



## Summary of MHA Drone Project prepared for:

World Café Sessions

**January 22-24, 2024.**

**Location:** All segments and online.

**Hosted by:** Dr. Kerry Hartman and Prairie Rose Seminole with Nueta Hidatsa and Sahnish College, and their grant partners at the University of North Dakota, in collaboration with Tanya Sand-Driver, Director, TAT GIS/Water Resources.

## DRONE CAMP STAFF

**Project Overview:** The goal of the MHA Nation Drone Project: Planning and Protocol Development is to develop infrastructure to support government-to-government relationships to improve access to basic needs using autonomous systems (drones) on the tribal lands of the Three Affiliated Tribes (TAT) of the Mandan Hidatsa and Arikara (MHA) Nation. This effort will include building a sustainable foundation to integrate the use of UAS, which is repeatable and scalable. Specifically, the project will demonstrate the use of UASs/drones to ensure better access to medical care and equipment and potentially other use cases. The priority use case is the application of drones to deliver medical supplies between Twin Buttes, ND, and New Town, ND across the Missouri River in northwestern North Dakota.

**Project Timeline:** August 15, 2023, to February 15, 2025.

**Funding:** Stage One SMART grant funding is provided to Three Affiliated Tribes by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) in the amount of \$1,966,345.00 for the 18-month period. A total of 392 proposals were submitted with 59 funded (15% acceptance rate). Three Affiliated Tribes is the only Tribal Nation to secure an award and the only recipient in a broad geographic area of the mid-west. Stage One funders are the only group eligible for Stage 2 funding in the amount of \$15 million dollars for 36 months of activity on their project.

**Partners:** The entities supporting this project include the Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, GIS Water Resources at Three Affiliated Tribes, the University of North Dakota, the Northern Plains UAS Test Site, Thales, and Airspace Link. The primary mission is to develop a safe, efficient, and scalable network within MHA Nation to deliver products and services using drones on tribal lands.

**Specific Project Aims:** The Three Affiliated Tribes of MHA Nation will work with their university and industry partners to (1) finalize a community assessment of needs to support decisions regarding future use cases, (2) determine the economic viability of using drones to improve the quality of life on these tribal lands, (3) expand workforce capacity and development in collaboration with the NHS College and Boys and Girls Club of the Three Affiliated Tribes, (4) expand government to government relationships, (5) plan for integration of Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations and implementation of drone use on tribal lands through application of the Vantis Network, and (6) evaluate the effectiveness of planning and protocol development activities with anticipation of a request for Stage 2 funding.

**Team Structure:** The MHA Drone Project has sub-groups who have assigned and are working collaboratively with Three Affiliated Tribes to achieve the aims of the project, including an assessment/use case group working in tandem with an economic viability group at the University of North Dakota. The workforce development committee that is guided by NHS College in collaboration with the University of North Dakota College of Aero-Space Sciences, and a Beyond Visual Line of Sight Group/Implementation group in partnerships with the Northern Plains UAS Test-Site, Thales, and Airspace Link.

