DISTRICT 12 – AS REPORTED BY LETTER

GRANT R. BOWEN, *Coordinator*

(Idaho, Utah)

MAY 27

District members felt it was not desirable to call a meeting at this time due to the fact that no further field data was obtainable since the previous meeting of August 12-13, 1940 held at Preston, Idaho. The report of May 27, 1941, contained supplementary information from the landscape engineers of both States.

Slope dressing and soiling apparatus has been recently developed. Photographs of modern equipment in operation accompanied the coordinator's report.

Also received for committee reference is a copy of the county planning and zoning laws which have been recently enacted by Utah's State Legislature.

Mr. Bowen also reports that he will have good data on the value of fully warped slopes from their Zions Park Project.

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DISTRICT 1 GROUP MEETING – SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

GEORGE H. OTTEN, *Coordinator*

(Oregon, Montana, Washington)

JUNE 9-10-11

District One comprises Washington, Montana, and Oregon, roughly 10 percent of the area of the United States, but containing only 2½ percent of the population of the country. For variation of soils and climate, from swampland to desert or any other conceivable range of variations of whatever character, District One tops the list in things different, diverse, and unpredictable. For this reason it is nearly impossible to tie down to formulas. Rainfall in very dry areas of Montana is only a few inches (6 inches or 8 inches annually) while on the Oregon Coast it may exceed 120 inches where vegetation flourishes like in a tropical jungle.

These extremes, in principle, apply similarly on a narrower scale in all districts and comparably in every State.

It is not the intention to "tie down" to fixed formulas; for rigid standardization is not desirable in any part of modern highway design. Flexibility

in the application of proven principles is the key to all these traffic and roadside problems. A collaborative study of the multiplicity of existing field conditions and construction needs will, through rational classification of the controlling factors, result in simplification of methods and practices so that roadside benefits may be expanded over a larger and larger mileage at a low cost. Analysis and organization of given conditions in a systematic way are essential in order to obtain information data on which a long-range continuing policy of roadside development may be satisfactorily formulated and recommended for general adoption and governing application in each district and in turn each State in that district. In other words, under certain given conditions, one method or treatment may be applicable; under another set of given conditions, a different practice and procedure may be warranted. The coordination of such data is necessary in furthering work of this character as an accepted part of regular construction in every State.

A systematic simplicity is needed for this routine construction improvement in every highway contract over the Nation, at the same time reserving the widest flexibility and variation in treatment for further testing in experimental or special demonstration roadside projects.

Research can be continually advanced through the small-scale or limited size of the specific demonstration projects, while administrative application to regular contract work may be expanded through systematic analysis of the practicalities of the work which have proven their value in the testing projects. In this manner, it is expected that the art of demonstration may develop into the science of application on every new mile of highway development. The "seeds" of research must be ripened into "fruitful" application by all highway administrators if the dual objective and purpose of the Coordinating Committee is to be realized. The success of any program is dependent upon the realized results which must pay dividends in a practical way to justify continuance. Data on policy is a means to this end in every district and offers a splendid opportunity in District One where military highways are important in wartime and motor travel in the post-war period has large appeal for tourists.

COORDINATION IN INITIAL PLANNING STAGE

After various methods of planning and construction operations were discussed and the various costs and procedures among the States compared, it was unanimously agreed that the landscape engineer can be of the greatest assistance if called upon during the planning stage so that landscape design factors may be initially considered and effectively utilized by the highway engineers. Complete coordination between the landscape department and other departments in all matters that involve location, design, construction, and maintenance would be ideal.

SLOPE, TRANSITIONS, AND ROUNDING - FOR EASY, MODERATE, AND ROUGH TOPOGRAPHY

Practice of slope rounding and trimming were specially discussed; on flatter sections in new standards recommended for adoption, hand work on slopes should be eliminated. A detail analysis of a typical mile section of light roadway construction and a mile section of medium heavy construction accompanied the coordinator's report. A diagrammatic chart providing for slope treatment for heavy construction sections was also included in the outline report from Washington, emphasizing performance largely by mechanical equipment.

One-percent funds: Maximum results for use of landscape money could be obtained if the rounding cross sections of grading were done in the original construction contract. The Committee felt that effective results could be obtained with landscape funds if the streamlined cross sections were part of the original contract. Adequate R. O. W. is a prerequisite for modern streamlined sections. Adequate set-back lines were likewise conceded vital to highway safety. The Committee felt that grass sod was expensive and should only be attempted where absolutely necessary.

Mulching: Use of mulching should be increased, not alone as a covering of bare soil and control of erosion but also for the desirable speed with which this method heals the construction scars.

Ground covers: Low vines and native shrub ground covers were recommended. Imported grasses should be avoided where possible.

Conservation: This is one of the important reasons why landscape planning should be used at the very inception of the highway location. Natural advantages such as native growth, topsoil, and scenic advantages will then all have been considered in the solution of the primary location problem. Furthermore, proper location and construction sympathetic with landscape point-of-view is the "backbone" for any successful roadside development.

Special problems: Trend is away from urban parkway treatment. Ornamental planting, other than on roads having an urban background, should not be attempted in the western country. Low ground covers and native vines which could establish themselves and not require future maintenance were considered the best solution of our rural roadside problem. All the advantages of streamlined cross sections were conceded by the Committee, yet it still remains the duty of the various highway departments to buy proper widths of rights-of-way and also to study the alinement in relation to topography in order that streamlined construction may be fitted into the surroundings with a minimum of maintenance after construction is completed.

Safety turn-outs: Road turn-outs for the traveling public, wherever historical markers are located, are not common practice in this section of the country.

Control of utilities: Washington and Oregon have control of tree trimming by the public utilities. Recent publication on this subject is recommended to other States - *Tree Clearing for Overhead Lines* by G. D. Blair, published by Heywood Publishing Company, Lafayette, Indiana.

Personal contacts:- between States and Federal officials: Annual field visits in each district by Public Roads Administration representatives would aid in proper recognition of coordinated landscape planning advantages. A better understanding of our local problems by the authorities in Washington would be of material help to all parties concerned.

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GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM NO. 126 ISSUED JUNE 21, 1941, BY PUBLIC ROADS ADMINISTRATION, FEDERAL WORKS AGENCY ON USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF LAND ADJACENT TO HIGHWAY RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY THROUGH WHICH HIGHWAYS ARE CONSTRUCTED.

JUNE 21

"In order to arrive at a uniform procedure in application there is outlined herewith a desirable policy which should be followed in States that expect to avail themselves of provisions of Section 11 of the Federal Highway Act of 1940.

"A State-wide survey of available tracts of land adjacent to highway rights-of-way of special landscape and traffic service value is the first logical step in an acquisition program. Among the features of primary importance to the natural beauty of highways may be listed tracts of forest land, woodland, or groves of trees; stream, lake, and ocean shore areas; mountain lookout and turn-out points; potential spring development areas; and points of unusual geologic or historic interest. The relative importance of all these tracts of land adjacent to rights-of-way on the Federal-aid highway systems necessarily must be determined before intelligent programs can be prepared for present and future acquisitions.

"The tracts of land acquired under these programs need not be in the form of strips of land of regular width. The boundaries of areas of special landscape value should be fixed in proper relation to streams, ridge tops, or other close-by controls. Tracts of old growth timber should be restricted to such widths as are necessary for the future preservation of growth. The aim should be to acquire, as far as possible, tracts of variable width which are natural topographic or traffic service units. Often these areas may be on one side of the road with boundaries determined by a stream or lake shore, or in the case of overlooks to allow for well-designed turn-outs and parking for a designated number of cars.

"The acquisition of tracts of land adjacent to highway rights-of-way should be planned collaboratively by the State landscape engineer and the right-of-way engineer, or by a consulting landscape architect technically qualified for such a land survey, who will consider the needs of State-wide traffic for rest, recreation, and the enjoyment of scenic and other special landscape values for which the areas are to be acquired. No such tracts should be acquired along highways scheduled for future relocation.

"Projects for the acquisition of tracts of land adjacent to highway rights-of-way with Federal-aid funds shall be programmed and plans, estimates, and project agreements submitted in the regular manner."

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DISTRICT 8 GROUP MEETING — ATLANTA, GEORGIA

R. V. GLENN, *Coordinator*

(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee)

JUNE 23-24

The following highlights of pertinent interest in District 8 are excerpted from the stenographic record of the group meeting of nine representatives, including Public Roads Administration, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, and local, city, county, and State highway officials.

Trends in roadside development: It is difficult to express in a brief report the many new and interesting trends in roadside development brought out in the open discussion in our meeting in Atlanta. Off the record comment proved as pertinent and interesting as that of record.

One-percent fund used for research and laboratory studies: The highlight of the conference was centered in the unanimous opinion that roadside development can no longer be considered as a special feature * * *; it has become so definitely a part of the original design. It was the opinion of the conference that by incorporating basic landscape and roadside features in the original P. S. & E., a great deal of the extra work involved in preparing special papers, wording contracts, etc., for landscape projects would be eliminated. A natural saving could be anticipated through this procedure as it would reduce cost of those items which can be handled by equipment already on the project; eliminating the duplication of plans, publications, etc. The conference believes that the 1-percent fund as an allotment is definitely out of the picture as it is so totally inadequate. However, in showing the way for development, it has served its purpose and it could be well used in the future for research and laboratory studies.