

Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands (ATPPL) Program*

Review: Summary and Results of Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) Activities Conducted to Date

September 2009

Beginning in late 2006, the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands (ATPPL) Program — jointly administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) — conducted a number of site-specific Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) activities, aimed at providing recommendations to federal land management agency (FLMA) staff on addressing transportation needs. These TAGs, coordinated by the U.S. Department of Transportation John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, were based on a similar series of successful activities, also known as TAGs, begun several years ago by the National Park Service (NPS) as part of its Alternative Transportation Program.

Land units operated by NPS, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) are eligible to submit project proposals for ATPPL funding. In some cases, potential applicants need assistance in scoping projects or in identifying their transportation problems and needs: few land units have transportation experts on staff, and ATPPL, as a new program, is not yet well understood. In other cases, land units may have transportation issues that could be effectively addressed by an effort much smaller than a months-long planning study. TAGs — usually a 2-3 day site visit by an interagency team of transportation professionals — are intended to respond to all of these cases: delivering technical assistance, strengthening project applications, raising awareness of the ATPPL program, and saving FTA, DOI, and the FLMAs a great deal of time, money, and effort.

To date, 11 TAGs have been conducted under the ATPPL program, as summarized in this document. Unit staff made logistical preparations for and actively participated in all phases of the TAGs, including reviewing final reports for each TAG and implementing the recommendations contained within the reports. Some TAGs have led to successful ATPPL project proposals; others suggested ways that units could address their transportation needs without the need for ATPPL funding.

ATPPL-Funded TAGs Conducted Nov. 2006–June 2009

Agency	Site	Location	Date	Purpose	Result
USFS	Tri-Canyons / Wasatch-Cache National Forest	Salt Lake City, UT	Nov. 6-9, 2006	Address feasibility of bus shuttle and other forms of alternative transportation.	Forest obtained FY 2007 ATPPL grant for \$204,000 for a feasibility study.
BLM, USFS	Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area; Spring Mountains National Recreation Area	Las Vegas, NV	Dec. 4-8, 2006	Address conflicts related to parking, traffic, safety, growing visitation (and the increasing urbanization of the Las Vegas area), and threats to natural environment	Forest obtained FY 2007 ATPPL grant for \$168,300 for a pilot ski season shuttle.
NPS, FWS	Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge	Chatham, MA	July 17-19, 2007	Scope planning study funded by FY 2007 ATPPL grant.	Study scope created; study in progress.
NPS, USFS, FWS	Colorado Front Range	Lakewood, CO	July 24-26, 2007	Explore strategies for enhancing alternative transportation access in the context of an innovative regional partnership.	Federal agencies continue to collaborate with one another, and have increased efforts to participate in state/regional transportation planning processes.
NPS, BLM, USFS	Eastern Sierra / Inyo National Forest; Devils Postpile National Monument	Mammoth Lakes / Bishop, CA	Aug. 21-23, 2007	Explore partnering opportunities and strategies for enhancing regional alternative transportation access and interagency coordination.	Scope created for study funded by FY 2006 ATPPL grant; study in progress.
NPS, USFS, DOI	Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest; Mt. Rainier National Park	North Bend, WA	Sept. 25-27, 2007	Scope complex transportation needs over a vast area and in the context of many different goals, including serving as a regional open space allowing "Pugetropolis" residents to connect to nature.	Forest obtained FY 2008 ATPPL grant for \$500,000 for a transportation planning study building on the TAG's recommendations.
BLM, DOI	Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area	Newport, OR	Oct. 16-17, 2007	Identify management measures in response to parking and capacity constraints stemming from increased visitation.	During summer 2008, unit implemented TAG recommendations to alleviate congestion.
NPS, FWS	Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge	Chincoteague, VA	Jan. 8-10, 2008	Scope planning study funded by FY 2007 ATPPL grant.	Study scope created; study in progress.

* Now formally known as the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program.

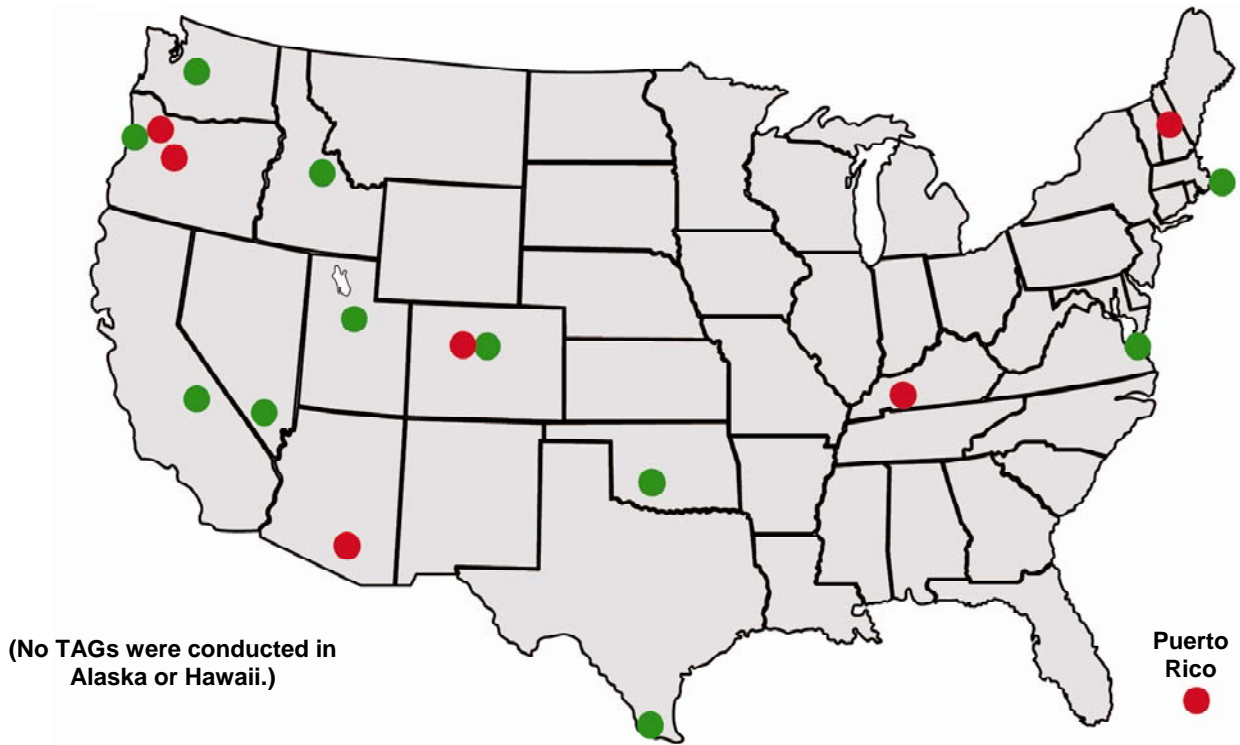
FWS	Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge / World Birding Center / S. Texas Refuge Complex	McAllen, TX	Jan. 29-31, 2008	Across a wide swath of Texas, evaluate changing demographics, environmental and growth challenges, transit and transportation disconnects, and jurisdictional overlap, and recommend a way to proceed on identifying and prioritizing transportation needs.	New transportation dialogue taking place; a regional working group may be formed. FWS submitted FY 2008 ATPPL grant application for an implementation project at one of the World Birding Center sites.
USFS	Sawtooth National Recreation Area	Ketchum, ID	Aug. 19-21, 2008	Identify transportation improvements that can improve the overall visitor experience to the Recreation Area and its abutting town during disparate winter and summer peak seasons.	Submitted FY 2009 ATPPL funding application for new buses.
FWS	Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Area	Indiahoma, OK	May 31-Jun. 2, 2009	Review transportation issues and facilitate transportation planning in the refuge to meet changing visitor needs and update aging infrastructure.	Submitted FY 2009 ATPPL funding application for new buses; received Refuge Roads Program funding to begin an alternative transportation planning study.

In addition to the 11 TAGs funded by ATPPL, USFS also funded seven of its own TAGs. The USFS TAGs functioned essentially the same as did the ATPPL TAGs; FTA staff participated in six of the seven.

USFS-Funded TAGs Conducted Dec. 2006–July 2009

Agency	Site	Location	Date	Purpose	Result
USFS	Coronado National Forest / Sabino Canyon	Tucson, AZ	Dec. 11-14, 2006	Review damage to Sabino Canyon Road and status of tram, and recommend options that take account of changed conditions.	Forest obtained FY 2007 ATPPL grant for \$180,000 to fund a transportation feasibility study.
USFS	White Mountain National Forest	Plymouth, NH	June 27-29, 2007	Assess transportation and safety impacts stemming from peak visitation across the entire forest.	Forest has implemented several short-term recommendations and plans to host a regional transportation planning summit in the near future.
USFS	El Yunque National Forest	Rio Grande, Puerto Rico	Oct. 15-19, 2007	Review plans for introducing alternative transportation; provide an overview of funding strategies, with a particular focus on ATPPL.	Forest established working relationship with FTA and is working to move forward with an earmarked capital project as well as prospective ATPPL activities.
USFS	White River National Forest / Maroon Bells	Aspen, CO	Dec. 12, 2007	Review status of ITS planning and determine extent of forest needs and benefits from ITS improvements being planned by the regional transit agency.	Forest staff now understand how ITS can benefit visitors to the forest, as well as the next steps needed to plan and implement ITS that will help meet visitor needs as well as the mobility needs of the resident population.
USFS	Land Between The Lakes (LBL) National Recreation Area	Golden Pond, KY	July 22-25, 2008	Review transportation issues and recommend steps for implementing alternative transportation within LBL while managing automobile-dominant transportation to LBL.	Considering an ATPPL funding application for FY 2010.
USFS	Mt. Hood National Forest	Sandy, OR	June 24-26, 2009	Clarify and address issues such as congestion, safety, accessibility by private car and transit, parking, and potential conflicts among road users; scope FY 2006 ATPPL planning funds awarded.	Forest is working with the Oregon Department of Transportation and its partners to scope a Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan, drawing on ATPPL planning funds obtained.
USFS	Deschutes National Forest	Bend, OR	June 29-July 1, 2009	Conduct a preliminary study of primary corridors to assist the forest in scoping an alternative transportation feasibility study.	Decision on FY 2009 ATPPL funding application is pending.

TAGs Conducted, Nov. 2006–July 2009 (ATPPL-funded in green; USFS-funded in red)



Two areas of improvement have been identified. Better pre-event guidance on what TAGs are and how they work would assist unit staff in their preparations and in soliciting local stakeholder participation. Also, a clear timeline laying out each step of the process – from the selection of sites to be visited to completion of final reports – should be a requirement for all TAGs.

Note: several additional TAGs, listed below, had been planned, but were canceled due to logistical reasons. However, they may be rescheduled for future dates.

- *Kilauea National Wildlife Refuge/Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Kilauea, HI (now planned for October 2009)*
- *Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Seneca Falls, NY*
- *Gulf Islands National Seashore/Fort Pickens, Gulf Breeze, FL*

The following pages present more detail on each of the TAGs conducted to date.

FTA-sponsored TAGs

Tri-Canyons / Wasatch-Cache National Forest

Salt Lake City, UT – November 6-9, 2006

FTA participation:

- Julie Atkins, Environmental Protection Specialist (Washington, DC)
- Jennifer Stewart, Community Planner, Region 8 (Denver, CO)

Other federal agency participation:

- U.S. Forest Service
- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Lands Highway Program, Federal Highway Administration
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

The Tri-Canyons area (Mill Creek, Big Cottonwood, and Little Cottonwood Canyons) of Wasatch-Cache National Forest (WCNF) is located to the east of, and is adjacent to, the Salt Lake metropolitan region, which has a population of over 2 million.

Purpose

Forest Service staff identified a wide range of transportation issues to be examined: existing road traffic safety and congestion, bus service, parking shortages, and bicycle safety, as well as the feasibility of providing bus shuttle service in Mill Creek Canyon and alternative transportation in Albion Basin.

TAG recommendations

The TAG recommended planning initiatives to enhance existing transit services for Big Cottonwood and Little Cottonwood Canyons, to improve visitor access and mobility in Albion Basin at times other than the ski season, and to implement a corridor management strategy that emphasizes alternative transportation and could help preserve the special character, solitude, and user appeal of Mill Creek Canyon while accommodating increasing levels of visitation.

Result

WCNF successfully competed for a FY 2007 ATPPL planning grant, in the amount of \$204,000, to conduct a feasibility study along the lines recommended by the TAG.



Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
Las Vegas, NV – December 4-8, 2006

FTA participation:

- Tina Hodges, Program Analyst (Washington, DC)
- Alexander Smith, Community Planner, Region 9 (San Francisco, CA)

Other federal agency participation:

- U.S. Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Lands Highway Program, Federal Highway Administration
- Office of Federal Lands Highway, Federal Highway Administration
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA) encompasses more than 316,000 acres located just 30 minutes from downtown Las Vegas, Nevada. SMNRA has become a year-round destination for local tourists and residents, and visitation there is growing rapidly. The adjacent Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) covers nearly 200,000 acres, and receives more than 1 million visitors per year, a number that is also growing.

Purpose

The TAG convened to address conflicts related to visitation, parking, and traffic; management and safety issues; and threats to the sensitive natural environment. Access to the most popular visitor sites within both SMNRA and RRCNCA is via narrow roads that experience significant congestion during peak seasons, and are vulnerable to inclement weather conditions.

TAG recommendations

The TAG's primary recommendations focused on the need for transit data collection, the potential for recreation fee enhancement, and increased coordination among partners and stakeholders. In addition, the TAG proposed an operations plan for transit service at SMNRA, and suggested that SMNRA seek funds for a transit service pilot project.

Result

SMNRA successfully competed for a FY 2007 ATPPL grant, in the amount of \$168,300, to conduct a pilot ski-season shuttle. RRCNCA opted not to submit an ATPPL project proposal for FY 2007, but is moving ahead on addressing the TAG's recommendations.



Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

Chatham, MA – July 17-19, 2007

FTA participation:

- Julie Atkins, Environmental Protection Specialist (Washington, DC)
- Andy Motter, Community Planner, Region 1 (Cambridge, MA)

Other federal agency participation:

- Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Visitors to Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) enjoy birding, seal-watching, recreational fishing and shellfishing, and beachgoing. The popularity of the area, the narrowness of the roadways, and limited parking and transit service have combined to create traffic congestion and spillover parking impacts in the area around the refuge.

Purpose

The TAG served as an initial scoping meeting for a planning study funded in FY 2007 by ATPPL. Among the many issues evaluated by the TAG team are parking management, lack of public transit, safety issues on narrow roadways, and the need for affordable housing and job access.

TAG recommendations

The TAG proposed a planning study that includes a traffic analysis, an alternatives analysis, public involvement, selection of a locally preferred alternative, funding analysis, and some consideration of other service expansion possibilities.

Result

Monomoy NWR has since received its ATPPL grant in the amount of \$100,000 and the comprehensive planning study is in progress.



Colorado Front Range

Lakewood, CO – July 24-26, 2007

FTA participation:

- Charles Goodman, Director of Systems Planning (Washington, DC)
- Terry Rosapep, Acting Regional Administrator, Region 8 (Denver, CO)
- Jennifer Stewart, Community Planner, Region 8 (Denver, CO)

Other federal agency participation:

- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- National Park Service
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

The Front Range generally encompasses the urban regions east of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. Federal lands serve as primary outdoor recreation and touring destinations for the over 23 million visitors annually from the Front Range, the Midwest, and elsewhere throughout the nation and indeed the world.

Purpose

The U.S. Forest Service requested the TAG visit so as to explore potential partnering opportunities and strategies for enhancing alternative transportation access to public lands in the Colorado Front Range.

TAG recommendations

The TAG proposed several outlets for improved interagency/organizational communication. Additionally, the TAG recognized the need for more data collection, and identified several recreational “hot spots” that could be candidates for stops on a much-needed alternative transportation system to serve the growing demand for recreational access.

Result

Federal land management agencies are working with the transportation planning community, including Colorado DOT and local MPOs, to achieve regional understanding and coordination.



Eastern Sierra / Inyo National Forest; Devils Postpile National Monument
Mammoth Lakes / Bishop, CA – August 21-23, 2007

FTA participation:

- Tina Hodges, Program Analyst (Washington, DC)
- Alexander Smith, Community Planner, Region 9 (San Francisco, CA)

Other federal agency participation:

- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Lands Highway, Federal Highway Administration
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- USDA Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

The Eastern Sierra is dominated by federal lands comprising 92% of Inyo County and 88% of Mono County. Sites include the Inyo National Forest, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Devils Postpile National Monument, Manaznar National Historical Site, portions of Yosemite National Park, Death Valley National Park, and Sequoia–Kings Canyon National Park to the west, as well as extensive BLM lands along the U.S. 395 Scenic Byway corridor.

Purpose

Since roughly 95% of visitors to Eastern Sierra arrive by private automobile, the U.S. Forest Service requested the TAG visit to explore partnering opportunities and strategies for enhancing alternative transportation access to public lands in the Eastern Sierra.

TAG recommendations

The TAG recommended that the federal agencies work with local partners to seek ATPPL funding to develop a long-range, alternative transportation strategy for the Eastern Sierra region to extend and complement existing regional transportation plans. In addition, the TAG suggested that existing transit services be better integrated, enhanced, and promoted.

Result

The TAG helped to outline and scope work based on an ATPPL grant in the amount of \$100,000 awarded to the region in FY 2006.



Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and Mt. Rainier National Park
North Bend, WA – September 25-27, 2007

FTA participation:

- Pat Hendrix, Region 10 (Seattle, WA)
- Kate Mattice, Chief, Policy Review and Development Division (Washington, DC)
- Bill Ramos, Region 10 (Seattle, WA)

Other federal agency participation:

- National Park Service
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest extends for more than 140 miles from the Canadian border to the northern boundary of Mt. Rainier National Park. Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie is a relatively heavily visited unit of the National Forest System, with annual visitation at approximately 5 million people.

Purpose

The TAG convened to identify opportunities at Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie to fit into the broad U.S. Forest Service goal of connecting people, especially urban residents and children, to nature. Additionally, the TAG contributed to the Forest Service *Open Space Conservation Strategy* by encouraging participation in local, regional, and transportation planning to conserve open space and retain ecosystem benefits.

TAG recommendations

The primary outcome of the TAG was a recommendation to seek ATPPL FY 2008 funds for a comprehensive transportation planning study to address the following issues: visitor mobility, visitor capacity, parking, traffic congestion, safety, enhancing the visitor experience, advancing USFS management goals, seeking partnerships with governments and the private sector, transit marketing, and the propensity for ITS on the three major east-west corridors in the region.

Result

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest successfully submitted an application for FY 2008 ATPPL funds to support such a transportation planning study.



Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area

Newport, OR – October 16-17, 2007

FTA participation:

- Bill Ramos, Region 10 (Seattle, WA)
- Jennifer Stewart, Community Planner, Region 8 (Denver, CO)

Other federal agency participation:

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area (YHONA) is the site of Oregon's tallest and second oldest continually active lighthouse, and a protected place for intertidal plants and animals. This site has significant levels of peak visitation during the summer months (mid-June through mid-September) and on weekends. In 2007, there were approximately 330,000 visitors to the site.

Purpose

A single route connects the entrance gate to two of the most heavily visited facilities: the lighthouse and the interpretive center. Parking is congested near some of these attraction areas during peak conditions. The TAG sought to help YHONA prepare for capacity issues that will undoubtedly come with increased visitation.

TAG recommendations

In the near term, recommendations included enhancements to the fee booth and overall fee collection system, encouraging use of the existing lighthouse pedestrian trail, parking and lighthouse access control, and improved data collection. In the long term, the TAG recommended an ATPPL application for funds to conduct a comprehensive transportation planning effort that may ultimately yield several feasible transit access alternatives.

Result

YHONA is currently in the process of implementing many of the short-term solutions proposed by the TAG team to help mitigate transportation issues during the peak visitation season.



Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge

Chincoteague, VA – January 8-10, 2008

FTA participation:

- Tony Cho, Community Planner, Region 3 (Philadelphia, PA)
- Scott Faulk, Program Analyst (Washington, DC)

Other federal agency participation:

- Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR) is located along the eastern shore of Virginia and attracts approximately one million visitors per year. The refuge contains the only public ocean beach in the area that is accessible to vehicle traffic and also attracts birders, naturalists, and other tourists. CNWR is within a half-day's drive of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Norfolk.

Purpose

The TAG offered federal lands managers and community leaders an opportunity to discuss the refuge area's transportation issues, and it also afforded an opportunity to discuss the scope of a comprehensive planning study for which CNWR received an ATPPL grant in 2007.

TAG recommendations

The TAG scoped the planning study and also put forth short-term recommendations that can be considered and implemented apart from the study. Among the key components proposed for the planning study are sustainability, feasibility of partnerships, data collection, and multi-modal alternative transportation options. Short-term recommendations include closing trail gaps and expanding existing transit service.

Result

CNWR is moving forward with a comprehensive planning study that was informed by the TAG's recommendations.



Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge / World Birding Center / South Texas Refuge Complex
McAllen, TX – January 29-31, 2008

FTA participation:

- Lynn Hayes, Community Planner, Region 6 (Fort Worth, TX)
- Matthew Lesh, Program Analyst (Washington, DC)

Other federal agency participation:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) has long been recognized as a world-class birding destination. The relative lack of alternative transportation options that exist in the area, combined with great distances between some sites, rapid growth, and urbanization, present unique challenges regarding access to and preservation of the natural resources in the valley. Within several sites, private vehicles are restricted and alternative transportation is provided.

Purpose

The TAG team evaluated issues that face many fast-growing metropolitan areas in the United States, including rapidly-changing demographics, environmental and growth challenges, transit and transportation disconnects, and jurisdictional overlap.

TAG recommendations

The TAG suggested a need for better traveler information, strengthened partnerships with various jurisdictions and private enterprises, data analysis and/or visitor surveys to quantify the need for alternative transportation, improved inventory of transportation assets and needs, and the consideration of a transit pilot that can focus on one World Birding Center (WBC) site or serve as a circulator service between multiple sites.

Result

The Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge submitted an FY 2008 ATPPL application for an implementation grant at the Roma World Birding Center.



Sawtooth National Recreation Area

Ketchum, ID – August 19-21, 2008

FTA participation:

- Bill Ramos, Community Planner, Region 10 (Seattle, WA)
- Matthew Lesh, Program Analyst (Washington, DC)

Other federal agency participation:

- Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- National Program for Sustainable Tourism & Scenic Byways, U.S. Forest Service
- USDA Forest Service

Background

The Sawtooth National Recreation Area (NRA) is a popular natural and historic recreation destination for day-use locals and overnight visitors in central Idaho. Primary access to the NRA is via automobile, with limited transit and taxi options from area towns. The NRA experiences a two-peaked season that favors one location in the winter and another location during the summer, with a wide variety of visitor activities at all times. The NRA is also experiencing increased land development nearby and related construction threats to its environmental resources.

Purpose

The TAG compiled a large number of issues present in the NRA and its neighboring towns, and then assembled a resulting set of recommendations for studying and implementing transportation improvements.

TAG recommendations

Recommendations were provided for the three focus areas and included the following:

- For the Sawtooth NRA/Sawtooth National Forest as a whole, TAG recommendations focused on improving the local understanding of visitors' transportation needs and travel patterns, incorporating transportation into other park planning activities, and partnering with other regional and state entities to leverage transportation improvement opportunities.
- For the Wood River Valley (ski area), the TAG recommended applying for an ATPPL grant for a winter shuttle.
- For the City of Stanley/Redfish Lake, the TAG recommended master planning and travel management with particular consideration of nonmotorized transportation options throughout the area.

Result

Sawtooth submitted an ATPPL funding application for FY 2009.



Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge

Indiahoma, OK – May 31-June 2, 2009

FTA participation:

- Lynn Hayes, Community Planner, Region 6 (Ft. Worth, TX)

Other federal agency participation:

- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Background

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is one of the oldest managed nature preserves in the United States, and is also the site of the oldest exposed mountains and the largest mixed-grass prairie in the world. Most of the 1.5 million annual visitors access the site via private automobile, though recreational vehicles, trailers, and buses are also popular. The park has approximately 120 miles of roadway, including the Wichita Mountains State Scenic Byway, which runs through the refuge, which is being nominated for National Scenic Byway designation.

Purpose

The TAG identified key issues facing the refuge: fluctuating visitation, personnel growth at the nearby Fort Sill, greater concern for sustainability, need for transportation infrastructure improvements, and lack of regional planning and coordination.

TAG recommendations

The TAG recommended that transportation be used as a catalyst for integrated and comprehensive local, regional, and tribal planning. Similarly, the TAG recommended that the refuge engage in short- and long-term transportation planning and goal-setting, through which it could identify opportunities for alternative transportation. Finally, the TAG recommended coordinating marketing and travel information, including a new visitor study to guide planning efforts for the refuge and the region.

Result

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge applied for ATPPL funding for FY09 for the purchase and upkeep of new buses to update the refuge's alternative transportation systems. In addition, Refuge Roads Program funds were used to begin an alternative transportation planning study in August 2009.



USDA Forest Service-sponsored TAGs

Sabino Canyon Recreation Area/Coronado National Forest

Tucson, AZ, December 11-14, 2006

Federal agency participation:

- Central Federal Lands Division, Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Lands Highway, Federal Highway Administration
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

For many who come to visit the Southwest, this area provides their first close encounter with the Sonoran Desert and the fascinating variety of plants and animals that make it their home. Concessionaire-operated shuttle trams and a number of trails provide access to this land of desert oases and rugged mountains. The road into the canyon was heavily damaged by floods and rockslides in July 2006.

Purpose

To assess damage to Sabino Canyon Road, to evaluate the status of the tram, and to outline options that take into account the changed conditions as a result of flash floods that occurred in the summer of 2006.

TAG recommendations

The TAG team suggested an ATPPL FY 2007 application for a comprehensive transportation planning study that determines the optimal transit service to operate in Sabino Canyon. The proposed study components include basic transit operations, ridership, management, vehicle considerations, ITS and traveler communications, parking, bicycle/pedestrian issues, partnerships, and trails.

Result

Sabino Canyon applied for and received an ATPPL grant in FY 2007 in the amount of \$180,000 to fund a transportation feasibility study.



White Mountain National Forest
Plymouth, NH – June 27-29, 2007

FTA participation:

- Andy Motter, Community Planner, Region 1 (Cambridge, MA)

Other federal agency participation:

- USDA Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) is located in north-central New Hampshire and southwestern Maine, and includes 157 miles of road open to passenger car travel, 1,200 miles of hiking trails, 400 miles of snowmobile trails, 160 miles of the Appalachian Trail, 23 developed campgrounds, and numerous Nordic and alpine ski areas. It is estimated that WMNF and surrounding area attracts 5-7 million visitors annually.

Purpose

The TAG convened to assess the transportation impacts at WMNF stemming from peak visitation. These impacts include heavy traffic on major access routes, parking capacity concerns and resulting safety implications, and degradation of natural resources and the overall visitor experience.

TAG recommendations

The TAG report noted a number of opportunities for further planning studies in several areas, as well as exploration of partnership opportunities with the Appalachian Mountain Club, developing a relationship with tour bus operators, creation of interpretive materials using new technologies, and studying the recreation enhancement fee structure. The TAG recommended that WMNF host a regional transportation planning summit with local stakeholders.

Result

White Mountain National Forest gave a presentation at the 2008 Transportation Research Board meeting in Washington, DC: "White Mountain National Forest Partnership for Integrated Transportation." The forest has begun to implement several of the short-term suggestions that came out of the TAG and will also host a regional transportation planning summit; WMNF successfully applied for ATPPL planning funds.



El Yunque National Forest

Rio Grande, Puerto Rico – October 15-19, 2007

FTA participation:

- Abigail Rivera, Community Planner, Region 4 (Atlanta, GA)

Other federal agency participation:

- Federal Lands Highway, Federal Highway Administration
- Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Division Office, Federal Highway Administration
- USDA Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Beginning in 1994, seasonal traffic congestion, and potential remedies have been actively studied with respect to PR-191, the route by which the majority of visitors access sites within El Yunque National Forest. A recent National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey estimated El Yunque visitation at 1.2 million annually. On the busiest days, about 1,400 vehicles enter El Yunque, and in the midday up to 400 vehicles compete for the 175 parking spaces located near the most visited places.

Purpose

The Forest Service requested the TAG to review the status of plans for introducing Alternative Transportation in the Mameyes-Río Blanco Forest Highway (PR-191) corridor, to identify partnering opportunities, and provide an overview of funding strategies with a particular focus on ATPPL.

TAG recommendations

The TAG recommended pursuing implementation planning and vehicle acquisition activities in parallel – leading toward deployment of a scaled back, seasonal demonstration system based on the “Alternative Analysis for the Provision of a Mass Transportation System for the Caribbean National Forest (El Yunque)” final report prepared by Steer Davies Gleave for the PRDOT/PRHTA.

Result

The forest is working with FTA to identify ATPPL opportunities and to move forward with a proposed capital project.



Maroon Bells Scenic Area, White River National Forest

Aspen, Colorado – December 12, 2007

FTA participation:

- Jennifer Stewart, Community Planner, Region 8 (Denver, CO)

Other federal agency participation:

- Central Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- USDA Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Maroon Bells, on the White River National Forest, is among the most photographed scenic mountain areas in the world. Each year about 200,000 people visit the site during a short summer season. Since the late 1970s, private motor vehicle access to Maroon Bells has been restricted. Visitor access to the site is via shuttle buses that operate from the Aspen Highlands Ski Area with free connecting shuttle bus service from the Aspen Rubey Park Transportation Center.

Purpose

To review status of ITS planning and determine extent of forest needs and benefits from ITS improvements being planned by the regional Roaring Fork Transit Authority.

TAG Recommendations

The TAG proposed several ITS solutions, including advanced ticket vending machines, electronic message signs with “next bus” technology, and Computer Aided Dispatch/Automatic Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) systems.

Result

Forest Service staff learned how ITS can benefit the forest and its visitors. The staff is currently identifying ways to implement ITS technologies that will help meet increasing visitor demand as well as the mobility needs of the growing resident population.



Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area

Golden Pond, KY – July 22-25, 2008

FTA participation:

- Matthew Lesh, Program Analyst (Washington, DC)

Other federal agency participation:

- U.S. Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration

Background

Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area (LBL) is a 50-mile-long peninsula bordered by two lakes in southwestern Kentucky. LBL's protected wildlife, waterfront, and historic areas support a significant local tourist industry. Its main access roads also support important business and commuter traffic and were under construction for improvements at the time of the TAG. Campgrounds and a series of visitor facilities can also be accessed via internal road networks, many of which are shared by a variety of uses and experience significant weekend congestion.

Purpose

The TAG recognized the automobile-dependent nature of travel to LBL and focused on identifying alternatives to private cars that could best provide visitors with access to dispersed facilities within the park.

TAG recommendations

The TAG recommended that LBL focus its transportation planning efforts by formally documenting existing transportation conditions, identifying transportation priorities, determining which portion of the visitor market the park would be trying to serve with improvements, and planning demand management. The TAG also recommended strengthening existing public and private relationships throughout the region, particularly with regard to identifying and applying for grant applications.

Result

LBL is considering an ATPPL funding application for FY 2010.



Mt. Hood National Forest

Sandy, OR – June 24-26, 2009

FTA participation:

- Bill Ramos, Community Planner, Region 10 (Seattle, WA)

Other federal agency participation:

- U.S. Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center
- Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration

Background

Mt. Hood National Forest (MHNF) encompasses 1.1 million acres in north-central Oregon and contains the tallest peak in the state. MHNF attracts four to five million visitors annually for hiking, sightseeing, camping, and skiing. Most visitor access occurs by private vehicle, though there is limited bus service to MHNF. Shuttle bus services tend to target specific user groups and many operate only seasonally. Access to MHNF is primarily via US 26, but the forest is also reachable from Portland via Interstate 84 to OR 35, which runs along the northern edge of the forest from Portland.

Purpose

Transportation issues facing MHNF include competing interest and inherent conflicts of purpose. The TAG attempted to clarify and address a variety of issues, including congestion from a growing regional population, poor safety, accessibility by transit, parking limitations, and potential conflicts among road users.

TAG recommendations

In the short term, the TAG recommended that MHNF develop an enhanced transportation planning process with a problem statement and goals, an inventory of resources, and a strengthened governance group to administer a proposed Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan. In the medium term, the TAG recommended technical improvements to enhance visitor experience, as well as the use of transit and transportation demand management to reduce congestion. The TAG also made long-term recommendations regarding major infrastructural changes to improve safety and reduce congestion.

Result

MHNF is working with the Oregon Department of Transportation and its partners to scope a Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan, drawing on ATPPL planning funds awarded in FY 2006.



Deschutes National Forest

Bend, Oregon – June 29-July 1, 2009

FTA participation:

- Bill Ramos, Community Planner, Region 10 (Seattle, WA)

Other federal agency participation:

- Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Forest Service
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

Background

Deschutes National Forest (DNF) is located in central Oregon and encompasses approximately 1.6 million acres. The DNF is one of the most popular recreation forests in the Pacific Northwest, providing opportunities for fishing, camping, hiking, hunting, skiing, biking and other outdoor activities and attracting 2.78 million visits annually. Most visitors travel by private automobile, although there is limited privately-operated alternative transportation during the winter season.

Purpose

The TAG was requested to help DNF conduct a preliminary study of primary corridors to assist DNF in focusing an alternative transportation feasibility study. DNF is interested in accommodating increasing visitation without building additional road infrastructure.

TAG recommendations

The TAG recommended partnerships between local governments, non-governmental organizations, and private businesses to utilize alternative transportation to benefit park visitors. Specific corridors and their infrastructural opportunities were identified for further planning studies; potential funding sources were also identified.

Result

DNF submitted an FY 2009 ATPPL implementation grant for consideration.

