

Cold Case Task Force Meeting
November 4, 2022
10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
In Person – and Virtual - Google Meet

Present: Director Camper, Deputy Director Chris Schaefer, Audrey Simkins, Kirby Lewis, Karen Bliss, Lisa Yoshida, Chief Dan Mc Casky, Melissa Mc Gaw, Joseph Vasquez, Natasha Adler, Sarah Chaikin, Tom Trujillo, Ken Kupfner, and Carrie Davis.

Introductions

The meeting was held in the 3rd Floor Training room located at 690 Kipling Street. The normal meeting space was being used by other members of the Colorado Department of Public Safety (CDPS). Attendees were escorted to the 3rd floor. This meeting was led by Director Camper.

CBI Updates

Cold Case Database –

Stats

1352 Homicide
445 Long-term Missing Persons
82 Unidentified Remains
3 Other

1882 Total

Work on the database continues. Information is constantly being updated. In December, we will begin sending messages to our law enforcement partners asking them to submit any unsolved cases that now meet the 3-year requirement.

JBC Annual Cold Case Report –

The report is being drafted. As soon as it is complete a copy will be distributed to the group and posted to the website.

Cold Case Review Team -

No meetings were held during this quarter. However, there are a couple of agencies that are considering future presentations to the team.

Cold Case Playing Cards/ Cold Case Billboards –

We are looking at the possibility of creating a Deck 6 of the playing cards. In addition, we are looking into the possibility of creating a couple of billboard campaigns in the more rural areas of the state. We are just beginning to explore these options.

Unidentified Human Remains (UHR) Project -

The CBI began working on UHR cases about 2 years ago. At that time, we were trying to get a good handle on how many unidentified human remains cases we have in Colorado. We worked with local law enforcement agencies and coroner's offices across the state and continue to work with them today. I provided training during the fall Coroner's Conference up in Grand Junction where we talked specifically about this project and how Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) is used in these cases.

Our goal when we began this project was to determine if reference samples collected at autopsy had been submitted to the state laboratory and to the National Missing Unidentified Person System (NamUs) for DNA analysis. We wanted to ensure that when the analysis was complete the DNA profile could be uploaded to the Combined DNA Indexing System (CODIS). Unidentified Human Remains can be searched against all profiles in the CODIS database as for these purposes we are not investigating a crime but are working to identify an individual. Once the analysis is complete, if a DNA profile is obtained it can be uploaded.

Additionally, we check to be sure that the case has also been entered into both the Colorado Cold Case Database as well as the National Missing and Unidentified Person System (NamUs). We will also check the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) to ensure the entry has been made there. The existence of these cases in all 3 databases helps to ensure that if someone is looking for a missing person across the country then they can see the unidentified remains cases that we have here in Colorado.

In addition to DNA, we are also checking to see if fingerprints are available for these cases. If fingerprints are available, we will also want to run them in the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS).

We have partnered with the Washinton State missing person office to have them assist with any UHR cases that need NCIC dental coding done so that we can ensure those entries are in NCIC and are being cross referenced.

Later this month we plan to reach out to all the coroner's offices in the state again to see if they would be willing to submit evidence in their cases to see if a DNA profile can be obtained and added to the CODIS database. Then if enough genetic material exists, we might be able to move that case forward with FGG.

Lastly, we are looking to see if dental records are on file for each of these cases. If so, we can use those for comparisons as well.

In December/January we hope to review each of the UHR cases in the NAMUS database to see if there are any possible identifications made through their system. This will consist of working with both our laboratory and NAMUS to see if DNA profiles can be compared. If we identify missing person cases that are possible, and DNA is not on file we will work to collect a sample. All of this takes time, but it is the next logical step.

We have one intern on board that is assisting with this project, and we hope to bring on 3 – 4 more to assist with the completion of these tasks and support our newly formed Cold Case Unit.

Colorado Missing Person Day –

In the next month or so I will be reaching out to Rhonda Fields to see if she is interested in working with me on Colorado Missing Person Day. We usually recognize this day at the state Capitol with a Resolution, and a brief ceremony followed by the reading of the names on the west steps of the Capitol.

Forensic Services

CODIS Numbers-

Total Samples Received	7,443 (approx. 2,481 per month)
Number of Samples profiled	5,502 (approx. 1,834 per month)

Of those samples profiled

- Arrestee samples 4,716
- Convicted Offender samples 786

Total number Offenders 562,030

Arrestee 348,757

Convicted Offenders including Juvenile Offenders 213,273

Total CODIS Hits for the Quarter, 476 (approx. 159 per month).

223 of hits are related to property crimes
83 of hits are related to burglary crimes
60 of hits are related to sex crimes cases
12 of hits are related to homicide cases
5 of hits are related to drug crimes
42 of hits are related to robbery crimes

Recent Successes -

Conviction of Steven Pankey in the Jonelle Matthews case from 1984 in Weld County. Congratulations to the family and those members of the Weld County Sheriff's Office and the 19th Judicial District Attorney's Office for their tireless effort.

Identification of Preston Christensen from 1999 Denver ME office.

Identification of Kenny Brooks from 2012 El Paso County Coroner's Office.

Identification of Nora Castillo from 1988 in Baca County Coroner's Office.

Conviction of Alan Phillips in the Bobbie Jo Oberholtzer and Annette Schnee cases from 1982 in Park County.

Open Forum –

Director Camper announced his retirement in February and that this would be his last Cold Case Task Force meeting. He thanked the Cold Case Task Force members for their dedication to the victims of cold cases in Colorado.

2 new Task Force appointments. The first Sarah Chaikin was a victim advocate with the Denver Police Department for several years and assisted with the creation and update of the Cold Case Training curriculum. She will be a tremendous asset to the task force, and we are happy to have her.

The second is Mari Dennis. She is currently the Deputy Director of the Colorado Victim Organization Association (COVA). She brings a unique perspective to the board when it comes to victim services. She has connections with the more rural areas of Colorado through her position which will be an asset to this Task Force. She will be replacing Rob Wells.

Next Meeting-

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Friday, February 9, 2023. This meeting will be held from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM. The meeting will be held at 690 Kipling Street in the first-floor conference room.