

## **No Boundaries Phase II Transportation Pooled Fund #TPF-5(330)**

### **Minutes - Kickoff Teleconference**

**October 1, 2015 | 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. CST**

#### **Attendees**

##### Current members

Ohio DOT (lead agency): John Stains, Thomas Lyden, Mitch Blackford, Cynthia Jones

Michigan DOT: Steve Cook

Missouri DOT: Mike Shea, Bill Stone

North Dakota DOT: Brad Darr, Les Noehre

Pennsylvania DOT: Jon Fleming

South Carolina DOT: Jim Feda

Note: Rudy Powell from Florida DOT was not able to participate.

##### Guest agencies

Illinois DOT: Tim Armbrecht

Minnesota DOT: Tom Peters

New York State DOT: Mike Lashmet, Joe Doherty, Joe Thompson

Virginia DOT: Allen Williams, Robbie Prezioso

Washington State DOT: Jay Wells, James Morin

##### Program managers

CTC & Associates LLC: Kim Linsenmayer, Patrick Casey, Kirsten Seeber

DW Clonch, LLC: Diana Clonch, Diane Watkins

#### **Welcome and introductions**

John Stains (ODOT) welcomed the group to Phase II of the project. He thanked MoDOT for leading the first phase, the members who have continued on from the first study and the new members who have joined this study.

#### **Overview and member goals for No Boundaries Phase II**

- John Stains (ODOT)
  - The primary goal of this pooled fund is to identify and share maintenance innovations and best practices developed by the individual states, so that the members can learn and grow from each other's experiences. The No Boundaries website lists all of the innovations shared during the first phase of the pooled fund. Each innovation has a one-page document that explains it.
  - ODOT wants to continue to bring innovations to the group at the in-person meetings. This has been very useful in the past because it allowed for good discussion and great training opportunities.
  - Beyond publishing summaries of selected innovations, the members plan to develop a

searchable database on the website to store and showcase many more innovations submitted. The website would be a clearinghouse for innovation and best practices for roadway maintenance practices. Any member should have the ability to participate and bring forth ideas.

- Mitch Blackford (ODOT) – Sometimes we get wrapped up in winter maintenance and forget about summer maintenance issues. Sometimes we only talk to the next county over and not statewide. This pooled fund will help members share non-winter maintenance practices across state lines.
- Thomas Lyden (ODOT) – There is so much focus on snow and ice. For southern states, warm weather operations are 10 months out of their year, and they would like to focus on that.
- Cynthia Jones (ODOT) – We would like to see No Boundaries build a community of practice to share ideas and learn from each other in a more applied manner. Being a member will provide regular connection with folks in the maintenance areas of other agencies.
- Steve Cook (MDOT)
  - MDOT is decentralized in their maintenance operations, but they do training for the people in the regions. Safety and training is an important part of this study. Equipment retention might also be a best practice. How do we keep old equipment safe and functional? What is everyone else doing? How do other states organize their maintenance operations? Are they centralized or decentralized? How do other states get information out, all the way to the roadside?
  - No Boundaries needs to provide more outreach to other states to get them interested in participating, like Pat Casey and I did at the Winter Peer Exchange. The website and the two-page brochure are good, but we need other avenues as well.
- Bill Stone (MoDOT) – Mike Shea (MoDOT) brought an herbicide sprayer to an in-person meeting in Ohio to show how it works. I like this type of sharing of practices. I'm excited about the training aspects of the study and guidance that can be shared between states.
- Brad Darr (ND DOT) – We're part of both the Aurora and Clear Roads pooled funds, so we see the benefit of being a member of this study. We focus on change management and getting new ideas moved through the department.
- Les Noehre (ND DOT) – The folks out in the field are always looking to do things cheaper as cost goes up, but budgets don't. Safety is also an important issue. They want to do things faster since the to-do list gets longer and there is not extra staff to handle the extra work.
- Jon Fleming (PennDOT)
  - I love being able to talk to other DOTs across the country. PennDOT has implemented some of the practices we learned during the last pooled fund. Other practices we were already doing. We would like to focus on processes.
  - We have our own engine shops, and we rebuild engines for our equipment. We also have our own sign shop. We would like to share what we do so that it might be incorporated into other state's practices.
  - We want to learn what other states do for training and how we can incorporate it.
- Jim Feda (SCDOT)
  - I agree with everything already said. I'm interested in what we can steal from other states – equipment, processes, activities and record keeping. The pooled fund needs to go well beyond equipment, to training, prevention of backing accidents, etc.
  - We inspect every maintenance office in the state every two years, including office practices,

and compliance with the policies and procedures. We also see if the offices have new innovations that they can share across the state.

- James Morin (WSDOT) – We have an interest in developing a program to deal with equipment and methods. We’re looking for the same kind of forum on the summer maintenance side that the Winter Maintenance Peer Exchange provided on the winter side.
- Jay Wells (WSDOT) – We want to encourage peer-to-peer interaction to find out what problems other agencies have solved, so that everyone can learn from it.

Note regarding the first phase of No Boundaries: Bill Stone (MoDOT) has received the final invoice from the contractors, and MoDOT will be distributing the remaining funds to the original members.

### **Questions and discussion with guest agency representatives**

- Tom Peters (MnDOT)
  - Is there any plan to conduct literature reviews on maintenance questions?
    - John Stains (ODOT) – The pooled fund doesn’t do any research, but we would be willing to promote a research project that is being done by a university or a state DOT. This is how the last study was structured, but we’re open to a discussion with the group.
    - Cynthia Jones (ODOT) – We haven’t priced No Boundaries to do research. A literature search is a possibility. The members can identify common issues and then do a literature search on related research or practices. ODOT or CTC & Associates could help with a literature search.
    - Bill Stone (MoDOT) – We didn’t think the group had the resources to do research in the last study. The MoDOT librarian could also help with a literature search for this pooled fund.
    - Tim Armbrrecht (IDOT) – We’re interested in literature searches or a clearinghouse on what research has been done nationally. IDOT’s maintenance folks could look and see what research has been done and discuss whether to pursue it.
  - Will this group be involved with private vendors and manufacturers?
    - This was discussed during the previous study. We’re willing to accept innovations (demonstrations) from them, but the group needs to decide on this. We could analyze and discuss what we learn, and then determine if it would be an innovation the group endorses. MoDOT – We would submit private vendor innovations to the No Boundaries group only when MoDOT will be implementing them in the state.
- Steve Cook (MDOT)
  - I would like to capture the maintenance questions/ideas that come up so I can take them to the AASHTO Subcommittee on Maintenance. If the committee agrees on the national importance of an idea, it could potentially develop into a research problem statement and funding could be secured via TRB for an NCHRP initiative.
    - Is there an FHWA representative to this study? Yes, Joe Conway is the official pooled fund liaison.
    - Are meetings scribed so we can capture the questions? Yes, CTC documents all meetings, and there will be minutes.
    - It would be good to have a liaison to SCOM so that if a good idea comes up it can be discussed there.

- Jon Fleming (PennDOT) – Yes, I would also like to see the issues raised here be tied back to the SCOM. This was discussed during the first study, but it didn't come to fruition.
- Tom Peters (MnDOT) – The group may want to consider surveys outside of this group. Clear Roads does this.
  - Kim Linsenmayer (CTC) – Yes, the initial plan is to survey all states broadly on their summer maintenance practices to gather innovations for the database.
- Joe Doherty (NYSDOT) – We are looking for best practices related to hot topics that our state is dealing with, such as guardrail end treatments. A forum like this would be good to see what other states are going to do related to this issue. Another issues is sign retro reflectivity. How are others addressing the federal requirements? How are other states cost effectively dealing with small culverts inspection programs?
- Steve Cook (MDOT) – Are other states doing performance-based maintenance? How?
  - FDOT does this holistically. MDOT is in the first year of developing statewide assets to be rated, and the training needed for a PBM system. Other states are in various stages of developing similar systems.

### **Overview of CTC contract activities to date – Pat Casey (CTC & Associates)**

- We have updated a few pages on the No Boundaries web site to reflect the new TPF number, the new lead state, and the new members. As we have more discussions on what the members want in terms of a database and clearinghouse, these will be added to the site.
- We have reached out to other states to get them interested and involved. We would also like to coordinate with other maintenance groups to leverage their knowledge and activities.
  - The Maintenance Peer Network, which includes AASHTO and others, has brought up many of the overarching maintenance issues. They have published two reports and two more are yet to be published. Other potential groups include the National Center for Pavement Preservation, AASHTO SCOM, the NCHRP Domestic Scan program, and LTAP. LTAP is in every state and frequently touches on maintenance knowledge and activities.
- CTC realizes the importance of tracking benefits as new practices are adopted to illustrate the value of the pooled fund efforts.
- A face-to-face meeting (or upcoming teleconference) will be a great opportunity to hammer out what the members want and to get a plan in place.

### **Next steps for No Boundaries**

#### First face-to-face meeting

The group discussed the structure and goals for the first face-to-face meeting. In Phase I, the group met at a host DOT building, rotating the host state each time. The meetings lasted a day and a half and included a combination of equipment demonstrations, field trips led by the host agency, and presentations by members on the innovations they wanted to share. The group decided to use this approach again for the first face-to-face meeting of this Phase II project. MoDOT has already offered to host the meeting in St. Louis and offered potential dates.

The group decided to target early December to allow enough time (minimum of 6 weeks) for members to get travel approval to attend. There will be no theme for this meeting. States can share whatever types of innovations they would like, regardless of topic or type (equipment, process improvement, etc.).

The pooled fund will cover travel expenses for one member agency representative to attend the meeting. Folks will also have the opportunity to attend via phone/webinar.

### Next teleconference

Instead of using substantial time at the face-to-face meeting to scope the No Boundaries project activities in detail, the group decided to have a teleconference prior to the in-person meeting. CTC will develop a draft agenda to guide the group through discussing the details of the work plan, including the purpose and format of the innovation database, goals and potential formats for upcoming face-to-face meetings, the role of training and demonstration projects by the pooled fund, and the overall budget breakdown for all desired activities.

### **Action items**

#### Kim Linsenmayer (CTC):

- Send out a poll to determine what dates will work best for the next teleconference and the face-to-face meeting.
- Work with Mike Shea (MoDOT) on the timing and logistics for the face-to-face meeting.
- Work with ODOT on the process for coordinating member travel and handling reimbursements.
- Solicit topic ideas from meeting attendees so we know in advance who will be presenting, who would be bringing equipment, and what demonstrations we could do.
- Work with ODOT to communicate with interested states regarding commitments to the pooled fund. Mike Lashmet (NYSDOT) expressed interest in participating, and Jay Wells (WSDOT) indicated that WSDOT already had plans to join again.