MONTANA WILDLIFE AND TRANSPORTATION

DATA AND INFORMATION WORKGROUP
9:00am – 1:00pm, Thursday, October 7, 2021
Meeting Notes

Purpose: Discuss and finalize 5th criterion (NAC 5), evaluate the draft product, coordinate work for October milestone tasks.

Objectives:

- Discuss NAC 5 criterion (to capture risk and conflict more accurately) and results of preliminary application of the 5th criterion. Identify adjustments to rankings and weightings as needed.
- Review and discuss the roll-up of the five criteria and discuss next steps for the draft product
- Coordinate work for the October milestone tasks
- Determine whether an interim meeting with the Statewide Steering Committee to discuss the product is timely in advance of the December full-quarterly meeting.
- Make plans for the next work group meeting on October 28.

Attendees:

- D&I Work Group: Andrew Jakes (MSWP), Liz Fairbanks (MSWP), 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), Nick Clarke (MSWP)

Agenda:

1. Introduction

2. Report on progress in developing and applying NAC 5
    a. Justin provided an update on revised rankings received
    b. Brian and Andrew provided an update on incorporation of layers for NAC 5. The group discussed in depth what makes up each layer and made several adjustments to the layers based on discussion captured below.

    The layers proposed for inclusion in NAC 5 are: traffic volume, projected traffic volume, speed limit, road (surface) width, and adjacent linear infrastructure

    - The group discussed the "number of lanes" layer and decided to use road width surface instead.
    - The group talked about how to calculate double sets of lanes for surface width. The group agreed on the following procedure; identify divided Interstate and combine the width of the lanes. Brian will follow up on this.
        - UPDATE: The MDT Interstate layer accounts for the surface width across single direction of travel and will be doubled to include both directions of travel (EB & WB, NB & SB). For all other routes, the layer includes the entire top width surface in both directions of travel, including for divided highways, and will be used as is.
        - Since this layer had not yet been incorporated, the group will need to re-weight the layers within NAC 5.

- The group discussed what information projected traffic volume is based upon and how it would be useful. This is a 20-year rolling time horizon updated annually. There is certainty for the data this is based upon, but not a high degree of certainly of outcomes 20 years into the future. Group members can keep this in mind when assigning weights. The group still believes it will be useful information when taken with the rest of the layers in NAC5.
- The group had a long discussion about the "adjacent linear features" layer.
    - The distance used for adjacent features was 100 meters either side of centerline in one-mile lengths. Being able to explain how the 100-meter corridor was selected will be important.
    - Adjacent roadways and railways made sense to include.
    - Water features including ditches, canals, and streams are more problematic.
        a. The group agreed to remove these water features unless large canals can be teased out and then they should probably be included. This layer will have implications for implementation criteria as well as provide an "additive effects" aspect to impediments/barriers to wildlife movement across transportation corridors in determining areas of need.
            i. UPDATE: It appears larger canals can not be gleaned from the NHD layer available. Brian will reach out to state library to determine if large canals can be made available via another source.
        b. Streams and rivers will not be included in this layer at this time.
        c. Powerlines, transmission lines, and pipelines will not be included in this layer at this time.
        d. Large canals will be identified as a data gap/need for now.
        e. Fencing will also be identified as a data gap/need.
    - Adjacency, large canals, and other parameters for this layer will need to be defined and defensible.
    - This layer will include adjacent roadways and railways for now.

c. Discussion to confirm (or not) the tool is now doing what it is intended to do.
    - Brian displayed the statewide map with the NAC5 information (before the above decisions have been incorporated).
        - Given the available information, the group believes it more accurately shows areas of need for potential accommodation than the map with NAC 1-4. Without having the benefit of the final layers for NAC5 the group affirmed the tool is generally doing what was intended.
        - The group identified seasonal and day/night fluctuations in traffic volume/flow as a potential data gap/need. This item needs further thought and discussion to be fleshed out completely.

d. Group discussion and identification of next steps
    - The group did not have time to discuss how the product should be used, how it should not be used, limitations, and purpose, at this meeting.
    - D&I group to finish and internally vet the roll up of all five NAC. Work to be completed on NAC 5 prior to roll up:

- Add surface road width layer
- Refining the adjacent linear infrastructure layer
- Re-weighting and rank the layers within NAC 5
- Update the excel file

Outcome: The group was not yet able to finalize the "draft" product with five criteria to share with the Steering Committee but identified next steps moving in that direction. Adding the 5th NAC has bumped the schedule back about a month. The group decided that the loss of a month means there is no reason for an interim meeting; the group plans to share the draft tool with the SC at the December 7th meeting.

3. Additional clean-up and making tool available
    a. Classifying the data—recommendations from Adam and Brian
    b. What clean-up is needed and who will accomplish it, by when?
    c. More discussion and guidance from the committee is needed on what will be made publicly available

Outcome: The group in agreement on classifying the data, what additional clean-up is needed, and preliminary recommendations for release of the rolled-up tool to the public.
This item was tabled based on work on NAC 5 and will be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

4. Review and discuss the roll-up of the five criteria and discuss next steps for the draft product
   This item will be the focus of the next meeting

5. Coordinate work for the October 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: Next steps, roles and responsibilities, and timeframes for October 28 tasks below
This item will be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

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 soliciting revisions to ranks and weights based on changes to layers in NAC 5.
        - Justin will compile and send out the new weights and rankings from the group.
        - Deb will adjust the timeline for the milestone tasks by a month and send revised version to the group
        - Brian and Adam will incorporate the new rankings and weightings and revisions to NAC 5 layers and push to the application for review at the 10/28 meeting
        - add surface road width layer and refine adjacent linear features layer

    b. What does the group want to accomplish at the next meeting?
        - Group will review the new roll-up of the draft product
        - Brian will report on the data clean-up effort (back of the house) and make recommendations for classifying the data

- Group will review story map interface and assign leads for write-ups under each section (front of the house)
- Group will begin discussions on how the product should be used, how it should not be used, limitations, and purpose, consider preliminary recommendations to the SC for public release
- Group will review the revised tasks and timeline document and coordinate the work for the October/November milestone tasks
- Group will begin discussions on presentation of the draft product to and request for additional guidance from the SC at their December 7th meeting

7. Close by 1:00 pm