



Partnerships in Action

Linking Conservation and Transportation Planning

Summary: The FHWA Project Development and Environmental Review Office, NatureServe and Defenders of Wildlife are hosting three workshops to improve linkages between conservation and transportation planning.

These workshops will emphasize the use of information, tools and methods that can be shared between the transportation community, and the resource and regulatory agencies at the local, State, regional, and national levels. We will feature information, tools and methods that are being used locally, as well as internationally. These workshops are aimed at demonstrating how the information and tools presented can save money and time by streamlining transportation projects and planning.

Timeline and Point of Contacts: The first workshop was held in Little Rock, Arkansas in May 2006, a Colorado workshop was held on August 15 & 16, 2006, and the Arizona workshop is planned for November 8th & 9th, 2006. Copies of the workshop presentations, notes and other reference materials can be found at: <http://www.defenders.org/habitat/highways/workshops/home.html>

The FHWA point of contact in each state are: Randall Looney (AR), Mike Vanderhoof (CO), and Steve Thomas (AZ). The overall project leads are Shara Howie from NatureServe, and Trisha White from Defenders. The point of contact for each NatureServe Member Program (locally called Natural Heritage Programs) is: Cindy Osborne (Arkansas Natural Heritage Program), Melissa Landon (Colorado Natural Heritage Program), and Sabra Schwartz (Arizona Heritage Data Management System).

Workshop Content:

The workshops will include an overview/demonstration of:

- Ø efforts underway that link conservation and transportation planning – local and agency-wide (Eco-Logical, Green Infrastructure, etc.)
- Ø major conservation approaches in use (including Natural Heritage methods and State Wildlife Action Plans)
- Ø software tools being utilized for conservation planning (including NatureServe Vista, Community Viz, Quantm, etc.)
- Ø other local tools, methods and data in use to support conservation and transportation planning

The workshops will be structured to allow discussion and the formation of a modified process for transportation planning that includes an infusion of various data, methods and tools presented during the workshops.

Workshop participants will be expected to represent their agency regarding its responsibilities for subject matter and jurisdiction, and to facilitate moving forward the goals of this initiative. Workshop participants will also be expected to work toward future efforts in developing products and results, and demonstrating their use. Possible approaches can include considerations of cooperative funding and partnerships that will facilitate demonstration, delivery, and use into the future. As one example, workshop participants could assist in demonstrating and delivering products and results by giving presentations at professional conferences relevant to their agency and their subject matter.

Outcomes and Products from the Workshops will include the following:

1. A revised planning process with specific next steps and leads to ensure implementation
2. Workshop materials
3. A compilation of materials on a variety of conservation decision support tools and methods
4. NatureServe Vista case study presentation (with example analyses and output results)
5. Summary of concepts on information sharing and coordination across agencies (data management, programmatic approaches)
6. Workshop summaries with cumulative lessons learned
7. Summary of future efforts/phases

Goals for the Future:

The Workshops will seek to set the stage for use of consistent scientific methods, data collection and compilation techniques, analyses, and products - useful for coordination/consultation between resource and regulatory agencies towards linking conservation and transportation planning. Future efforts will continue to pursue this goal.

If you have ideas for the workshops or would like further information please contact Shara Howie (703.797.4811, shara_howie@natureserve.org) or Trisha White (202.772.0236, twhite@defenders.org).