

## **CITIZENS FOR A SAFE HIGHWAY 9**

### **Colorado State Highway 9 Safety Project**

North of Green Mountain Dam Road – CO River Crossing  
Mile Post 127 – Mile Post 137

#### **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?**

Colorado State Highway 9 between Green Mountain Reservoir and the Colorado River provides a major transportation corridor that serves Summit, Grand, Jackson and Routt counties. Increasing traffic, including domestic, business and recreational uses, has contributed to nearly 600 vehicular accidents in almost 20 years, including 16 people killed and almost 200 injured. Many of those accidents were wildlife related, and, in fact, over 450 animals have been killed on this stretch of highway in the last 8 years.

The Highway 9 Safety Project was initiated in 2011, and will include wildlife crossings and fencing, the addition of 8-ft shoulders, and re-alignment to improve site distances. The design of the project by CDOT is nearing completion, but the price tag of \$46 million still needs a funding source. Recently, a new CDOT program called Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) has provided an exciting opportunity to fund the project, but requires that local governments provide 20% of the total project cost. Grand County must secure \$9.2 million to qualify the Highway 9 safety improvements for RAMP consideration.

#### **GOALS AND OUTCOME:**

CDOT's RAMP Program provides an opportunity for grassroots action to support Grand County in its effort to fund and complete the construction of the Highway 9 Safety Project. The "Citizens for a Safe Hwy 9" Committee was formed to focus community support toward the end goal of project construction. The committee will raise awareness and inform stakeholders and citizens of the need to fund this badly needed project.

In response to the formation of the Committee, Blue Valley Ranch offered a matching grant of \$4 million, leaving \$4.3 million to be raised. Our goal will be to provide the 20% match as specified by the RAMP Program, but we only have until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 to secure this funding. The time to take action is now, we can't afford to pass up this opportunity.

#### **CO STATE HWY 9 & SAFETY ISSUES:**

- Mile marker 127 North of Green Mountain Dam Road to Colorado River Crossing approx. 10.6 miles
- Major route through Grand County, serving Summit, Grand, Jackson & Routt Counties
- Access to I-70 and Denver/Front Range
- 590 vehicular accidents in last 19 years, including 191 people injured, 16 killed
- At least 455 wildlife deaths in the last 8 years, mostly mule deer. If the average collision results in \$6,600 (Huijser, 2009), over \$3 million in damages.
- Annual Average Daily Traffic count is 3,600 vehicles, including 290 trucks
- CDOT forecasts steadily increasing traffic on Highway 9

## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS:

- 2 wildlife overpasses (the first of their kind in Colorado) and 5 underpasses
- Wildlife fencing to guide wildlife to the crossings
- Road widening: safer 8-ft paved shoulders with room for bike paths
- Vertical and Horizontal re-alignment to improve site distances

## PROJECT HISTORY:

- Early 2011 - Design began with \$945,000 contribution from Blue Valley Ranch (Private-public partnership between Grand County and Blue Valley Ranch), including money for design and a donation of land for right-of-way acquisition
- 2011 to present - Design by CDOT through contribution of in-kind services (Public-public partnership between Grand County and CDOT) – Nearly complete
- 2012 - Planning Collaboration – CDOT, Grand County, CO Parks & Wildlife, BLM, Landowners
- April, 2012 – CDOT held public meeting to gather input on conceptual design
- Early 2013 – Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) program provided an opportunity to fund the project
- April 9, 2013 – Grand County Commissioners decided to submit a pre-application to the RAMP program (due by May 1, 2013)
- April 18, 2013 – Citizens for a Safe Highway 9 first meeting; goal is to secure the 20% match for the RAMP application
- Late April, 2013 – Blue Valley Ranch agrees to a \$4 million matching grant toward the 20%

## NEXT STEPS:

- May & June, 2013 – Citizens for a Safe Hwy 9 must raise remaining \$4.3 million
- July 1, 2013 – Final, detailed application and 20% of total project cost secured
- September 19, 2013 – Project recommendations (approval) by Transportation Commission

## FUNDING:

Total Cost of Highway 9 Safety Project:	\$46.0 million
20% of Total Costs:	\$ 9.2 million
Previous Blue Valley Ranch Contributions:	\$ 0.9 million
Blue Valley Ranch Matching Contribution:	\$ 4.0 million
<b>Total Remaining Funds Needed:</b>	<b>\$ 4.3 million</b>