

August 17, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street S.W.
Room 10200
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood,

I am writing to encourage you to fund the Wyoming Dept of Transportation project for an overpass and additional road work to reduce the conflict of vehicle drivers and wildlife in the Trapper's Point Area and additional areas of Sublette County here in western Wyoming.

There are a number of reasons beside just public safety, which is a major problem, why this project should be funded. I have listed some of them here. I also provide information to back up and describe in more detail my comments. The overpass project is unique in that it promotes a Win-Win situation for all parties involved by providing a highly visible use of public funds that connect together efforts of agencies, private landowners and the community to increase public safety while protecting the natural resources of the area.

- The road hazard at Trapper's Point is the last bottleneck of insuring the safety of drivers while promoting the "Pathway of Wildlife Migration Corridor" unique to the Continental United States.
- People drive at excessively high speeds in the area and animals have little chance of crossing the road safely. With the gas field development in the Pinedale Anticline traffic of pickup trucks and Semi-trucks has increased dramatically the past few years.
- Several US federal agencies (BLM and USFS) and Wyoming agencies (WY Game and Fish, Cultural –Archeology agencies) have recognized the value of the unique conditions of wildlife, crucial habitat and the migrations corridor as a natural resource to Wyoming and nearby National Parks (Grand Teton and Yellowstone Parks).
- The US Forest Service recognizes the value of the migration corridor in linking the Upper Green River Valley with Grand Teton Park. Check with the Bridger-Teton Forest Service Director for details on the Pathway of the Pronghorn in their management plan.
- The Green River Valley Land Trust (GRVLT) - now the Wyoming Land Trust- has worked with private land owners in the Sublette County to establish conservation easements with one benefit of such easements is to promote wildlife and habitat while maintaining the ranching culture of the area.
- The Green River Valley Land Trust (GRVLT) - now the Wyoming Land Trust- has worked with private land owners at considerable expense to provide in wildlife-friendly fencing along the corridor from Trapper's Point north to the boundary with the Bridger-Teton Forest and Wilderness Area managed by the US Forest Service.

- The Trapper's Point Site is listed as a National Historic Site which is a Federal designation based on the archaeological evidence uncovered during roadwork in the area.
- WY DOT provided the funds to do the original archaeological work in the area that uncovered the wealth of the site for historic purposes. The site has cultural artifacts to indicate that the area has been used by man for at least 7200 years in hunting antelope.
- The BLM Management Plan for the development of the Pinedale Anticline Gas Field recognizes the value of wildlife, the seasonal migration, and the specific important habitats in the area. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages extensive lands that are adjacent to the Trapper's Point Area and has implemented stipulations regarding timing and surface occupancy of drilling sites by the Gas field Leases. Check the federal record of BLM for more details.
- The Pinedale Anticline Projects Office (PAPO) has joined a consortium of funding sources to provide up to \$22 million dollars to preserve and promote wildlife habitat and migration along the Green River Corridor near Trapper's Point. WYDOT needs to build the overpasses to complete the package.
- This overpass could be a significant impact in adding to the tourism value of the Pinedale to Yellowstone area. The elk overpass in Banff, Canada that improves public safety with additional value of providing high public visibility in helping wildlife.
- Wyoming DOT has conducted studies to document the number of dead animals hit by drivers at locations along highway 191 and State Hwy 189. The economic value of wildlife and the costs in injuries to drivers and vehicle repair are high based on loss of each animal and passenger injuries and vehicle repair.
- There are a number of animals not counted as road kill since they crawl off the road in shock and die a distance that is not included in the road counts of WYDOT
- There is public outrage in the local community at the huge cost to the state in wildlife resources, hazardous driving conditions of animals on road and winter driving conditions. There are articles in the local and state papers on the problem and recognition of the waste of state resources. It is a public relations nightmare that needs to be fixed.
- Citizens are concerned about the problem of reckless drivers, road hazards that are avoidable with construction of an overpass. I thought it was a problem for Game and Fish to handle but it is a Department of Transportation problem.
- Legal liability to the state in that they are aware of a problem but not addressing to fix it properly and insure motorist safety.
- Wildlife will adapt to the overpass and use it safely. Elk, deer, and antelope have demonstrated elsewhere that animals will adjust to changes on the migration route that ensure safe passage. See studies in Banff, Canada and Sage Junction in Wyoming.

- **Funding the construction of the overpass and other requested roadwork would be a positive public relations project in demonstrating current efforts to work with other agencies to promote public safety and spend money in a way that promotes public safety by eliminating a recognized problem and liability**

The basis for my evidence to back up the comments

- I live in Sublette County, Wyoming and have a job that requires I drive long distances on the State Highways as there are few paved roads in the area. People have to drive here as many basic services are only available in Rock Springs (100 miles south of Pinedale) or in Jackson (76 miles north of Pinedale).
- I have lived in the area for a number of years and this is my home where I am involved in many aspects of the community. I live in Cora at Mile 4 near the Post Office. On Highway 352 at the Cora Y there are numerous incidents of animals hit by vehicles. The speed limit sign says 65 mph so drivers seem to view that as a minimum even though road conditions suggest otherwise.
- The first mile of Hwy 352 is adjacent to the Trapper's Point landform, has no shoulder, is a two lane road with lots of truck traffic, and has sections with a double yellow line and a big corner. Deer come up out of Duck Creek right where there is no shoulder and right on to the roadway. The speed limit should be lower and give animals a chance.
- My neighbors and I have discussed the **issue that many drivers do not even stop if they hit an animal to look at the damage to their vehicle let alone check on the condition of the animal hit**. I can provide their names and their contact numbers if your staff needs to get the details.
- Twice in the past few weeks I have found crippled/injured animals along the road side that have been hit by cars and left by the driver to die a slow death. If the animal is alive, I call the Dispatch at the Sheriff's office to request someone come out and shoot the animal to put it out of its misery. You can check their records in that I, Peggy Bryant, seem to find my share of injured animals. I observed numerous drivers pass by the crippled antelope flopping along the roadside.
- **People drive big pickup trucks with the bull-bar on the front so if they hit an animal the truck is not damaged.** I can provide names of neighbors and their contact numbers if you want to pursue this fact.
- Often driver's on Hwy 191 at Trapper's Point are driving at excessive speed, close to +80 mph. When I turn off Hwy 352 on to Hwy 191 I always swing over to the far right lane and begin to speed up from a complete stop to the posted 65 mph or what is safe for conditions. Commonly the driver of the vehicle coming over the Trapper's Point hill will pass me and then pull away from my car. If I am doing 65 mph and they are pulling away from me at an additional mile per minute, they can be going close to 100 mph. There have been bad accidents at the corner and that may be the reason there is a road video cam posted there.
- People are always talking and writing letters about the senseless loss of wildlife and the risk of injury from hitting a deer, elk or antelope. We have to call the Sheriff's office to get many officers to show up and shot wounded animals on the roadway. A common situation is of a

doe getting hit by car and then her fawn/calf runs out after her and gets hit by the next vehicle – result is two dead animals on the roadway. Recently a motorcyclist hit an elk cow and both died but that left her calf running back and forth alongside the road. The situation was very upsetting for the Emergency Response Crew.

- My neighbor had the experience of driving van full of kids, hitting a deer and wrecking her car; luckily none of the passengers were injured but the deer died. When my neighbor reported the accident to Wyoming Game & Fish office, the employee replied “Oh Yeah, people hit deer there all the time”.
- **Right now there are lots of antelope moving through the area and I have seen crippled and dead animals along the roadway. Before the migration season begins we need to do something to help reduce the incidence of wounded wildlife.** I have asked a local news paper to do an article of what drivers should do if they hit an animal and it is not dead.
- See attached PDF page of an example of vehicle-wildlife accidents in one week during migration.
- **I just want to repeat my support for funding the construction of the overpass and other requested roadwork at Trapper’s Point near Pinedale, Wyoming. It would be a positive public relations project in demonstrating current efforts to work with other agencies to promote public safety and spend money in a way that promotes public safety by eliminating a recognized problem and liability.**

Thank you for consideration of the concerns listed in support of this overpass project and its funding. Contact me if you need any additional information to my suggestions.

Sincerely,



Peggy K. Bryant

Contact me at
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Drivers collide with antelope, elk, deer

On Oct. 14 at about 9:20 p.m., a deputy was called to Highway 191 in front of the Hampton Inn, where several antelope had been hit. The deputy arrived and found six antelope in the roadway that appeared to have been hit by a large truck. The deputy moved

p.m. C
ing party relayed another party was involved in the accident and suggested the deputy contact her for specifics.

The deputy made contact with the woman who relayed she and the other party backed out of the incident.

the dead antelope off the road. There was no vehicle found that had hit the antelope and the call was cleared.

On Oct. 15 at about 6:45 p.m., a deputy saw a vehicle, with its flashers on, that was parked along side the road at about mile marker 105 on Highway 191. The deputy made contact with the driver who said she had struck a deer at about mile marker 135. The deer died but did considerable damage to the vehicle. The driver said she thought she could make it home to

permission to leave the vehicle. The car was left along side the road and outside the lane of travel.

Oct. 15 at about 11 p.m., a deputy was advised by dispatch a vehicle had struck a deer on Fremont Lake Road. Upon arrival, the deputy met with a driver who advised she was southbound on Fremont Lake Road when a deer ran out in front of her. She said she was unable to avoid a collision and struck the deer with the driver's side of the vehicle. The deputy observed damage

On Oct. 16 at about 1:30 p.m., a deputy responded to the area of mile marker 116 on Highway 191 for a report of an antelope struck by a car and still alive. The deputy found the animal and put it down.

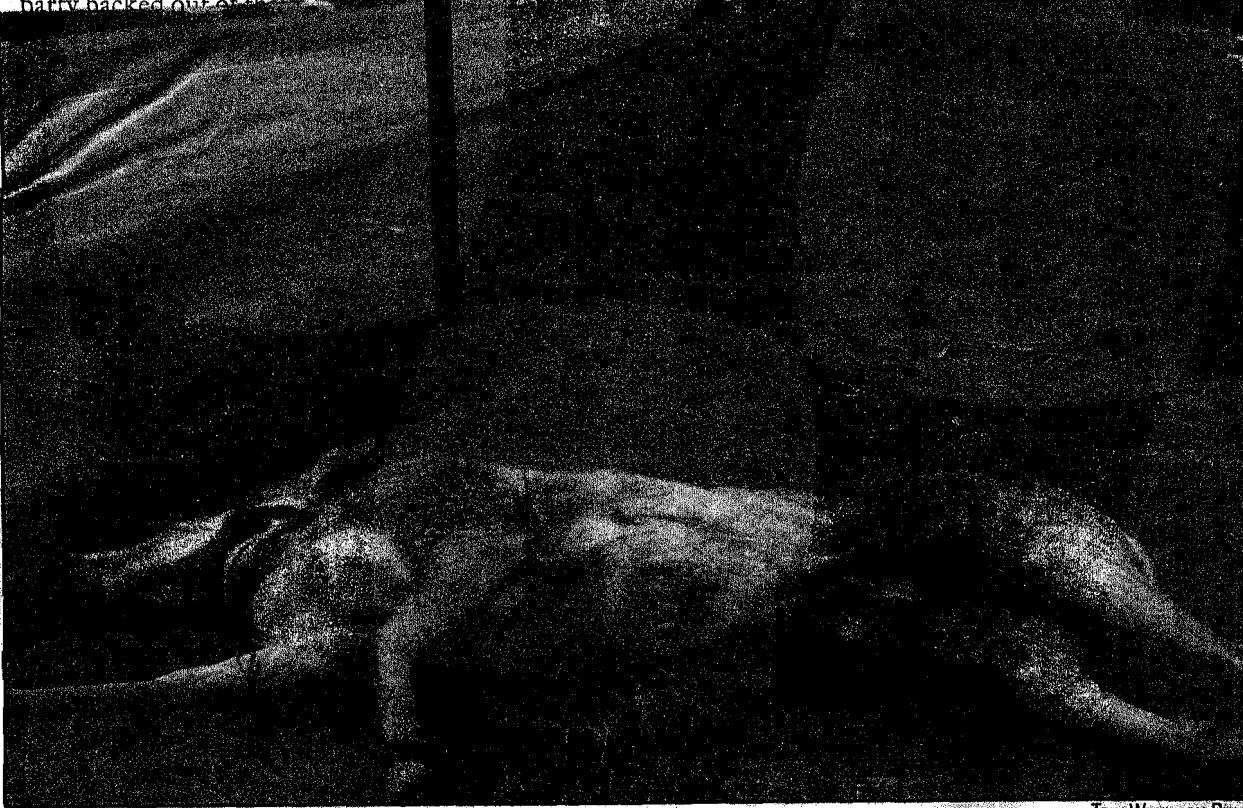
On Oct. 16 at about 3:30 p.m., a deputy was advised a vehicle had struck an elk near the Rim and the vehicle was at the Daniel Junction. The

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Road kill

Five dead antelope were seen on either side of Highway 189/191 heading west out of Pinedale toward Jackson late last week. According to area maintenance supervisor for the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Darrell Snyder, the antelope were hit by a semi trying to pass another vehicle. "People need to slow down, everyone is in a hurry," Snyder said, "especially when it is storming because the animals want to stay close to the road."

Snyder said Game and Fish has been posting vehicle message signs throughout the county in migratory areas.



TREY WILKINSON PHOTO

Sent: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: The Bridge
All: In case you haven't seen this, I thought it was worth your viewing. MLW

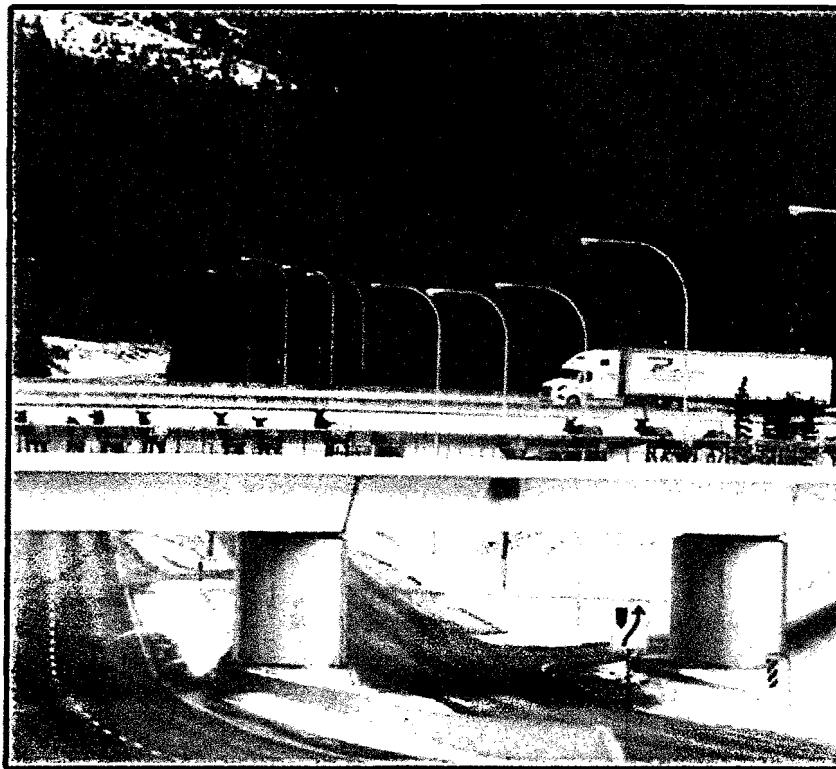
From: jean [mailto:jeansmith@wymail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 19, 2010 10:17 AM
To: [REDACTED] **World**
Subject: FW: The Bridge

Isn't this fabulous? J

Subject: Fwd: The Bridge

Begin forwarded message:

The Bridge, Nice Work Canada



**WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT?
If You Build It, THEY Will Come...**

This is the actual turn-off from Banff, Alberta, Canada to the #1 highway to Calgary ...

Great picture isn't it? They had to build the animals their own crossing (especially the elk) and after the highway was built there were far too many accidents.