

Study Questions

Questions	Comments
Funding & Capacity	
Financial analysis of program income generated vs. additional cost	MSL staff are evaluating the administrative needs that would result from a change in program administration. Understanding the workload and potential for funding through agreement overhead is necessary to determine the financial feasibility of a change in administration.
What additional staff capacity is necessary to successfully administer the program?	MSL staff is researching organizational models in other agencies with comparable work loads.
Forecast for indirect dollar availability to program?	An indirect cost analysis will be included in the financial analysis and impact to MSL budget
What is typical indirect rate that MSL charges?	There is no typical. We are looking to standardize this.
How can we best replicate the reserve/SPABA account?	MSL would evaluate how best to set up a special revenue account to meet the intent of the SPABA account.
Insurance coverage for agreements?	MSL staff will request insurance information for agreements from State Procurement.
What MOUs need to be updated?/How would current individual grants transfer?	When contracts transferred from TNC to UM, they just signed a single agreement transferring the contracts. We would work through those on a case by case basis, but in general we would expect any new funding to run through MSL instead of UM unless there are special circumstances. For example, in the case of agreements with the Spatial Analysis Lab, we would want collaborations on campus to be maximized so agreements that are collaborations with University faculty or researchers or those that are limited to educational institutions and collaborations between educational institutions may likely be run through UM.
Human Resources	
What are relevant State employment classifications, including exempt vs. non-exempt status?	Malissa and Jennie are meeting with DOA HR on Friday, September 27 to begin to explore these questions
How do MTNHP staff salaries compare to current state pay ranges?	Malissa and Jennie are meeting with DOA HR on Friday, September 27 to begin to explore these questions

Study Questions

<p>Will pay increases be needed to the point that it hinders project work?</p> <p>What will the recruitment process look like to hire MTNHP staff?</p> <p>Will employee benefits changes have a negative impact on MTNHP Staff</p>	<p>We will want to make sure that any employee who requires a salary increase to meet the our broadband pay plan policy requirements received a raise. We may also face some pay equity issues with MSL staff who are doing comparable work that we may need to address.</p>
<p>Are there options to mitigate any potential negative impacts to MTNHP employee benefits</p>	<p>Malissa and Jennie are meeting with DOA HR on Tuesday.</p> <p>MSL staff will do a comparison of benefits.</p> <p>If there are negative impacts to benefits, are there options (such as leveraging the Spatial Analysis Lab) to avoid or offset some/all of these impacts?</p>
<p>Impacts of comp time to science and field staff?</p> <p>Use of volunteers for field work...workers comp?</p>	<p>MSL staff need to better understand the accumulation of comp time by staff to determine how this need might change the current comp time policy. In general, MSL understands the need to accrue comp time to complete work priorities but also needs to minimize agency liability and encourages staff to practice good work/life balance through enforcement of a comp time policy</p> <p>MSL staff will research applicability of volunteer insurance to volunteers for field work.</p>
<p>Spatial Analysis Lab Operation</p> <p>Spatial Analysis Lab Director needs to stay a Research or Tenure Track Professor in order to be eligible to apply for higher education grants and leverage the position to its intended and full potential in meeting MTNHP's programmatic goals! How do we maintain present-law adjusted support of this position?</p>	<p>We will evaluate opportunities to maintain a contract with UM for the operation of the Spatial Analysis Lab;</p>
<p>Indirect rate charged to Spatial Analysis Lab projects?</p> <p>Would the Spatial Analysis Lab be more vulnerable to losing space on campus?</p>	<p>This rate would be negotiated with the University</p> <p>This need would be negotiated with the University</p>

Benefits Questions

Questions	Comments
Compensation (longevity pay eligibility 1.5%, 3.5%, 5.5%, 7.5%) Retirement (TIAA vs. Empower or Pension...vesting, insurance buy in) Health Insurance Premiums (Medical, Dental, Vision) Copays (Medical, Dental, Vision) Medical Deductibles Prescriptions Holistic treatments (massage, acupuncture, etc.) University Tuition Waiver for Dependents and Staff Vacation transfer (accumulated and earning rate) Sick leave transfer (accumulated and earning rate) Medical travel reimbursement Leave without pay or sabbaticals allowed Life Insurance Disability Comp time Discounts	In general, these should all be things that can be researched and documented for comparison before or during the study

Answered

Questions		Answers/Notes/Comments
Organization and Human Resource	What is the vision for integration with existing MSL staff? Will anyone lose pay with a transfer of administration?	No change to organizational structure of MTNHP are being proposed as part of this change but we do expect that this will provide opportunities for greater interaction No
	Concerns on integration and answering to people we aren't used to. Can staff work remotely (e.g., Bozeman)?	No change to organizational structure of MTNHP are being proposed as part of this change but we do expect that this will provide opportunities for greater interaction Yes
	How quickly can we hire someone?	There are options to get people on board rapidly. Postings for permanent positions require five days notification. Staff can be hired more quickly through temp agencies.
	Can we give merit-based raises or bonuses?	Merit-based pay is allowed under the current MSL Broadband Pay Plan policy.
	Can we give raises for reasons of retention?	Retention pay is allowed under the current MSL Broadband Pay Plan policy.
	Loss of University hiring pool?	We will evaluate opportunities to maintain a contract with UM for the operation of the Spatial Analysis Lab; this may create opportunities to maintain access to the university hiring pool. MSL will also evaluate how other state agencies attract field workers.
	How and where can job announcements be posted?	Jobs will be posted via the state job site and any other appropriate recruitment sites including the University.
	Is a Wednesday through Wednesday 8 x 10 hour field stint doable?	Tuesday through Tuesday would work better with state pay periods but we can make this work. Staff would accrue additional comp time depending on how the days worked align with the Saturday through Friday state pay period.
	What is hiring process for permanent & temporary?	MSL will provide training to MTNHP staff on the human resources policies of the State

Answered

Travel restrictions out of state (Governor, AirBnB)?

Certain Governors require the Gov Office to sign off on out of state travel, but that is rare. Staff will follow the state travel policy. The only restrictions regarding lodging are cost.

Can State Library employees work out of the Spatial Analysis Lab; if not it presents barriers to current workflow?

We will evaluate opportunities to maintain a contract with UM for the operation of the Spatial Analysis Lab

Some staff at the Spatial Analysis Lab have worked on projects managed by both the Spatial Analysis Lab Director and the Senior Ecologist; could that continue and how?

Yes

Comp time for summer field assistants; does camping or travel time qualify for comp time?

Much like the State travel policy, employees will be in work status while traveling to field sites and while conducting field work. Employees will not be in work status while in camp.

How would MTNHP and MSL staff integrate (e.g., desktop support, requests, websites)?

The only thing the org change would impact is IT support, but MSL already treats MTNHP the same as other staff, so no real change expected there. Requests and website would not be addressed directly as part of this change, but we will work together to address these items as a single agency when time comes to address these. That would likely happen even with a contract in place.

Barriers to seamless Helena-Missoula work environment?

We currently have staff across the state as does MTNHP. A change in administration would have no impact.

Operational

Software license costs (ESRI, Java, etc.)?

There will be some up front costs for MSL but these costs would ultimately be built into the MSL budget

Computer purchases?

MTNHP equipment would become part of the overall MSL IT planning process

Software use off of state network (ESRI, etc.)?

Like MSL remote staff, MTNHP remote staff would have access to all MSL software including Esri products.

Answered

Computer hardware use off of state network?

Like MSL remote staff, MTNHP remote staff would have a state-owned device for professional use at a home or other remote office.

Purchases of supplies...approved vendors only?

All purchasing would be made following MSL's internal controls and coordinated through Central Services. A procedure for staff who need to make purchases while in the field would be created and added to Internal Controls.

How can we purchase marketing materials like pens, USB data sticks, and calendars to market our program to our partners?

Marketing materials are purchased following the same agency purchasing procedures
Staff will have the necessary resources to do their job most efficiently including the use of pro-cards where appropriate and in keeping with agency internal controls
Should be able to address this through ILL and operations budgets.
Additionally, there may be a case for expanding our professional development collection

Purchases with procards for all science staff and some admin?

Access to peer reviewed literature is excellent through UM and essential to our jobs; what about MSL?

MSL has never used it but it came up as an option a few years ago. MTNHP may want to research this question further.

Butte Super Computer access if off of University Network?

Contracts and Agreements

Can MSL handle all types of agreements MTNHP has had over time?

Based on the agreement examples provided to date, MSL has the ability to handle MTNHP agreements

Can MSL handle agreements in a timely manner?

Yes, we do regularly. Our experience has been that our business office is much more efficient and timely than UM

Can MSL handle MTNHP's volume of agreements?

Yes, and we would manage business office staff appropriately to ensure we can continue to do so.

Ability to work across state boundaries?

No different from current model - it would not be done just to be done, but if it fit the larger program goals there is no reason we could not

What, if any, agreements has MTNHP had that MSL would not be eligible to apply for?

MSL would not be able to apply as an educational institution for those types of agreements but can and does partner on those kinds of agreements now. The program may still be able to apply for those kinds of agreements through a contract for the Spatial Analysis Lab.

Funding

What is the definition of “core services”?	All services provided by the program are important to the program's mission of providing reliable information and expertise to support stewardship of our native species and habitats, emphasizing those of conservation concern. Core Services are those paid for by the core contract as well as supplemental core funding provided by partners. These funds currently support portions of the following positions: Program Coordinator, Finance and Grants Administrator, Biological Data Systems Coordinator, Biologist/Biological Data Analyst, Biologist/Information Specialist, Web Projects Manager, Botany Program Manager, Senior Zoologist, Senior Ecologist, Spatial Analysis Lab Director. In any kind of administrative change, these priorities would continue to be funded through the MSL budget, rather than a contract.
Why can't the core contract get present law adjusted?	Operations budgets are not included in the existing legislative process by default.
How have MSL FTEs fluctuated in the past 10 years?	MSL laid off six staff due to budget cuts in 2017. Funding levels for FTE have been restored and staff is currently recruiting to fill vacant positions. Prior to the cuts MSL's permanent staff remained steady at approximately 30 FTE. Actual number of staff reflects project and funding priorities.
How can we ensure that positions won't be lost the way they were during FY18-19 budget cut?	We can't promise anything, but there is no guarantee that remaining a contractor will protect positions either. To the extent possible, MSL would continue to seek project dollars for work priorities to keep positions in tact.
Ability to cooperatively fund positions?	MSL staff can be funded through multiple funding sources including general fund and grants or contracts. Additionally, MSL can enter into agreements where MSL funds contract positions in other agencies.

Answered

How would required project match be handled?

The MSL Central Services Office monitors match requirements for MSL agreements. Any program agreements would be handled in the same manner.

Who would decide MTNHP budget allocations?

Ultimately the MSL Commission, but that is no different than the current model. Budgeting for the program will occur within the larger agency budget as informed by Bryce and the MSL Leadership team.

How was program able to get regular budget increases from 1994 to 2002; why is that route not seen as viable at this point?

The nature of public funding has changed dramatically over the last two decades and is affecting all state government services. Any loss of current income will be considered in the overall financial analysis.

Potential loss of \$50,000 UM contribution to supplemental core?

MSL sets an annual budget based on legislative appropriation. New appropriation is added as new grants and contracts are received.

What is the budgeting timeline and process (e.g., quarterly, monthly...)?

Leads communicate regularly with Jennie, Evan, and Malissa about the status of their budget and any changes that are necessary. Leads also receive monthly budget reports. The Commission receives quarterly financial reports. This year's budget is linked here.

Reputation

Would the identity/mission of MTNHP be watered down or altered?

No. The work and mission of the program would not change. Any changes would be made with the intent of adding additional resources for the work.

How does the mission of MTNHP interact with the mission of MSL?

They are 100% compatible. MTNHP is a statutory program of MSL. MSL and MTNHP as very positive political traction with the Legislative Finance Committee; legislators themselves are looking toward providing funding through less volatile sources than is currently the case.

Would MTNHP be more vulnerable politically?

MSL greatly values our partners. We can only successfully meet our mission if we collaborate with partners and stakeholders.

Ability to collaborate with all partners?

Need More Info

Questions	Answer/Notes/Comments
Concerns over flexibility & bureaucracy!	Any change is not intended to change the mission or work of the program. MSL Leadership would appreciate specific examples to better understand the nature of this question.
Loss of academic freedom and independence?	Any change is not intended to change the mission or work of the program. MSL Leadership would appreciate specific examples to better understand the nature of this question.
Attraction of qualified people with appropriate science backgrounds?	Any change is not intended to change the mission or work of the program. MSL Leadership would appreciate specific examples to better understand the nature of this question.
Potential loss of science credibility?	Any change is not intended to change the mission or work of the program. MSL Leadership would appreciate specific examples to better understand the nature of this question.

Out of Scope

Question	Answer/Notes/Comments
Best strategy for House Bill 2 associated FTE (numbers, positions)?	Should MSL change the administration of the program, we will evaluate how best to address budgetary needs of the program during the Executive Planning and Legislative process