

Colorado State University Libraries
Center for Collaborative Conservation
Seminar and Discussion Series

Transcription of History - The People's Way Project: how traditional way of knowing the land led to the creation of the most extensive wildlife-sensitive highway in North America, 2011-11

Item Metadata

Collection: Fall 2011

Creator: Skyelander, Kim, speaker; Unidentified speaker

Title: The People's Way Project: how traditional way of knowing the land led to the creation of the most extensive wildlife-sensitive highway in North America

Date: 2011-11

File Name: skyelander_audio.mp3

Date Transcribed: Apr 2023

Transcription Platform: Konch

BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

[00:00 - 00:37] Moderator: If it gets too loud in the back door, you can close that one. Okay.

Welcome to the seminar series for the Center for Collaborative Conservation. At the risk of being highly repetitive, if you're in the wrong place, please stay because this is gonna be a good one.

[Background Laughter] Somebody is still new to that and still laughing. That's good. [Laughs]. So this fall, our seminar series is focusing on indig -- I'll get it out, - indigenous peoples and conservation and this is our last one.

[00:38 - 00:39] Background: One.

[00:39 - 00:41] Moderator: There's-- we have one more speaker. Which?

[00:45 - 00:45] Background: Dave.

[00:45 - 00:50] Moderator: Dave Bartecchi from Village Earth will have-- will give the next seminar and that will be on, excuse me--

[00:50 - 00:51] Background: Two weeks from today.

[00:51 - 03:27] Moderator: Two weeks from today. [Background Laughter] All right. After Thanksgiving. So we've had a great series this fall. And so it's my pleasure to get a chance to introduce our new Associate Director at the Center for Collaborative Conservation, Dr. Kim Skyelander. I want you to notice the "E" after sky in the spelling of her name, that often gets dropped out, just so you know. [Chuckles] And Kim comes from us from a really diverse background. In fact, when I read all the things that she wrote here, I thought, wow, this person is an intellectual and a practical traveler through different ways of thinking. So she started out as a wildlife biologist at Utah State University and then moved on to other great universities in the West and luckily, she finally ended up the best one in the West now. But then she went on to Montana and then she went on to Idaho to get her PhD. And in that process, she kind of migrated from sort of a more biological focus on things to a more, to the more inclusive people orientation toward natural resources. And so at-- at the University of Idaho, I think I can get this right, she was part of a group called Conservation Social Sciences, which was the former, like our human dimensions of natural resources in the Warner College, was formerly a natural resource and recreation department. After that, she kind of took a right hand or left hand turn and decided to go into teaching. And that's not really necessarily a right or left hand turn. But she didn't stay on the line of a lot of folks, continue on to academia and research. She worked for a good period of time in there, actually. This is all not sequential, my apologies. But in there she worked it for the Forest Service first as, let me just read all this, this journey sort of. Starting as a wildlife biologist, then a public affairs specialist, then an assistant district ranger, then a tribal government liaison, and then a wilderness ranger, probably not in that order, but really, really different things. And then she went into teaching and she taught for eight years at the Salish Kootenai College and the Flat and Indian Reservation teaching natural resources. And then for the last seven or so years, she was at Wolf Ridge Environmental Education Center, pretty close [Chuckles] in Minnesota, being their executive director and doing everything from teaching, which you do at an education center to fixing the pipes and all kinds of other things, raising lots of resources. So it's just our great pleasure to have her speak with us today. And she's got a long title, but The People's Way Project how traditional ways of knowing and the land lead to the creation of the most extensive wildlife sensitive highway in North America. Welcome, Kim. [Overlapping]

[03:27 - 03:27] Kim Skyelander: Thank you.

[03:27 - 03:28] Moderator: We're so glad to have you.

[03:28 - 04:13] Kim Skyelander: Thank you, Robin. [Applause] [Soft Chuckles] Thank you all for coming and I really appreciate it. This is-- this is great. I chose this topic mainly because it's a

combination of collaborative conservation, indigenous knowledge and traditional science, if you will. But I have to say that I'm not an expert on this particular project. I just happened to be working on the-- at the reservation with the tribes during the implementation of this project. So this is actually more of kind of a case study. And actually, I'm actually just going to tell you a story. It's actually the story of this project and it has an interesting history to it. Is anyone here from Montana? Anyone here from the Flathead Reservation? Did you live there?

[04:14 - 04:17] Background: No, I went through the biological states where the white people live.

[04:18 - 06:56] Kim Skyelander: Oh, yeah. Okay [Chuckles]. Okay. All right. Anybody been to the Flathead Reservation of the wolves? Okay, great. So, do you have anything to add? You're free to jump in any time. So there you are. So I do have a really long title, and we'll read it again. You can read that for yourself. What I'm gonna do is start with background about the Flathead Indian Reservation which is where the project takes place. Tell you a little bit about that. Then I'll introduce the project and tell you what some of the challenges were and some of the solutions to it. So our project or story actually takes place on the Flathead Indian reservation, which is between Missoula and Kalispell, Montana, if you've been over that way. There are seven reservations in Montana, and they include the Blackfeet, the Rocky boy, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne and Crow. And the Flathead Reservation originally went down through Missoula into the Bitterroot Valley at the time of the Hellgate Treaty of 1855. But like a lot of reservations, it was opened up to settlement and land allotments so it became the size it is today. Still pretty respectable. About 1,317,000 acres and about half way, more than half of this reservation is actually privately owned. The rest of it is owned by private landowners and there are some state and federal holdings as well that the tribe is in the process of growing up when lands becomes available. Can you all hear me alright in the back? Okay. Okay. Apparently the reservation has a little less than 22,000 people on it. Roughly about a third of that are tribal members. [Clears Throat] And the three tribes that make up the Flathead Reservation are the Salish, the Kootenai and the Pend d'Oreille. And the governing body is called the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Council. And they make a lot of decisions, along with the tribal elders and the cultural community. And this lady here in the lower right hand corner is, *Agnes Campbell, a wonderful elder. And unfortunately, the tribes lost her a couple of years ago. Wonderful, fascinating woman made the best buckskin in the world. She was a huge demand for weddings and fellow regalia and excellent feeder as well as a keeper of knowledge for the tribes. And I was fortunate enough to take a traditional hide tanning class from her. So I feel fortunate about that. And she had the most infectious laugh. She would start off kind of giggling like a little girl, and soon she'd have this big belly laugh and nobody in the room could not laugh when this woman was there. She's a really interesting lady.

[07:01 - 10:08] So the Flathead Reservation has a lot of wonderful natural resources on it. And the reservation goes up to about halfway to Flathead Lake. And I was not sure, why it doesn't cover the whole lake, but it goes up half way through the lake. As a Flathead River and the Nishi mountains that you see there. The tribe manages the mounds up to the crest and on the other side, on the west side and on the eastern side, its US Forest Service line up. And the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes are the first tribe to actually set aside the tribal wilderness. The Mission Mountain is a tribal wilderness, and the tribe side and also happens to be a wilderness forest service. A very beautiful place through there. It also has the National Bison Range and Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge. Both of these are currently managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service through a permanent easement with the tribe. The tribe would like to take over the National Bison Range. There's a little bit of contention there, but it's under Fish and Wildlife Service. I have to digress a little bit to an old story here. [Chuckles] When I first got the job at Salish Kootenai college, my roommate Tana and was very excited because she like spent a lot of time in Flathead lake, camped out there. And she said, "Well, that's great. You're gonna work for the tribe. You get to drive up, in 93 and you get to go by the Bison Range and you get to go by everyone. You get to go by Neenee-peepee, and then you get to go to Flathead lake. I literally said, "What? Excuse me." I said, "Go by the bison range and go by the neenee-peepee?" [Chuckles] And she said its neenee-peepee, the wildlife refuge. And I said, "Tana, it's called NinePipe." She looked at me and looked totally bored, she said, "No way." She said, "For eight years, I've been calling it "Neenee-Peepee" because I learned to respect the Salish and Kootenai. I thought it was a Salish word. And I am telling everybody, its the neenee-peepee wildlife refuge. [Laughs] So I still had my drive up there and I see that sign and I'm like yeah, it's Neenee-Peepee. [Laughs] It's actually pronounced Ninepipe. [Laughs] So there are several major sources of income for the tribe. The major one is they get revenue from Coeur Dam, which is a large hydroelectric power dam on the Flathead river by the Flathead lake, which they currently lease with the Montana Power Company. Kwataqnak is a resort casino by Polson which is there. Kwataqnak means where the water leaves the lake. That's the best western hotel here if you ever get to [Inaudible]. It's a nice place to stay. S and K Holdings; electronics manufacturing firm, the tribes like to encourage the members to bring in non-polluting industry and to create their own businesses on the reservation. It's a scrutiny college right across. It's a community tribal, community/tribal college with non-Indian about 1000 students. Also get income from land leasing and selling timber. It was quite a bit of forestry. They have a large forestry department there, seasonal agriculture and tourism. And tribal government employments.

[10:14 - 11:47] So now you have a little bit of background about the reservation and the tribe and the People's Way Project. Well, what is it? This is a project that reconstructed 53 miles of US Highway 93 to meet the safety and capacity needs of drivers while respecting tribal, cultural, community and

environmental values. And the 53 miles of Highway 93 go through the reservation. But the actual highway is quite long. It starts in Arizona, goes all the way up to Canada. So the section that we're talking about is that section that goes through the Flathead Reservation. And the actual picture of the road on the left, you can see it's a two lane highway. Lanes around has a lot of forests involved with it. So the players in this story are the *Confederacy tribes, Montana Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. And later on, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the US Fish and Wildlife Service came into play. But the ones we're talking about today, are those big three and these are three governments, you know, the tribal government, state governments, Montana, private transportation and the federal government to the Federal Highway Administration. So why reconstruct Highway 93? Well, it just happens to be Montana's most dangerous two lane highway. And you can see a little bit of statistics down there 95 and 99, 42 people were killed, 727 were injured just on this 53 mile stretch that goes to the reservation. [Clears Throat]

[11:48 - 13:56] And so what's causing that? Well, as you can see, in the lovely reservation, it is a very big wildlife migration area. Grizzly bears, everything from those grizzly bears, white tailed mule deer migrate back and forth through the valley and hook up with other wildlife corridors. So there's a lot of wildlife vehicle collision accidents that happen and also the design of the road itself. It's a two lane highway, there's Narrow shoulders. Only has three passing lanes. And it's the only road that goes up to Glacier National Park and that part of Montana, so when you're driving along, you have a heart of campers and things and you're getting a little frustrated, people take chances and pass. It also has a lot of access roads, frontage roads, people's driveways and come in access to community businesses, which is dangerous because we're trying to pull out on the highway and it's filling, it's curvy. Has a lot of design issues with it. And I drove this road for eight years, commuting from Mazola up to the reservation there. And a lot of times people would pass me and I always read the bumper stickers, and the most frequent one was this one, Pray for me, I drive 93. [Background Laughter] Another one was, I'm a 93 road warrior. Yeah. So I actually am in trouble on this section of the highway. My section-- problem of 93 was, it's another story. Sorry, but one day I was driving down, from Mazola South to Hamilton, on the southern part of 93. And I was with a friend that owned Toyota Tercel. And this object was coming towards us in the middle of the highway quite fast. I couldn't really tell what it was, but I could see the people move down the way were all bailing off the highway left and right. The cars are going off in the ditches, and I said, holy cow! And we got a little closer and I could tell what it was. It was a plane, making an emergency landing. [Laughter] It was coming right down the highway. And you know, you can see this little part of the plane and the wing sort of silhouettes and he I drove over to the side, he did take a swing right over the top of the car.

[13:56 - 15:36] The poor guy looked in there and he saw over there in the cockpit, which is like totally white, no panic. But he did stop, and everything was fine, so that was my only scary part of Highway 93. So to fix this problem, in 1989, the Montana Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration came up with a proposal and a plan. They wanted to expand US 93 Reservation into a foreign land divided highway. It's like if some of the problems that I mentioned before with wider lanes, passing lanes, all those things. Because they then engineered this road, so we had the highest level of safety, provide for increased traffic that was coming and also provided the lowest cost as good engineers do. However, the tribe didn't really want anything to do with this plan. They were not in favor of a four lane highway for several reasons. One thing that would accelerate non-tribal development. Remember I mentioned that roughly a little more than half of the reservations owned by the tribe and the rest of it was private or state or federal. [Clears Throat] They felt that a four lane would adversely affect the wildlife in the wetlands. They had a two lane running through their bisecting the migration routes, so just think of a four lane. They figured people would be driving faster over the habitat, so they weren't in favor of that. And also a damaged tribal, cultural and spiritual sacred sites. As well as raised parts of the tribal history that's etched into the landscape. Tribe has had the reservation for a long time and everything on the landscape has meaning to them. So they didn't want more disturbance of that.

[15:39 - 17:31] The tribal elders tried to get across to the highway department that the road is a visitor and should respond, be respectful of the land and spirit of place. This is a hard concept for the highway department to round its head around. And spared a place in this context merely being a continuum with everything on the reservation that is seen and unseen, touched, felt and traveled through. So all the parts of the landscape, the natural outcroppings, the sacred sites, everything have been embedded in tribal members minds, either through experience for generations or through coyote stories and Coyote serves as a link between the tribal members and the natural spiritual world this highway was cutting right through. So because there was a lack of vision and despite the lack of trust between the governments, there was a stalemate. They didn't really understand each other very well. So for ten years this project was sort of put on the shelf, so to speak, because they could not agree on lane configurations, designs, environmental impacts for a lot of different reasons. And most of it was trust. Like I said, lack of common vision and different values. So eventually what really happened is the highway department actually tended to see the tribe, is this, a little bit-- a little bit secretive, hard to catch, allusive. You know, they didn't really understand them where the tribe tended to view the highway department as this. Rather puffed up, you know, had its own way of doing things. They were the engineers, they were the experts, and they were going to do this highway and this way of doing it, and that was the only way. So they had a lot of issues there.

[17:34 - 19:26] And of course there was a bit of value difference there. The tribe did all-- the tribal people do a lot of circular thinking. All things were connected but the highway was more or less linear thinking. You have a highway, you have a road to get from point A to point B. Tribal thinking, humans are part of nature. The highway department is treating humans as separate from nature. The tribe spent a lot the social and the cultural spiritual aspects of very important in the project to the tribe where the highway department is mainly looking at it from an intellectual, physical and economic way. And that relationships are extremely important to tribal folks where the Highway Department was mainly looking at the end product of this road. So the highway department, the most important thing to them is the road. And you build roads to get through things. And the tribe, the most important thing was the landscape and you should be building the road to fit the land. So unfortunately, about ten years later, as I said. In the fall of 1998, Montana private Transportation hired Skillings Connelly, Inc., which was an outside firm to come in and look at this problem. And they talked to the tribe, they talked to the highway departments, and they came up with a new way of designing roads. It was new back then, it's not new now. This was in the late 90s. At the time, this is one of the first times they tried this road design, which is called context sensitive design. There's a way for them to try to undo this stalemate. And this is a new kind of planning defined as collaborative and a disciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, storage and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility.

[19:28 - 21:44] So what they did is this Skillings Connelly ended up being the project manager. And they went out and they contacted about 600 stakeholders, did interviews, talked to them, tried to find out what was important to people, came back, got with the tribes, got with the highway department and used this context sensitive design to come up with a road that might be acceptable to all parties. And then the spring of 2000, the tribe hired Jones and Jones Architects, an architect and landscape architect and also planning firm from Seattle, Washington. And they wanted to and then come in and talk about landscape architecture. What were they going to do to beautify the highway? How are they going to make it look good and how are they going to address the wildlife issues. And also all the other environmental impacts. They had some integration measures. And so together the tribe and J&J came up with several. [Clears Throat] They decided they're going to use natural materials like local court stone that would fit into the road that will sort of look like the type of materials have come in. They wanted to landscape the road to enhance the character of the town, southern towns on the reservation and they got a nice facelift from this. And they also wanted to beautify the entrances to both sides of the reservation to make it inviting for people to come. The plan to dodge and maintain the ponds and the lakes, keep the integrity and restore them that had been divided by the existing highway. These are two pictures of 95, I'm sorry, neenee-peepee. And you can see on

the left that the highway is bisecting a fairly large lake there and on the right, this is more of 95. And you can see what a challenge that would be to try to fit the road, into all of these wetlands. Also, they came up with a way of healing the scars from the road cuts and the blasting instead of leaving them very raw looking. They had a type of substance they could put on there that made it look like a weathered rock. I don't know if you've seen that in some places. They're going to install interpretive signs talking about important cultural and natural landscapes in two different languages; Salish and English.

[21:47 - 24:27] And of course, we vegetate the area with indigenous plants, try to save as much of the trees as possible, and install a wildlife crossing structure so the animals will go over under the highway and maintain that animal movement and connect the habitats together. So finally, after all of this, in December of 2000, three governors signed an agreement to do this. They had a design that they had talked to all the tribal members. They had a good contact sensitive engineering. They had a lot of mitigation factors worked out. They had areas where they could work on some of the canceling and passing some of the natural resource. So this is a quote from Fred Matt, who was the tribal Council Chairman at the time. And he said the words in Illinois, A memorandum of understanding about rebuilding a road, but the process leading up to it was about listening to each other, building trust, honor and mutual respect among the governments. And it wasn't until this happened that this project, actually moved forward. So working on that together, designing it together, trying to come together and understand each other's values, trying to come up with a common vision for this road eventually led to success of actually implementing it. The contractors came in and they got it and the highway got it. That they got away from the notion of the road is the important thing. You got to be mindful that there's a history to be respected, and now they have a road that's integrated with the land rather than slicing through it, together with the landscape. So one of the big constructions, the big one was the wildlife crossing structures. This is a photo of the ban. Have you guys seen this on the Trans-Canada Highway? There's 24 different wildlife crossings on this highway. And the tribe and the highway departments went together to Canada to take a look at this, to see how they can in fact design these. This is not a new thing to Montana. Actually, wildlife crossings have been around since like the 1950s, and they originated in the Netherlands and France, which other countries and Canada came to this country and now in Montana. So Montana is not the first place to do this. The goals for the Highway 93 project for the wildlife was to restore habitat, create the corridors and dimension for all these migratory wildlife, conserve the species and of course, try to reduce the number of humans vehicle collisions. That was a big one. So why was the People's Project unique?

[24:27 - 27:13] It was unique in the size and the scope of how they designed it. They put 42 wildlife crossings in 56 miles of highway. No one had ever done that before. That's a huge amount of wildlife

crossings. So it was the scope and the size that made this unique, not necessarily if their the using the structures. And I listed some of them in there. They had quite a few of them. Probably the most impressive one, was a 26ft high, 54ft wide, 20ft long tunnel, which they put over by over a hill. Lots of fencing, lots of one fencing, of course, to direct the wildlife. [Clears Throat] On the left that's the big overpass that they built up there above a hill. They built it in 2009 for \$1.88 million. Total project costs for reconstructing the highway was about \$121 million. And that's the finished highway there. So did they work? [Background Coughing] Well, in the summer of 2000 and 2009, they started camera work and tracking surveys, and they documented that roughly 6,500 wildlife crossings were using wildlife crossings. It's not individual animals because they still don't have a good way of saying this is one animal who went through it. Could be one animal went back and forth like 20 times in a fence. So the actual number of crossings not the actual number of animals. [Unintelligible] In 2008, this is what they counted as far as critters go. Knowing that some of these might be double or triple counting, but that's still a pretty good list. You know, 3,600 white tailed deer, black bear, Grizzly Bear, 121 Coyotes, 255 miscellaneous species. Muskrats, Skunks, Raccoons, Badgers, Otters, Beavers, Mice, Rabbits blue rats. And then birds, owls and dozens of grouse went through there. And they were concerned a little bit that maybe the predators would hang out in these corners and pick out the prey as they went by. But the only one that's thought of it, and so that was the owls. The owls would wait right beside there. Wait for the mice to scurry by and the [Chuckles] And then lots of reptiles and amphibians as well. And then they are going to be building smaller crossings for these guys. And Whisper noticed that, she watched the wildlife and she noticed that some of the deer, the does are actually training their fawns how to use the crossings and the does would actually go in some of the underpasses and lay down and let their fawns run back and forth through the folders. And she said that they were kind of training the babies how to use this thing.

[27:13 - 29:15] So she said that behavior of the wildlife was really interesting to watch, especially she could always tell the first timers. Especially if a car was going by cause it would make noise. A couple others, Kyle, Otters. I wouldn't want to meet them in the colder. [Chuckles] Lions, coming and going. These are all from courtesy of the tribe. So, is this project going to be successful? Well, the research institute in Kansas City has predicted that over the next 20 years, the new road design will reduce fatal crashes by 17, reduce crashes by 520 and property damages by 650. For a total reduction of about 1240 incidents, which is no small thing considering it's a pretty interesting. There is monitoring going on. The Montana State University of Western Transportation Institute has started a five year study. Started in 2010 will go to 2015. And their study is looking at how effective are the wildlife crossings in reducing human vehicle collisions. How effective are they as providing corridors between the wildlife habitat and then are they cost-- is there a cost benefit to them? [Clears Throat] So what next? Well, there is another 1781 mile cross that go in to the north of the reservation up

there on Highway 93. They're going to add a lot of reptile and amphibian crossings, which is near and dear to my heart because there should have been a tunnel just above these guys. In the bottom here, you can see somebody crawling through, those little green things are frogs. [Laughter] And, you know, you've all heard of Snow Patrol the band, right? If I [Inaudible] That would be my rock band.

[29:16 - 30:53] And I knew as Highway 93 south from students over Hamilton, further they're also looking at putting in some more structures in a 25 mile stretch. So that basically concludes the story is deemed a success. It wouldn't have been a success without a lot of work and all the parties in building the trust and doing the collaboration and talking to people and understanding the values and the visions that all the different players had involved there. And as they do the monitoring, they'll find out how successful the wildlife structures are. The Montana Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Department are using this particular project as a flagship study that they've written about in the publications and they've taken to other places, and use it as a model for around the world. I'm just going to do my last slide with just some signs that I got. Some crossing signs I found on the Internet. [Laughs] They kind of like, like this one. You know. Warning! Camels and Kangaroos and Wombats. I need two blotters. This was a sign outside somebodies driveway, 10 miles per hour. Deer, dog, kid, wolf, rabbit crossing. This one must have come from Minnesota because where I lived up the hill there was a lot of car animal collisions and terrorism noise. Well, and this is a sign from Japan warning people of [Inaudible] So anyway, that's the end of my story here and I welcome comments or any questions.

[30:56 - 31:05] Moderator: Let's thank them. [Applause] Please ask questions. And you can field your own questions as we go along.

[31:16 - 31:17] Speaker 1: So in order to get to that collaborative vision, what kind of process did they use and did they bring stakeholders together in the process or did they just have it visually?

[31:20 - 33:59] Kim Skyelander: They did both, and the Sistolion Connely company was the one that actually did collaborations. And they did everything. They also did face to face, and did some focus groups. They did some individual interviews, they also did some family interviews, but working with folks and the rest on the base of face to face. We've taken some look at a couple here. [Background] I believe they did. I'm not seeing it. And that's what they did with the tribe. I'm sure there's a copy of that but I did not actually get a chance to look at that. [Background Question] The question was, what was the cost difference between doing it in the collaborative manner versus the traditional four lane highway? And I haven't seen specific dollar per dollar amounts that did cost more money than the traditional highway did, because they brought in, they did more things that was, especially the

rerouting of some of the road. Instead of doing the straight shot like they're going to do, going around some of the wetland areas, picking out some of the the windy places actually added more to it more. So anytime you veer away from a straight regular engineer design, it'll cost more but I don't know how much more exactly. I'm going to guess, it's probably. [Inaudible Background Voice] Well, oh, yeah. [Laughter] But the Federal Highway Administration, the Montana Department, Transportation, had money in Montana for quite a while. It's getting a lot of grants back in the 90s to do upgrade their highways. And so they were going to do it in high water. And actually, a lot of people in the valley really didn't want to for long highway down there either. But they had the money, they did the as they're going through with it. So a lot of it was federal and state. [Inaudible] Oh, excellent. The new highway. The interesting thing when they got donors, [Clears Throat] is it stayed about except for a ten mile stretch, it still stayed two lane highway. But they widen the lanes and widened the shoulders. They put in more passing lanes, more turning lanes. They restricted the access and some of the access roads that were coming in. They confirmed the line of sight but from Polson to [Inaudible] which is up by ten mile period, ten mile stretch was the most heavily used, traffic wise, so they did put in a four lane divided by way there.

[33:59 - 35:10] And then around the town of Arley. Which is about halfway up, they did split the highway, two lanes on one side, two lanes on the other and mainly that has helped beautify the town and encouraged more tourism and sort of. It's actually pretty nice. First time going up there and saw this like, wow! This is really nice. So it just stayed two lanes except that last 10 mile stretch. Which is not at all what the original plan was. Any question. [Background] Not really. Actually, there's been, let's say the most economic was probably the beautifying of the towns, people going out of the tribe, helping people put new facelifts to some of the homes, something like that. As far as opening up new shops, not really. The Valley which is the town right before you get to the bison range. Had an old sawmill in it and was kind of, I guess run down and some of the, part of the money helped really spruce up the little town. So most of it was kind of beautifying the town but I don't know any new thing that they had to do.

[35:13 - 35:14] Speaker 2: Are the tribes in the stakeholders happy with the outcome and the design?

[35:19 - 35:28] Kim Skyelander: I think so. I think you noticed that when they signed the agreement, they were signing the agreement on the basic design and the environmental improvements but there are still things they had disagreements on.

[35:28 - 35:29] Speaker 2: Did they include monitoring?

[35:35 - 38:26] Kim Skyelander: Yes, they're monitoring it. [Background] Yes, they included money for monitoring. And the tribe does have a natural resource shop that does that as long as those of Montana Department of Transportation and then the Montana Fish and Wildlife Service are all involved as well. [Inaudible] [Background Question] Right. Right. There aren't a lot of nonprofits on the reservation per se. There's a ton of them in Missoula. And so the nonprofits were not huge stakeholders in this particular structure but yeah, we're talking about going down to Highway 93 south in Missoula Hamilton, [inaudible] stakeholders. [Background Question] Well, part of the context, sensitive design was to look at wildlife migrations ut the tribe was the one that wanted to do the wildlife crossings particularly, and they're the ones that insisted on so many because of the land issue and stuff. But they went together and they did go to Canada, like I said there were some existing structure so they could find out how to design them. [Background Question] And [Clears Throat] safety was very much in the mind, the end product being the road itself. [Overlapping] Of course, the tribe also wanted a safe road as well. They also wanted that but they didn't want safety at the expense of other problems. Safety and also capacity for being able to handle the increased traffic as a population in Montana increased. Because it is the main course of highway through the state. So in the two lane highway, as I mentioned before, when you didn't have any planes, we just get clogged up for miles and miles, and drove 40 miles an hour and that's when people would take chances and star [Inaudible]. Oh, totally no unresolved issues. I don't really know exactly what all the unsolved issues are. I think that there was a lot of compromise. I don't think both sides got exactly what they wanted.

[38:29 - 38:49] Kim Skyelander: The main concern to the tribe was the wildlife, respecting, feeding the flow to the landscape so that respected the agricultural. You know, parts of the landscape and all those the important. So it's mainly the design but I'm not sure if there's any big unresolved issues. I never heard of any big unresolved issues.

[38:00 - 39:39] Speaker 3: This may be an unfair question, so I apologize in advance. But, you know, sort of given your experience living there and and working in [Unconfirmed Name] and being aware of what was going on at that time, how did this sort of event, how did that figure into the relations between the tribe and the federal government? Was this a kind of a bright spot of something that was really positive or was it, you know, lots of other things that were going on that really weren't working out well? In other words, how did this did this in any way influence the more general, you know, relationship between the federal government and the tribe?

[39:39 - 42:11] Kim Skyelander: And again, I'm not an expert on the subject, but I would say that it definitely increased the trust in relationship with them. [Clears Throat] Down by Derby was a rare

tree of hundreds of pine trees. Did you know about that? They're sacred to the tribes [Laughs] and for years and they wanted to cut it down. Because it was on the very winding part of the road, again, a very narrow part of 93. And that tree was in the way of what they wanted to do and they kept threatening to cut it down. Of course the tribe said, absolutely not. It was a sacred tree. They said it's just one tree. They said it is not just one tree, it's a very sacred tree. And what happened was suddenly the tree died, like within a year and it just turned on red needles and died. And so there was a lot of speculation that, and now they're inoculated it with some disease and killed it, you know, because it's very fishy that it would just also die in one year. And so the highway said, well, we're going to cut it down, the tribe said no, it doesn't matter that it's dead. You're not gonna cut it down. So there was this lack of trust right there throughout. The transportation does not really know what was up, so there was a lot of mistrust there. I think this project has helped immensely, working with each other, they go and they do somethings together and I think it has helped quite a bit. I would call it normal grace, but not. They were definitely on their differences. But remember it was ten years when they actually came to an agreement. And then to bring an outside folks [Inaudible] The tribe? The tribe also had its position. It's hard to get people off their positions, and so they bring in these outside consultants, they were able to help do that. [Background Question] They are very excited about this. As I said, they're using this a flagship model to do other kinds. [Background Voice] [Laughter] And they are taking what they learned on the roads and they're putting it down to the rest of 93 reservations. They got a lot of hoodoos. You know, sort of coming there had for this as well. So they actually really excited about it. And I had some of their journals read up about, you know, yeah, this is a great project. They did take a little more credit than they probably do, but they were very excited about it. There's a new way of designing roads.

[42:20 - 42:24] Moderator: Any other questions for Kim? Well, let's thank her again, very much and thank you. [Applause]

END TRANSCRIPTION