

MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
Business Meeting – ADC30
Committee on Ecology and Transportation (ADC30)
Business Meeting
January 12, 2009 1:30 – 5:30 PM
Minutes

Prepared and Submitted by:

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Secretary ADC30

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February 2009

TRB ADC 30
Committee on Ecology and Transportation
Annual Business Meeting
January 12, 2009 1:30 – 5:30 PM
Hilton – 1919 East

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:30. Tom Linkous, Chair, showed pictures from the mid-year meeting in Denver. Friends, members and guests were introduced and the attendance form was circulated. The Committee approved 2008 Annual Meeting ADC30 Business Meeting Minutes.
Tom organized the meeting so that subcommittees could meet at the end of the meeting. He reminded the subcommittee chairs that they have the option to have a meeting outside of the committee meeting.
Tom emphasized that the Sunday workshop on research needs and funding was terrific. Since this was an “e-meeting”, it can be reviewed either on the TRB website; presentations can be viewed on our website.
Triennial Strategic Plan/Committee Annual Report of Activities
2. Committee Succession Planning: Next year will be the Committee’s third year; TRB requests that we rotate 1/3 of our membership annually; there is a 9- year time limit for service on the committee. We have approximately 25 members including a young member. At some point we will be soliciting interest level and also interest in being Chair, as Tom will probably cycle off as Chair. If anyone is interested let Tom know. We should also mention this in the next newsletter.
3. **TRB issues and news** – Christy Gerencher, Senior Program Officer & Staff Representative provided an update on TRB news.
 - a. Christy is working on an unofficial task force to improve all TRB communication (brochures, pamphlets, etc.). This will help TRB outreach. No rotation is necessary for the committee. The goal is to expand the “communications portfolio” to reach out to new/untapped members. For example, we have a list serve that can be used by anyone to pose questions. CTE has a similar one for ICOET. Tom requested that all members sign up for our listserv on the website. Marcia will give Chris a list of email addresses and he will get them on the list serve. Webinars are another useful outreach method.
 - b. Christy reported that TRB member survey (28% return) provided useful feedback on why people are members and what can be improved.
 - c. Annual meeting statistics: 3400 papers were reviewed, resulting on 600 sessions and xx committee meetings. More than 50% of papers have resulted in posters.
 - d. TR News - Environmental Issue will be published in the spring. This committee contributed three articles- WTI prepared two articles, one on animal-vehicle collisions and a second on fish passage.
 - e. The Research Needs subcommittee will need to review research statements in TRB database every three years or else they will be deleted.
 - f. Status of AICP accreditation at TRB sessions- there are still ongoing discussions but the monetary consequences of addition accreditation are problematic.
 - i. Attendance by state transportation employees is lower than usual. Christy acknowledged the need for conference phones to allow members to participate without travelling. However, the cost of the phones (\$800/day per room) is significant. Internet connection is also in an issue that needs resolution.

4. **Environment and Planning Section** – Kate Quinn updated the Committee on Section news. Meeting attendance is expected to be lower (4-8% reduction) but the high number of last-minute registrations makes it difficult to quantify. Forty-two percent of the state DOTs have travel restrictions; 4 states are sending no one. TRB is looking for ways to expand participation without physical participation. The Spotlight Theme for 2010 is “Expanding project delivery: Bold Ideas for Big Challenges”. Climate change, infrastructure, fuel types are still major focus areas. Kim Fisher is developing a section of the website to be devoted to research, including needs statements. Other ways to expand membership have included raising the “young member” age limit to 35. There is a Thursday morning session on work force, including succession planning. The Environmental Analysis “natural resources” subcommittee has changed to be “strategic issues” subcommittee. It would be desirable for each committee in the section to have one member involved, so that it would in effect be a way to create a focused, within-section liaison. This committee would address cross cutting issues and bring them to the forefront to the rest of the transportation community.

Kate also indicated that TRB is considering holding another Research Needs conference. The conference will include members of this committee. The conference in the past has produced documents that have been somewhat effective. The prioritization is especially important. The fact that TRB and AASHTO have separate processes needs to be resolved. We need to be sure to “market” these research ideas, especially beyond NCHRP. The last conference cost around \$50,000, funded by FHWA and others.

The 2010 mid-year meeting will be a mega-environmental meeting, hosted by CTE. It will be held in the Raleigh or Charlotte NC area. The focus will be better delivery of better transportation solutions. A wide range of environmental topics will be presented. Susan is our representative on the planning committee. Sustainability, marine environment, aviation and rail have been contacted; landscape design is another committee, but we have not been able to contact them. SCOE will participate; proceedings will be published and be composed of the presentations on CD.

Our Section is in the Planning and Environment Section; the Section is trying to ensure all committees have a Strategic Plan and then annually update the triennial review. Since we already have a strategic plan, we should not have much to do.

5. **Subcommittee Reports**

- a. **Communication** - Marcia Bowen

The Committee activities included publication of meeting minutes and two newsletters, spring and fall. The newsletters are timing is generally before the mid- and annual meetings. These are distributed electronically and posted on the website. Marcia asked friends to review the list of email addresses circulated during the meeting to be sure they are correct. We will periodically ask if friends still wish to be included. Sandy said that it appeared we have a sufficient number of friends to rotate 1/3 of the committee. Getting state DOTs to participate is a critical issue. The Communications committee also includes the web site. Chris Gesing gave the website report (attached). Annual meeting presentations sponsored by the Committee will be posted. It would be good to add more content to the website. Chris thanked CTE for supporting the website and to Michael Baker Inc. for developing website content.

- b. **Liaison** – Lars Carlson

Lars distributed a liaison form via email for liaison members to fill out when they attend liaison meeting; these will collated for the liaison report. The form includes a summary of topics discussed, items of interest, action items, and follow-up items. When several members attend, one person (the official liaison person) should prepare the form.

- c. **Programs** – Joe Burns, Alex Levy (paper review coordinator)
 - There were two workshops sponsored (Research Needs, EMS). There was a session on Ecological and Cultural Sustainability: 5 years series. This year was Peer to Peer Information Sharing Technology- how can different agencies do simultaneous review (with Joe chairing). The overarching goal over the next five years is to consolidate the cross cutting issues into a process with performance metrics. Ultimately this will work into a research problem statement. Joe will want to cycle off as the program chair by the 2010 meetings. Tom complimented Joe on his ability to link with many other committees and other groups. Perhaps Joe can continue with this series in 2010 without being chair. Next year Joe hopes to have a session on cross-cutting performance measures with inputs into EMS.
 - o Greening Asset Management – (prepared by Deb Nelson/Gary McVoy- Tuesday 10:15)
 - o Travel demand management
 - o GIS Research Road Map Workshop
 - o EMS: Joe reviewed the workshop led by Gale Ackerman, U OR. Performance metrics, especially mitigation.
 - o Paper Session – Alex Levy- five papers selected for review. 25 reviewers invited to review including some outside members/friends; 3 papers were recommended for presentation (Session 767, Wed.); final publication decision is still pending (February 2 is deadline, dependent on the recommendations of the reviewers). Some re-review is needed. Alex cautioned that email address changes can prevent login for paper review, so be sure to update TRB when email addresses changes. Paper review is important for members.

2010 Annual Meeting – Chair & Paper review. One session will stem from ICOET along with potentially one workshop. Tom asked for a person to spearhead this effort. In the past, we've rated presentations and the highest rated were asked to present. Last ICOET, Deb Nelson selected strategically important papers from ICOET to bring to TRB. Alex asked us to consider the theme "Transportation Delivery: Bold Ideas for Big Challenges". The sessions/titles need to be submitted in September. Sandy suggested that we could decide at ICOET, and the process and some of the decisionmaking could occur before since we will know the topics. Mary will take the lead on working with Deb on a process to select papers for 2010 annual meeting. Susan and James will work with Mary to develop the process and will communicate with the members. By default the person bringing the ICOET is the meeting chair; Alex will help with the paper session.

2009 ICOET News (and Committee Midyear Meeting): ICOET will be held this year from Sept 13-17 in Duluth MN. The location is very walkable, with air flights directly to Duluth or a 2-3 hour drive from Minneapolis. The call for abstracts has been extended to January 31; so far, 60 have been submitted. This can be done electronically through www.icoet.net or through the CTE website.

There may be some limited travel assistance for those that have travel constraints. Details on accommodations are on the website. Frank Pafko MN DOT is the local sponsor. Chairman Oberstar will be there.

- d. **Research** – Sandy Jacobson: The research needs has revitalized the research needs process. Taking the lead from Environmental Analysis Research Needs Subcommittee, our subcommittee met with the public lands and environmental analysis research needs subcommittee at mid-year meeting. There was only a little overlap between the different groups. Sandy would like to have a “co-chair” or “chair elect” to work with Sandy this year to help with information transfer. There will be continuing need to keep research needs updated, add new research needs, and coordinate with AASHTO. Lars Carlson and Patty Cramer have done much of the heavy lifting for the group. Take home messages from the workshop: the process is very confusing, and the session helped clarify much of it. What is the likelihood of “implementation” i.e. what “science that can be used” is. Usefulness will help funding. TERI (AASHTO/ NCHRP 2525) and TRB (research needs database, <http://rns.trb.org>) there is some overlap. The website for funding sources (www.trb.org/researchfunding) and a research library for results. Tom passed out information on the four current research needs statements; he asked members to review and let the subcommittee know which are priorities and what may have been missed.

 - e. **Steering Subcommittee** – Mary Gray presented information on the Triennial Strategic Plan. The subcommittee will gather the information and prepare a draft Triennial Plan. Feedback from ALL committee members will be important. The goal is to complete this by December, but Mary will try to complete well in advance. She also discussed that the WTI is going to have an international competition on wildlife crossings. The winner will be announced at the ICOET awards banquet.
6. **AASHTO Update** – Kate Kurgan, Center for Environmental Excellence updated the group on new items for CEE. New topics added include sustainability, 4f, noise, and historic bridges; a searchable case law database has been added. A section on GIS will be added in the next 6 months. Their Work Plan is posted on their website; they are in year 2 of three year program.
- TERI Transportation and Environment Research Ideas Database-(TERI) is on the website; reviewed and updated each spring, including a status assessment. CEE solicits ideas from many organizations each spring; they are then prioritized and CEE works with AASHTO. TRB database is queried and some of these statements are added or incorporated into existing ideas. Air quality, natural resources, cultural, environmental process subcommittees help prioritize ideas in their subject area before presenting to overall committee. FHWA is consulted to eliminate any statements of research already being conducted by FHWA. This activity all timed so needs statements are submitted in time for funding consideration. Our committee can review the TERI database to make sure it is current and add other needs statements. Specific and detailed needs statements are more likely to be forwarded for consideration. Project cost (<\$100 k goes to 2525) and timeframe help determine where the statement is submitted. Environmental issues are a small subset of TRB list. We looked at TERI database to determine if any were applicable. There was some overlap, and the committee (Joe Crossett) tries to eliminate overlap and redundancies. We should get State DOTs to champion our projects when possible. CEE probably gets 1 project funded annually. There was discussion that once

data are in database, the ideas are no longer proprietary, which could be an issue for some.

- 7. Agency Updates** – FHWA, USFWS, USFS, USEPA, Others: Carol Atkins FHWA said the Eco-Logical Grant recipients will be listed on the website. Mary has been working with USFWS to develop a web-based Biological Assessment tool. She expects the process to be field tested. FHWA will sponsor a research project on invasive species and wildlife uses in mitigation sites; Joe will send an email to NGO; Federal interagency committee for invasive and noxious weeds. (Sean). He wants to identify states in terms recovery credits (USFWS) and has funding. He said water and ecosystem sections are now in project development section and will have better connection to states. USFS Western Gov Association passed a habitats and corridors initiative 1.5 year ago, and state wildlife agencies plan to identify crucial corridors; western regional energy zone will be added to this. Green infrastructure community of practice being developed. TNC developed initially. Designed to combine process and be more cost effective. Sandy said that the research program has a small research grant for ecology; that will be housed in Pacific NW and SW research stations. USFS is developing training programs with FHWA and Federal Lands. The National Conservation Training program will host the course “Innovative approaches to highway and wildlife” in August. USFWS Sean Furness had a “dust conference” looking at engineering and environmental aspects. USGS Columbia (MO) Environmental Lab was given a grant to study dust suppressants, including chemical composition. There are 250,000 miles of roads in the federal lands programs; research ideas and statements that involve ecology likely affect these roads; they have funding and decision process is straightforward. Any research need statement (TRB or otherwise) needs more than entry into database, it needs a champion.

USEPA – Laura Gibansky, Office Wetlands/watersheds/oceans is starting a new conservation program for healthiest aquatic ecosystems. Former focus on water quality standards hasn't focused on ecosystems/watershed; they are now focusing on ecosystems, habitat, water quality, species assemblages, landscape condition, and the hydrologic flows necessary to support them. Fluvial geomorphology also considered in habitat assessment, along with disturbance. EPA wants to integrate healthy intact watersheds at the state level, and implement strategies to protect/conserv. The program is officially being launched this month (USEPA Healthy Watersheds Network) and EPA is taking a leadership role. They are meeting with instream flow councils, state wetland managers, and other groups as well as other federal agencies and NGOs (TNC) to work together in a systems approach. (Green infrastructure group has been the informal network). Landscape America is a new mapping website that includes plants and animals. She indicated there is some funding available to support these activities, for example 319 grants and Economic Stimulus Package State Revolving Funds. She also mentioned the Northwest Habitat Institute an information clearing house focused on conservation of Pacific Northwest native species and habitats. The information and funding sources could focus mitigation (preservation) efforts. Tom asked that EPA submit an abstract for ICOET. Mary mentioned the Oregon Trout program, which is doing something similar. Also FHWA Eco-Logical goals are in parallel.

- 8. Organization Updates** – CTE. James Martin handed out a written update on CTE activities. Context sensitive solution dialogue is a new program soliciting best practices in CSS; CTE is looking for participation in the steering committee. The program will host 5 regional workshops next fall and winter that highlight local examples of best practices. CTE continues CSS training for state DOT staff as well as training in Merger 101, NEPA

streamlining. One of CTEs most successful venues is the CSS summer academy, students that work as interns for state DOTs and train at CTE and then study and report on CSS projects. The CTE teleconference series is continuing, the latest webinar was on climate change. There were 650 participants registered on the web, plus additional satellite broadcast participants that likely pushed the number over 1000. CTE will probably conduct a follow up webinar.

WTI: their summer student program was successful, so they are continuing it this year. Committee members can let any interested college students know.

The Animal vehicle subcommittee meeting (under the safety and data analysis committee) will meet Tuesday am, and will have presentations on use of PDAs and Banff wildlife crossings.

9. **NGOs** – Humane Society of the US, Defenders of Wildlife, others. Susan Hagood Humane Society updated the group on their box turtle project, where permanent fencing and culvert were successfully used to protect box turtles; information from the study was to improve culvert design. HSUS has located hundreds of box turtles in path of Maryland Intercounty Connector Project and is experimenting with a process of confining animals whose habitat will be completely destroyed to determine whether they can accept new habitat.

10. **Future Meetings**

ICOET 2009 – Duluth, Minnesota, September
2010 – TRB Section/Group Meeting Mega Meeting

11. **Subcommittee meeting time (Steering, Research Needs)**

There was discussion of the subcommittees before the meeting was adjourned.



Attendance Roster
2009 Annual Meeting

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