

MWTP SC – WORKING MEETING NOTES

January 29, 2025

I. INTRODUCTIONS

- a. Approve Notes 10/24/24 - **approved**
- b. Assign Notetaker – **deb**
- c. Add new agenda topics - **none**
- d. Attendance: (delete missing)
 - i. Steering Committee: **RS, KM, SB, KP, BS (for TM)**
 - ii. PIT Crew: **DW, BA, ST**

II. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Robin Graham left FWP – new FWP appointment pending – **likely from DO**
- b. Communications Plan and Schedule of Deliverables, 2025 update – **ST to work on it, tabled until next meeting**
- c. Direction for May 2025 call for applications
 - i. East/West Montana
 - ii. Any/All applications
 - iii. Other
 - **Group discussed and determined they previously agreed that for the foreseeable future, May calls would be any scale project, including large. November would be a call for smaller projects only (unless ample \$ in FS account) based primarily on FS funding available from MDT in any FY.**
 - **MDT discussed capacity issues in D1 and D2 with the projects already in the hopper and other studies and projects going on.**
 - **Based on timing, group decided to stay the course for May 2025 call and revisit based on what projects are received.**
 - **If we change the call for application parameters, we should give at least one-year advance notice to potential applicants.**
 - **Will consider an interim message alerting applicants to potentially longer time frame for implementation of projects in the west. ST/PIT Crew to draft.**
 - **Currently have a 'Coming Soon' & 'Cycle Open' announcements distributed at 1 month out and the beginning of the application cycle, respectively. Proposing a third announcement 'planning ahead' to go out early in application cycle (3-4 months ahead). Agreed to be a good idea. ST/PIT to draft**
 - **Lots up in the air related to future availability of federal funding for this work.**
- d. Selected MWTP projects funding opportunities and challenges
 - **Discussed the need for a better long-term strategy for application to federal funding including the need for agency commitment in supporting applications.**
 - **Need to evaluate competing priorities with agencies and between MWTP projects.**

- If the framework requires NGO's/private funding for these projects, federal grant funding is a must, and the Partnership should support every opportunity for that funding for projects selected by the SC.
- Need to plan early, get creative on project bundling and other options, consider project prioritization including Partnership projects
- MDT sees the importance of this work but the conversation about project prioritization will be hard. Having these frank and honest discussions within the Partnership is a great first step. MDT members can work to get the conversation moving within MDT.
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- e. MSWP – KP update on potential crossings funding legislation
 - **Two bills floating in draft; one current and one 'on-hold' for now.**
 - **Set up a SRA with FWP, specialty license plate as account 'seed money', but would also accept donations**
 - **FWP not excited about being the bank – MOLF or other NGO may be better suited, especially regarding private donations**
 - **Other bill gets into other potential revenue sources (e.g., rental car fee)**
- f. Review/revise Charter
 - **Assignment: Review the Charter and consider where we are now compared to 5 years ago. Bring comments and recommendations to the next meeting.**
 - **Clarify roles and commitments of the partners to support these projects.**
- g. MSWP – hub for Outreach/Communications, future applicant materials, Partnership advocacy, wildlife accommodations outside Partnership
 - **This needs more exploration within MSWP, including big picture MT and relationship to Partnership. Initial thoughts of group are that all things Partnership should be available on the Partnership webpage and potentially linked back to MSWP website. MSWP could be MT clearing house/resource for wildlife accommodations literature, design, what's happening here and elsewhere, etc.**
 - i. All Resources for applicants and road crossings
 - ii. MSWP tips and tricks for applicants
 - iii. Agency thoughts
- h. Website page for current projects and updates
 - **Group gave thumbs up to this proposal as described by ST.**
 - i. Active Projects tab
 - 1. Link to MDT projects webpages
 - 2. Link to Project webpages
 - a. <https://www.yellowstonesafepassages.org/engineering-feasibility-study>
 - b. <https://missoulacrossings.org/projects/sixmile/>

III. NB ACTION ITEMS

- Review/Revise Charter
 - <https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/mwt/documents.aspx>
 - Assignment: Review the Charter and consider where we are now compared to 5 years ago. Bring comments and recommendations to the next meeting.
 - Clarify roles and commitments of the partners to support these projects.
- MDT consideration of early coordination between MDT Grants Team and MWTP project applicants.
- Call for applications announcement to include language for potential longer time frame for implementation of projects in west MT.
- Create new (3rd) announcement to subscribers to be sent 3-4 months early. Draft language.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

V. OB ACTION ITEMS

- VI. DW – modifications to application guidance docs for jurisdiction of the Partnership
- **Approved. Deb to PDF and get documents to MDT for website posting.**

VII. UPDATES

- a. No SC Working Meetings were held in Nov or Dec 2024
- b. MDT-FWP Summit
 - **Draft Report expected mid-February. Final not expected until March/April**
- c. MSWP Crossing Convening – **Report also in the works.**
- d. Current Active Projects
 - i. Sixmile Creek Underpass
 1. **Consultant Scoping Meeting held in mid-Dec**
 2. **Waiting on draft Scope of Services**
 - ii. Dome Mountain
 1. **Moved forward with consultant selection**
 2. **Consultant Scoping Meeting to be held in February**
 - iii. US-191 Mouth of the Canyon – Lessons to Learn?
 1. **CLLC provided MDT final FS report Dec. 19**
 2. **Did not receive WCPP award**
 3. **Unable to apply for RAISE application**
 - iv. US-191 North of Big Sky
 1. **CLLC provided MDT with draft of FS report Dec. 19**
 2. **On hold pending HOA concerns**

VIII. NEXT MEETINGS

- a. Schedule future SC Working Meetings – Feb, Mar, Apr
 - **Deb sent out 3 when2meet polls, one for each month. Will schedule when polls are completed.**