this program to the public.

Bruce said that this is a good point because for traffic safety the 3 issues to be addressed are:

- 1) Engineering
- 2) Enforcement
- 3) Education

Mike Todd asked about the speed reduction at Timmerman Junction. Gene Ramsey said that the accident rate decreased and there were less severe injuries. Bruce pointed out that other engineering factors were also changed such as narrowing the driving lanes adding rumble strips and adjusting the signs.

Walter read the email from Wendy Jacquet in 2010 concerning speed zones and controversy reducing the speed limits.

Gene Ramsey is supportive of a night time reduction in speed limits but not supportive of a day time speed reduction. Gene mentioned that if this committee pursues public education that they need to include the costs of the vehicle collisions with wildlife to the public.

It was asked about the possibility of keeping the speed limit at 45 mph from River Grove (approximate MP 117.4) through to just north of Deer Creek Road (about MP 119.2) . It could move back to 55 mph at that point if warranted. This has potential to reduce collisions in the Peregrine area. Alan Reynolds stated that there are 28 accesses onto SH-75 in this stretch, 11 are streets.

Angenie said that the commissioners recognize the controversy over speed limits.

IV. Next Steps

Bruce Christensen will offer recommendations and informally look at the speed limit issues in the area of interest which appears to be from Hailey to the Peregrine ranch area. He will do an informal evaluation. He will also look at the day vs. night time speed limit possibilities. He will make his informal recommendations by the July 1 meeting date.

V. Adjourn

The next meeting will be held July 1 at 11 a.m. in the Blaine County Court House.