

Wildlife Accident Mitigation Workshop
Transportation Association of Canada Annual Conference
St. Johns, Newfoundland
September 24, 2003

Roundtable Discussion Topics

Each roundtable discussed two of the assigned topics below and reported their conclusions to the entire group.

- **Funding:** How can the research be funded? Are there opportunities at the provincial or federal or international level? Are there ways to encourage collaboration?
- **Partnerships:** How can we foster better partnerships between NGOs, insurance agencies, wildlife departments, DOTs, traffic safety organizations, highway maintenance contractors, international wildlife/vehicle collision organizations, etc.?
- **Operational effectiveness:** How can researchers, manufacturers, engineers, planners and operational staff communicate more effectively to ensure that mitigation tools can/will be applied? What levels of planning are needed to identify high wildlife collision risk areas prior to construction and to mitigate appropriately?
- **Data collection and analysis:** How can we critically review the literature and design studies that control confounding variables? [One example of this is Peter Scheifele's deer whistle experiment that tested the actual sounds the whistles make, rather than just trying to document a reduction in accidents.] A question that has been raised is the extent to which salt is a contributing factor to kills. Is it possible to assess this with a controlled alternate salt experiment? Or, is the data already available somewhere?
- **Knowledge gaps and research priorities:** What critical pieces of information are we missing to be able to tackle the wildlife collision problem? How can these best be collected? Possible actions could include standardization of wildlife vehicle collision data across states/provinces and improvement of data collection accuracy (possibly using GPS units).
- **Information sharing:** What tools exist for sharing of information (USFS tool kit, Wildlife, Fisheries and Transportation list serve, Deer Vehicle Crash Clearinghouse, ICOET). Do we need more? How can we access this information? How can we get more information out on failures as well as success?

Roundtable Responses

Funding /Partnerships

Partnerships that could be explored include:

- special interest groups (hunting organizations, wildlife conservation groups)
- private companies (forestry companies, car companies, etc.)
- Insurance Bureau of Canada and independent insurance brokers (try to align bigger groups of insurance companies together)
- federal government (Transport Canada and Infrastructure Canada may have some research money, and provinces can access funds through the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program)
- railway companies
- natural resource agencies
- non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- trucking associations
- TAC
- salt/chemical de-icing companies
- international cooperation on mitigation research (such as the FHWA)
- universities (one example was to endow a chair such as the existing position for Traffic Safety Research at the University of Calgary).
- use existing programs to fund wildlife protection measures when new highways are built; use these as “test sections” to evaluate effectiveness of mitigation.

One of the challenges in achieving this partnership is that someone must be the champion/leader. In BC, Insurance Corporation of BC has partnered with other groups to raise money and to address the issue.

Participants also recognized the need to make decision-makers aware of the need for wildlife accident mitigation. One suggestion was to try to get wildlife accident mitigation as part of the 2020 safety target by Transport Canada. The 2010 target assesses fatalities and major injuries, but wildlife accidents are not specifically identified.

Operational Effectiveness

Communication

- personal relationships between individuals in DOTs, natural resource agencies and NGOs
- MOUs, policies, operational procedures between DOTs, natural resource agencies and NGOs
- get public involved (e.g. New Brunswick)

Planning

- GIS, web-based to integrate data from DOTs and natural resource agencies
- GPS location data
- benefits/costs analysis of wildlife vehicle collisions

Knowledge Gaps and Research Priorities

- clearinghouse; a suggestion was made to organize the information so that users could search by published journal articles, in-house reports (grey literature), and informal observations
- integrate information from transportation and ecology/biology research literature
- data integration is essential (police, DOT, insurance companies, natural resource agencies)

Data Collection and Analysis

- look at other jurisdictions
- develop a universal reporting system
- develop a computerized system accessed across regions, like accident reports, with universal access
- establish standard/universal questions and answers
- experimental testing
- gather all available information (what, where, when, age of animal, etc.)
- educate data collectors to establish consistency

Information Sharing

- multi-jurisdictional committees
- universal reporting system
- list serves
- clearinghouse
- contact NGOs to share public information
- important to present information about wildlife accidents at traffic safety meetings

Action Items Specific to TAC

- Environment Council is a mechanism to engage this type of issue. We need a synthesis of “Best Practices” to put forward to the Environment Council.
- As transportation designers we need some type of warrant analysis to look seriously at this issue and put in place an appropriate process to follow this type of procedure.