MONTANA WILDLIFE AND TRANSPORTATION

STEERING COMMITTEE
Meeting Notes
November 17, 2020

PURPOSE: To get Steering Committee feedback and direction on data and information, communications, and funding efforts, and develop a work plan for 2021

Objectives:

- Understand the status of the Data and Information Work Group
- Discuss the communications white paper and determine next steps
- Determine which committee members will attend and present at the PLPW Council Meeting on December 1, develop an approach to the presentation, and provide feedback the presentation outline and powerpoint
- Discuss the funding white paper and determine next steps
- Set meeting dates for 2021
- Develop work plan for 2021

ATTENDEES:

- Steering committee (Committee): Mike Tooley (MDT), Tom Martin (MDT Proxy), Lynn Zanto (MDT), Ken McDonald (FWP), Charlie Sperry (FWP), Kylie Paul (MSWP), Brooke Regan (MSWP Proxy)
- Agency Staff: Bill Semmens (MDT)
- Planning and Implementation Team (PIT Crew): Deb Wambach (MDT), Renee Lemon (FWP), Laramie Maxwell (MSWP), Nick Clarke (MSWP), Hannah Jaicks (MSWP)

AGENDA:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Data and Information Work Group Update**
    - The D&I group finalized the Mission statement, and it will be posted on the website
    - The group is working on identification and evaluation of data layers that inform the needs assessment criteria
    - The group will undertake ranking and weighting of data layers
    - The Committee will have the opportunity to review interim products and provide feedback and direction in early 2021
    - MSWP asked if the D&I group was seeking input from "external" sources that may have done work such as modelling, citizen science, or anecdotal information
        - The D&I group will consider this type of information during later steps in their process but are currently focused on more empirical and readily accessible data sources
3. **Communications**
    - **White paper**
        - The Committee discussed the purpose and audience for a communications plan and the suggestion to hire a PI consultant to help develop such a plan
        - The Committee requested some additional work by the PIT Crew to refine the proposal:
            - Further develop goals and objectives, including a clear and concise needs statement; address why we need a communications plan
            - Consider a tiered approach to a communications plan to include the high-level issue of wildlife and transportation's importance, the statewide work and guidance, and a strategy for stakeholder

engagement and involvement at the local, community level
    - Develop an outline for an RFP to better frame and understand what a PI consultant would do for us
    - MSWP (Kylie) offered to assist the PIT crew in this effort – consider what communications staff might be available to assist as well
- The Committee would like to revisit this topic, including the revised white paper and draft RFP, at their next meeting.

- **PL/PW Council Presentation**
    - The PL/PW meeting is scheduled for Tuesday December 1st; the Committee presentation is scheduled for 30 minutes beginning at 8:55 am
    - Ken (FWP), Kylie (MSWP), and Tom (MDT) will present
    - The presenters will meet on November 30 at 1:00 pm to run through the presentation
    - A few suggestions were made to the presentation
        - Highlight the purpose of the MWT Steering Committee early in the presentation – why is there a need, what is the role, how do interested public members get involved?
            - Deb offered some ideas in answer to these questions that will be incorporated into the presentation
        - Add a few photos of the built infrastructure at the Thompson Falls location to show what was done

4. Funding White paper

- The Committee was generally very impressed with the work and sees real possibilities for the development of mechanisms for private contributions to wildlife accommodation projects, and the generation of new revenue streams to fund these types of projects
- MDT will provide comments to the spreadsheet and white paper by December 4th
- There are some unknowns looming as transportation bill needs reauthorization, new administrations in place at federal and state levels
- The Committee agreed that they would like to further explore:
    - The possibilities of a foundation or a trust for holding and allocating private funding
    - Mechanisms to generate revenue outside of traditional sources
- The Committee requested that the white paper be "kept current" as a living document relative to the changing landscape of federal and state funding, as well as other aspects
- The Committee discussed the merits and challenges of having a project to direct monies towards as compared to general fundraising efforts
- MDT needs to work on streamlining internal processes for accepting private funds for transportation projects
- The Committee discussed exploring the idea of establishing a funding "team" with experts from each entity to lead the development of a funding package for individual projects
- The Committee agreed to hold regular dialogue on funding

5. 2021 Work Plan

- **Establish meeting dates for 2021**
    - Due to the legislative session, it may be difficult for agency members to commit to a time in the first quarter. They agreed to hold two dates on the calendar for now
    - First Quarter:

Tuesday February 16th, 10-1 (first choice)
Tuesday February 10th, 1-4 (second choice)

- Second Quarter: Wednesday May 12th, 1-4
- Third and Fourth Quarters will be scheduled at a later time

- **Discuss 2021 work plan tasks**
  - MSWP suggested that Action 9 could be a concurrent effort with current D&I group efforts
    - Capacity of the D&I group and PIT Crew was noted as a concern
    - Interim products and work progress of the D&I group will be shared with the Committee, seeking feedback and input along the way
    - There was general interest in the Committee beginning to develop the overall approach and the statewide framework outlined in Action 9 so that the Committee would be ready to act on the final product from the Data and Information work group when it is ready
  - FWP noted the desire to explore a pilot project to inform the Committee's work.
  - The Committee discussed the pros and cons of undertaking Action 12 to both develop a pilot project and the guidance and support from the statewide Committee "in real time"
    - Some members felt the D&I needs assessment product should be complete or near-so to inform the focal areas of a pilot project
    - The Committee should identify some criteria by which a pilot project would be selected – what needs to be in place ahead of proposing project implementation, how far along do they need to be, etc.?
    - Do some internal processes need to be developed or at least outlined ahead of undertaking a pilot project – funding, administration, agreements and approvals?
  - There is Committee interest in further exploration of:
    - Criteria defining a pilot project "ready for implementation"
    - Internal and partnership processes for development and implementation of pilot project
      (These activities may be considered the beginning of Action 9)

6. Review and Close
   - Director Mike Tooley will be stepping off the Committee. The Committee expressed their gratitude for his leadership and enthusiasm in initiating their work
   - The Committee agreed to invite the new agency Directors to the next meeting to introduce them to their work

ACTION ITEMS:

- The PL/PW presenters will meet on November 30 at 1:00 pm to run through the presentation. The PIT Crew will make edits to the powerpoint.
- The PIT Crew will refine the communication plan proposal and bring to next meeting
- Kylie and the PIT Crew will develop an outline for a Scope of Work and potential RFP and bring to next meeting
- The Committee will continue active dialogue on funding mechanisms and internal processes for streamlining the acceptance of private contributions to wildlife accommodation projects; this will be discussed at the next meeting
- MDT will provide comments on the funding whitepaper by December 4th
- The Committee will consider comments on the Draft 2021 Workplan