

**Bringing Montana's History into the Future: Modernizing MDT's Interpretive Marker System**  
**Kick Off Meeting**  
**May 13, 2024**

**Attendees**

Jon Axline, MDT, Historian & Project Chair  
Kira Axline, MDT, Planning Division  
Brian Andersen, MDT, Geospatial Information Supervisor, Data & Analysis Bureau  
Jon Swartz, MDT, Maintenance Administrator, Maintenance Division  
Vaneza Callejas, CTC & Associates, Project Manager  
Karalyn Clouser, WTI  
Natalie Villwock-Witte, WTI

*Panel Member Not in Attendance*

Bob Seliskar, Civil Rights & Right of Way Specialist, FHWA

**Notes**

**1. Project Management (Vaneza)**

Natalie: No questions at present. We previously discussed pushing back some of the proposal deliverable dates to match up with the kick-off meeting date; they are reflected in today's presentation.

Vaneza: Of course, things were shifted because contracting took a while. As needed, we can also do a no cost extension.

**2. Review of Project Scope, Schedule (Natalie)**

Natalie walked through the scope of work for this project.

Project Objective - enable interpretive marker information to more readily be accessible to the public through MDT online applications. A focus audience includes interested travelers visiting or considering visiting the locations of these markers while traveling Montana's roads.

5 Tasks

- Task 0: Project Management (short monthly calls, quarterly progress reports, meeting notes, etc.)
- Task 1: Literature Review/Survey/Information Gathering
- Task 2: Investigate Innovative Approaches
- Task 3: Provide Recommendations for an Online Interactive Map
- Task 4: Final Report/Project Close Out

**3. Discussion (All)**

Monthly Calls

Vaneza: For the monthly check in calls. Since most of us are on the call for planning these meetings I want to get these on the schedule. I want to make sure I get a response from people whether they will attend each call – no sense for having a meeting with just Natalie and myself.

Natalie: I can send an agenda for each call too. We can keep these to a half-hour. We intend for these to be short and to the point, just to check in on where we are at in the project.

Brian: That works for me. I will probably have someone else sit on these going forward, but GIS will be represented.

Jon Axline: I will be here every month.

Kira/Jon Swartz: Same here.

Natalie: For the next two months do you want to identify that now or should we wait?

Vaneza: I need to see if there is an FHWA member on this panel. I will send some dates after this call.

Tasks 1 and 2

Brian: We already have 3-4 options for maps (story maps, etc. available at MDT) we are looking at something that can address limited cell service and the communication of those.

Natalie: We can prioritize looking into limited cell service and hands-free options.

Jon: Correct

Task 3

Jon Swartz: In terms of identifying the vision of the marker data, that is something we need to visit internally. I'm not sure where the data currently resides.

Brian: We have been working with Jon Axline to inventory those as part of our annual field inventory – we have photos, data, data dictionary, location, etc. It is very reliant on Jon Axline telling us that there's a new sign or one has been removed or changed to know when to update/collect that data. That could be refined. I'm happy to keep collecting these but I also don't need to.

Jon Axline: I'm retiring in a year and a half – we will need to come up with something to get that information for you in the future.

Jon Swartz: It sounds like we have a good foundation but need to decide how to capture that data in the future.

Jon Axline indicated that he plans to retire in approximately 18 months, so we want to be cognizant from a research team perspective that we obtain his input on the draft deliverables before he retires.

#### **4. Next Steps (All)**

Vaneza: I will get back to you Natalie on some dates for the upcoming monthly meetings. We do have an FHWA rep for this project (Bob Seliskar).

# Bringing Montana's History into the Future: Modernizing MDT's Interpretive Marker System

Monday, May 13, 2024

# Project Objective

- Enable interpretive marker information to more readily be accessible to the public through Montana Department of Transportation online applications. A focus audience includes interested travelers visiting or considering visiting the locations of these markers while traveling Montana's roads.

# Task Outline

- Task 0: Project Management
- Task 1: Literature Review, Information Gathering, & Survey of Other States & Federal Lands
- Task 2: Investigate Innovative Approaches, including App Development
- Task 3: Provide Recommendations for an Online Interactive Map
- Task 4: Report & Project Close-Out Deliverables

# Task 0: Project Management

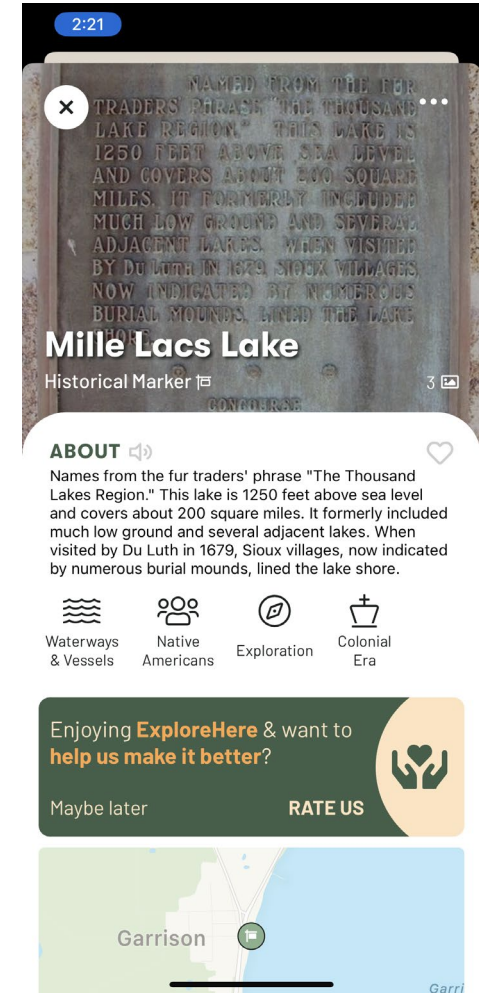
- Kick-Off Meeting
- Monthly Check-In Conference Calls
  - Starting June 2024 through the end of the project.
- Quarterly Progress Reports
- Deliverable: Kick-Off Meeting, Kick-Off Meeting PPT, Kick-Off Meeting Notes, Monthly Check-In Conference Calls, Monthly Check-in Conference Notes, Quarterly Progress Reports (July 31, 2024; October 31, 2024; January 31, 2025; April 30, 2025; July 31, 2025, possibly October 31, 2025)

# Task 1: Literature Review, Information Gathering, & Survey of Other States & Federal Lands

- Literature Review & Information Gathering
  - Journal articles, reports, grey literature (e.g., periodical articles)
  - Focus on how historical and geological marker programs are shared via applications (apps)
    - App development – how was it done?
    - App features – key features
    - What information about a marker is shared
    - Challenges, best practices
- Survey Development & Dissemination – Technical Panel approval before dissemination
- Deliverables: Draft & Final Survey Instrument, List of Contact, Task Report

# Task 2: Investigate Innovative Approaches, Including App Development

- Interviews to examine hands-free approaches, methods of communicating marker information, dealing with limited cellular service
- Programs to Learn More About
  - ExploreHere
  - WITF (Pennsylvania)
  - Michigan History Center – interactive map
  - Georgia Historical Society – interactive map
  - Vermont Roadside Historic Markers
- Deliverable: Task Report





# Task 3: Provide Recommendations for An Online Interactive Map

- Interviews with MDT staff (including maintenance staff) to identify the vision for maintaining interpretive marker data and what data should be made available to the public
  - Does MDT want a similar interface for the historical data as it already available for the Geologic Road Sign information?
  - Does MDT want an interface that displays both sets of data?
- Example of interest: Vermont Roadside Historic Markers
- Deliverable: Task Report

# Task 4: Report & Project Close-Out Deliverables

- Deliverables: Draft and Final Report, Performance Measures Report, Implementation Report, Project Summary Report, Project Poster, Close-Out Meeting/Webinar, Data Management Plan

# Project Schedule



- 18 months
- Start Date: May 1, 2024
- End Date: October 31, 2025

Task	Dates	2024										2025							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct
0 Project Management																			
Kick-Off Meeting	5/13/2024	X																	
Monthly Check-In Calls	Monthly		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Quarterly Reports	Aug, Dec, Apr, Aug			X			X			X			X			X			X
1 Literature Review, Information Gathering, & Survey of Other States & Federal Lands																			
Draft Survey Instrument	July 31, 2024			X															
Final Survey Instrument	August 16, 2024				X														
Task Report	October 31, 2024						X												
2 Investigate Innovative Approaches, Including App Development																			
Task Report	January 31, 2025									X									
3 Provide Recommendations for an Online Interactive Map																			
Task Report	July 31, 2025															X			
4 Report & Project Close-Out Deliverables																			
Draft Final Report	September 19, 2025																		X
Final Report	October 31, 2025																		X
Performance Measures Report	September 19, 2025																		X
Implementation Report	September 19, 2025																		X
Project Summary Report	September 19, 2025																		X
Project Poster	September 19, 2025																		X
Final Presentation	September 19, 2025																		X
Project Webinar	September 19, 2025																		X
Data Management Plan	October 31, 2025																		X

# Questions?

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