# MONTANA WILDLIFE AND TRANSPORTATION

DATA AND INFORMATION WORKGROUP
9:00am – 1:00pm, Thursday, August 26, 2021
Meeting Notes

**Purpose:** Debrief from the August 5th steering committee meeting, evaluate the draft product, coordinate work for September milestone tasks.

Objectives:

- Debrief on the 8/5 presentation to the steering committee and discuss feedback received and determine next steps
- Review the 5 km analyses for NAC 2-4, the 0.10-mile scale for NAC 1, the 1.0-mile highway segments for projection
- Review and discuss the roll-up of the four criteria and discuss next steps for the draft product
- Coordinate work for the September milestone tasks
- Make plans for the next work group meeting on September 23.

**Attendees**:

- D&I Work Group: Andrew Jakes (MSWP), Liz Fairbanks (MSWP), Gabe Priebe (MDT), Paul Sturm (MDT), Brian Andersen (MDT), Adam Messer (FWP), Justin Gude (FWP)
- Planning and Implementation Team (PIT Crew): Deb Wambach (MDT), Hannah Jaicks (MSWP), Barb Beck (FWP)
- Staff: Brian Klapstein (MDT)

**Agenda:**

1. Introduction

2. Debrief from the 8/5 steering committee meeting
    a. Adam and Brian provided an overview of the presentation and feedback from the steering committee
        i. The committee is very pleased with the progress and direction so far and are eager to play around with the tool, once the roll up of all four criteria is complete
        ii. The committee further discussed the SOC species, the intended purpose, and the impact of their inclusion on the product
    b. Group discussion and identification of next steps
        i. Both the D&I group and the committee are identifying how the product should be used, how it should not be used, limitations, and purpose
        ii. D&I group to finish and vet the roll up of all four NAC and share the product with the committee

   Outcome: Finalize the "draft" product to share with the committee. The D&I group may share the product through an interim meeting with the committee ahead of the next quarterly meeting scheduled for December 7th

3. Review the 5 km analyses for NAC 2-4, the 0.10-mile scale for NAC 1, the 1.0-mile highway segments for projection

a. Adam and Brian reviewed the analysis presented at the last meeting
b. Group confirmed the 5km scale for NAC 2-4, the 0.10-mile scale for NAC 1, and the 1.0-mile highway segment scale of projection
c. Most of the group is good with the current ranking and weighting values. Liz and Andrew will review them one more time and provide any changes to Adam.
    i. The group discussed the difference between the value and scaled value and desired a range for each criterion to better convey how each value compares to the min/max and other values
    ii. Data fields need to be "cleaned up" and made more user-friendly
    iii. More discussion and guidance from the committee is needed on what will be made publicly available
        1. Most of the wildlife data is already publicly available
        2. The crash data may need some filters for public use
    iv. The group discussed the relationship of the values within each criterion
        1. Is it linear or bell curve – varies
        2. Various ways to classify the data which changes how it is displayed – Adam and Brian will determine the best classification based on GIS standards and share with group to see if it makes sense
    v. The group noticed that the composite score of NAC 1 is a low contribution in some locations which is being overwhelmed by the composite scores of NAC 2-4 combined

Outcome: The group agreed on appropriate scales for analysis and projection. Clean-up work is needed on the values and data fields in each criterion. Decisions on what can made publicly available need to be made. The relationship between each criterion and contributions to scores identifying areas of need requires further exploration and discussion in the rolled up version of the tool.

4. Review and discuss the roll-up of the four criteria and discuss next steps for the draft product
    a. Adam and Brian presented the roll-up of the four criteria into a single projection, including a slider tool that shows how the roll up of all four NAC relates to any single NAC
    b. Group discussed if the tool is doing what it is intended to do and is it meeting the objectives outlined by the committee?
        i. The group noted the tool seemed to show areas of need appropriately
        ii. The group identified a concern in that several areas that are important for wildlife but not necessarily a high risk or areas of need for wildlife accommodations (e.g. very low traffic volume but good habitat)
            1. This might be related to how traffic volume is currently included in the tool (NAC1 and NAC2)
            2. There was also concern about the display of the cumulative effects of linear infrastructure (parallel highway, frontage roads, railroads)
            3. Group noted that risk and conflict were not being appropriately represented in these areas showing high value for wildlife but low traffic volume and low carcass/crash values

4. Group debated various approaches to addressing this concern and eventually landed on developing a 5th NAC to better represent risk and conflict (crash or barrier effect)

Outcome: Group proposed NAC 5 to capture risk and conflict more appropriately. This work is anticipated to take about a month to complete.

Justin proposed draft descriptions for all 5 criteria:

NAC 1 Increase human safety and reduce property damage
NAC 2 Focus on important habitats for big game and carnivores
NAC 3 Focus on important habitats for struggling or at-risk species (SOC 1 or 2 and federally listed)
NAC 4 Focus on important habitats for a wide range of species.
NAC 5 Focus on highways that are impediments to wildlife movement

Justin and Andrew crafted proposal for data layers to comprise new NAC 5:

1. Traffic volume
2. Projected future traffic volume
3. Speed limit
4. # adjacent linear transportation corridors (roads and railways)

Traffic volume would be removed from NAC 2. The group needs to reevaluate the rankings and weightings for all criteria based on the addition of NAC 5.
The group identified a data need related to fencing and mapping of the number of adjacent linear features (frontage roads, railroads)

5. Coordinate work for the September milestone tasks
    a. Task leads will report out on any progress made as homework since last meeting
    b. Task leads will identify next steps, others to assist, and timeframes for working on the September tasks

Outcome: Agree on next steps, roles and responsibilities, and timeframes for September tasks
**This item was tabled based on work and timeframe associated with adding NAC 5.**

6. Next Meeting
    a. What is the group's homework between now and next meeting? Will that be accomplished individually, in small groups, or some other way?
        - Justin will send out a new spreadsheet with the addition of NAC 5.
        - The group will review the criteria titles and descriptions.
        - Due September 3: The group will provide new ranking and weighting to all 5 criteria
        - Justin will finalize the new criteria percentages based on revised ranking and weighting
        - Brian and Andrew will work on a new layer for criteria 5.
        - Deb will adjust the timeline for the milestone tasks by a month and send revised version to the group

- Liz will send out a Doodle poll to determine the date of the next D&I group meeting, anticipated in early to mid-October.

b. What does the group want to accomplish at the next meeting?
   - Finalize NAC 5
   - Discuss and agree on new rankings and weightings for all 5 criteria
   - Revise and review the roll-up product
   - Determine next coordination with the committee
   - Coordinate work for the “new” October milestone tasks

7. Close by 1:00 pm