

Meeting Notes for Kick Off Meeting of Montana DOT Project

#HWY-308445-RP-Wildlife Crossing Research on US 93 South

Notes taken by P. Cramer

Meeting October 9, 2008

Helena, MDT Offices with video calling to Bozeman and Missoula, MT.

Present:

Patricia Cramer, P. I.

Sue Sillick, Research, MDT Project Manager

Pat Basting, Missoula District Biologist, MDT

Mark Greenwood, Professor, Montana State University, Bozeman

Scott Jackson, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Helena, MT

Bonnie Steg, Resource Section Supervisor- Environmental Services Bureau, MDT

Carl James Federal Highway Administration, Helena, MT

Nigel Mends, Missoula District Engineer- Bridge Bureau, MDT

Dave Hedstrom, Hydraulics Section- Highways Bureau, MDT

Kris Christensen, Engineering Management Information & Support, MDT

The meeting opened with introductions. Sue Sillick explained the main goal of this meeting is to make sure we are all on the same page with regard to process and technical aspects of the project. Sue explained the research process: how we arrived at this point and where we go from here. Pat Basting submitted a problem statement. At the Technical Panel's request prior to the release of the RFP, Mark Greenwood conducted a preliminary statistical analysis. Based on this analysis and the problem statement, the Technical Panel wrote a scope of work and RFP. Patty Cramer's proposal was chosen as the basis for conducting the research. As the project continues, the Technical Panel is responsible for reviewing deliverables, which should be detailed enough to give the Technical Panel a clear picture of the research to date and upcoming tasks, to make sure the project stays on scope and we are getting what we want out of this project. Sue emphasized the technical panel is the key to success for any research project. It is up to the panel to make sure the project stays on scope. Sue indicated, as MDT project manager, it is up to her to facilitate the panel getting what it wants out of this project based on the scope of work in the RFP and the proposal.

Sue then discussed some key contractual requirements. Project decisions are made by the Technical Panel, either as a group during a meeting or via Sue as the liaison between the Panel and Patty. There is no limitation regarding technical discussions among panel members and Patty; however, anything affecting time, scope, or budget go through Sue. Changes in key project personnel must be approved by MDT prior to any changes being made. Also, any other contractual changes, such as changes to budget categories, must be approved in advance by MDT. There is a limitation on release of preliminary data; this must be approved in advance by MDT. The contract is a cost reimbursement, not to exceed contract. MDT will withhold the last 15% of the contract until all deliverables

have been accepted by MDT. Progress reports (quarterly) must accompany each invoice; both can be submitted electronically. Large files should be posted to MDT's FTP site, with an e-mail indicating a new file is on the FTP site. Sue indicated it is important to follow MDT's report requirements for all progress and final reports. All reports are draft until accepted by MDT; however, all draft reports are the principal investigator's vision of the final polished report. All final reports go back for at least one revision and possibly more. MDT requests only text and graphics for the project summary report; research staff will compile the text and graphics into the appropriate format. Finally, all reports require a line item response for each comment provided by MDT.

The remainder of the meeting notes follows the meeting agenda.

Animal-vehicle collision data can be obtained from Pierre Jomini at MDT. Dr. Cramer will work through Sue Sillick to contact Pierre for exact records.

Carcass data will be accessed through Pat Basting. Bonnie can also assist. Sue can assist with timeliness of data delivery. Pat discussed the data collection methods, explaining the accuracy was fairly good, with carcass locations reported by every 1/10th of a mile, but not with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) units. Missoula District Maintenance uses a form to collect data, which are then compiled with a 1 to 3 month lag from reports to computer database.

Note: Talk to Kirsten Wrzesinski about MMS database- might be able to get more data or maybe quicker.

GIS data sources can be coordinated through Skip Nyberg of MDT. Sue will help Dr. Cramer with this contact. The only past research projects of which panel members were aware that were conducted on this stretch of US 93 were those by Dr. Kerry Foresman of the University of Montana.

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks is not represented on the panel at this time. Dr. Cramer would like a representative to join the panel. The original MFWP biologist on the panel, John Vore moved to another area of Montana, and his replacement, Craig Jourdannais may be able to join the panel. Pat Basting and Dr. Cramer will look into inviting him. MFWP data on deer is said to be in an Excel spreadsheet format. This will need to be investigated.

Traffic Volume data can be obtained through Sue Sillick. The best contact for this is Becky Duke, MDT.

Mark Greenwood's role as a statistician for the project was discussed. Dr. Greenwood is a consultant to the project, to MDT. His role is to make sure the statistical analysis is as robust as possible; this will facilitate the research being applicable to other situations. It was agreed that Dr. Greenwood would give a report of his work to Sue Sillick every quarter so the panel can better understand his involvement, and to view the 'statistical progress.' Mark will work directly with the research team and will report any issues to Sue.

MDT roles were discussed. It is believed that MDT permits for installing cameras on MDT land under bridges and in the area of study are not necessary. Pat Basting will check with Doug Moeller. Pat is the champion for the project. Key decisions that affect the outcome of the project will be made by the panel. Smaller day to day and in the field decisions will be made with Pat Basting and possibly project managers along US 93 South. Sue should be kept in the loop with all correspondence and project decisions Panel members can help the P. I. make other necessary contacts for this research. MDT stickers to place on camera boxes will be coordinated with Sue Sillick and Kris Christensen; additional stickers can be obtained from the sign shop through Harlan Davis.

Schedule of MDT US 93 South Projects was still up in the air at the time of the meeting. It was understood that greater detail as to how the cameras will be installed will come with awarding of future construction contracts. All designs for camera installation beyond those presented in the agenda will rely on construction award schedules that won't be available for at least a few months.

Plans for future correspondence and meetings were discussed. The panel decided there will be a May 2009 conference call to monitor progress of the project. There panel will meet annually.

For the length of the project, Dr. Cramer will forward interesting pictures and information to Sue Sillick for distribution.

Afterward

Dr. Cramer met with Becky Duke for traffic data.

Dr. Cramer also met with GIS personnel, including Marlin Sander. Data transfer was discussed and agreed upon.

The day after the meeting, Dr. Cramer went into the field and installed a camera in its utility box at the North Bass Hill wildlife crossing on US 93. The camera was cable locked into concrete. Alternative methods for installing boxes on the sides of culverts will also be explored.