



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Highway
Administration**

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
and
***De minimis* 4(f) Conclusion**
For
Mission Ridge Road
WA PFH 216-1(1)

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration has determined that the Action Alternative discussed in *Environmental Assessment, Mission Ridge Road* (WFLHD, April 2006) (EA) will have no significant impact on the human environment.

The proposed project is located approximately 8 miles southwest of Wenatchee, Washington in an area of private properties, state land, and Wenatchee National Forest in Chelan County. It begins approximately 700 feet east of the intersection of Squilchuck Road and Mission Ridge Road near Squilchuck State Park and ends at the intersection of the access road to Mission Ridge Ski Area.

Squilchuck Road begins in the town of Wenatchee and terminates at Squilchuck State Park. Mission Ridge Road is a two-lane facility that begins at Squilchuck State Park and terminates at Mission Ridge Ski Area. The proposed project begins east of the intersection of Squilchuck Road and Mission Ridge Road so that the intersection of the roads and the access road to Squilchuck State Park can be improved.

The proposed improvements consist of upgrading existing Mission Ridge road to a safe, two-lane, paved road with better driving characteristics. The road will be designed for consistency in width, and improvements will be made along the existing road with two minor shifts in the alignment.

Two 11-foot lanes and two 3-foot shoulders will be constructed. Where feasible, slopes will be stabilized, ditches with barriers will be provided for rock fall, and retaining walls will be constructed where appropriate. Slopes will be flattened to reduce erosion into Squilchuck Creek and Miners Run Creek.



The reconstruction will include flattening some curves and widening the road in some areas. Drainage crossings will be improved, including some fish passage improvements. Other improvements include grading, placing road base material, paving, installing drainage facilities, and revegetating disturbed areas.

Since the circulation of the EA, the US Forest Service obtained WFLHD enhancement funds to pave an existing trailhead gravel parking lot and erect interpretive signing and a kiosk. The parking lot is adjacent to the Mission Ridge Road planned improvements at Graffiti Rock, and paving and signage of the parking lot will be included in the construction package. No excavation or fill will be required. Approximately 0.25 acre of pavement will be added to the project, and all of this area is currently disturbed. Wetland, cultural resource, and endangered species surveys originally done for the EA included the area of the parking lot. No measurable impacts, other than those discussed in the EA, will result from paving the parking lot or erecting signs.

Property will be acquired from Squilchuck State Park, the Boy Scouts of America, and private landowners. An easement will be acquired from the US Forest Service (FS).

This Finding of No Significant Impact is based on the EA prepared by the WFLHD and signed April 12, 2006, that documents the evaluation of the social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed action and alternatives. All major issues have been resolved.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The EA and *de minimis* Section 4(f) were distributed to resource agencies and interested parties April 14, 2006. Printed announcements of the EA and Section 4(f) evaluation availability were mailed to property owners and persons showing interest in the project during previous public open houses and announcements. The availability announcement was printed in a display ad in the Wenatchee World on April 20, 2006, and the announcement was also placed on the website of WFLHD. The announcement included the opportunity to request a public open house and to comment on the EA, the 4(f) availability, and proposed project.

The EA was available at Chelan County Offices and on the WFLHD web site. It was also available by request. Comments were accepted by phone, e-mail, or mail.

One comment was received via telephone. The commenter requested a left-turn lane at Forest Ridge Subdivision. WFLHD determined that, based on traffic volumes and movements, a left-turn lane is not warranted.

No other comments were received.

MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Threatened and Endangered Species

Because of the: proposed project's location along the existing road; threatened and endangered (T&E) species habitats in the project area are minimal; and the absence of T&E species during surveys, WFLHD determined that the project **"may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect"** Canada lynx (threatened), gray wolves (endangered), grizzly bears (threatened), or Northern spotted owls (threatened) or habitat for any of these species. No designated critical habitat is located adjacent to the road.

Informal consultation was initiated and concurrence with the determination is documented in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) letter dated May 6, 2004, and included in the EA. As a result, WFLHD finds that the proposed action will not significantly affect Canada lynx, gray wolves, grizzly bears, or Northern spotted owls, or habitat for any of these species.

The project will have **"no effect"** on spring Chinook (endangered) or bull trout (endangered).

The project will have **"no effect"** on Ute-ladies' tresses (threatened).

Since consultation with the FWS and the circulation of the EA, no new species or critical habitats have been listed, and the effect determinations remain the same.

U.S. Forest Service Survey and Manage Species

Based on the available information including field surveys, it has been determined that the proposed project would have *no impact* or *may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species* of FS Sensitive or Survey and Manage species. Because of these minor effect determinations, WFLHD finds that the proposed action will not have a significant effect to FS Sensitive or Survey and Manage species.

Wetlands

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, WFLHD closely evaluated the proposed road improvement and its wetland impacts. Approximately 0.02 acre of the area to be disturbed are considered waters of the U.S. by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The amount of wetlands directly impacted was consciously reduced through avoidance, where possible, minimization, and mitigation. Mitigation for disturbed wetland will be reconstruction of slopes to reduce erosion and sedimentation into Squilchuck Creek, Miners Run Creek, and their associated riparian areas.

Based on these minor impacts, WFLHD has determined that there will be no significant effects to wetlands, and the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands that may result from such use.

Cultural Resources

An early historic trash scatter (ca. 1905-15) and homestead with associated house and irrigation canal are located adjacent to the road near the beginning of the project. Another historic and/or prehistoric site is located farther toward the ski area at the Boy Scout camp. The sites were evaluated and are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A finding of no effect to properties protected under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was determined by WFLHD. The State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the determination in a letter dated November 17, 2005, and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation concurred in a letter dated November 10, 2005. The proposed project would comply with Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended.

***de minimis* Section 4(f) Conclusion**

Included with the EA is a *de minimis* Section 4(f) evaluation that examines impacts associated with acquired property from Squilchuck State Park located at the beginning of the project. The *de minimis* 4(f) evaluation concludes that no park recreational facilities are affected, and that impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project.

The EA notice of availability in the Wenatchee World and the mailed announcements included the opportunity for public comment on the *de minimis* 4(f) evaluation. No comments were received.

Permits

To construct the Action Alternative, the following permits will be required:

- 404 authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (Department of Ecology)
- 401 Water Quality Certification (Department of Ecology)

CONCLUSION

The EA and related documents adequately and accurately address the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project, including appropriate mitigation measures. The EA documents full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable environmental laws, executive orders, and implementing regulations. The EA provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The WFLHD of the FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the EA.

RECOMMENDED BY:



Terri L. Thomas
Environmental Manager

6/2/06
Date

APPROVED BY:



Robert B. Lale III
Acting Director of Project Delivery
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
Federal Highway Administration

6/2/06
Date