



SCOPING SUMMARY

N372005

SEPTEMBER 2013



Prepared for:
Wyoming Department of Transportation

Prepared by:

HDR



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INTRODUCTION

WYDOT is considering improvements on approximately 11 miles of U.S. Highway 14 (US 14) near Burgess Junction, the intersection of US 14 and US 14A. These improvements are being referred to as the Burgess Junction South Project (Project). WYDOT initiated scoping to study the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Project. The information received during scoping will be used to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA). WYDOT initiated agency and public scoping. The official scoping period began May 29, 2013 and ended July 8, 2013. WYDOT held a public scoping meeting on June 5, 2013. Details of the agency and public scoping follow.

AGENCY SCOPING SUMMARY

The following agencies with jurisdiction, special expertise with resources present, or land holdings in or near the project area were contacted in May 2013:

- United States Forest Service (USFS)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 (EPA)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Forest Service (USFS)
- Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD)
- Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Office of State Lands and Investments
- Wyoming Office of Tourism
- Sheridan County

WYDOT is coordinating with USFS through the Memorandum of Understanding between WYDOT, USFS, and FHWA for planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining roads through national forest lands. USFS

provided comments to WYDOT on September 7, 2007 as a follow up to the reconnaissance survey completed for the project (Appendix A). These comments remain valid and were affirmed during meetings between WYDOT and USFS. USFS will continue to coordinate with WYDOT to make sure the road is compatible with the National Forest Plan.

Responses were received from three agencies (See Appendix A). USACE responded the proposed Project would likely impact waters of the United States and would require a Department of Army permit and noted that an identification and delineation of aquatic resources should be completed. They requested that alternatives be considered that avoid and minimize impacts to waters of the United States as required under the Clean Water Act.

WGFD responded that the primary terrestrial concern is the potential impact to big game habitat and movement in the project area, including moose, mule deer, and elk. The proposed Project is within designated crucial yearlong range for moose. WGFD suggested using “Bighorn” 2-pole wooden fence. WGFD also noted that precautions should be taken to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter the several creeks in the project area during construction. They requested the opportunity to review detailed plans once they are complete for work in stream and riparian areas. Lastly, the WGFD provided several measures to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

The Sheridan County Public Works Department provided information to WYDOT related to the County Comprehensive Plan to ensure the proposed Project is consistent with the goals and policies within the plan, including protection of riparian areas, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, transportation, and regional coordination.

No response was received from USFWS, EPA, NRCS, Wyoming Office of Tourism, SHPO, DEQ, or the Office of State Lands and Investments.

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

A public meeting was held to solicit comments on the Burgess Junction South Project on June 5, 2013 at the Tongue River Valley Community Center in Dayton, Wyoming from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The purpose of this meeting was to gather public input on the Project purpose and need, alternatives that should or should not be considered and environmental resources in the area to be examined.

The meeting was an open-house format. Representatives from the Project team were available to answer questions and take comments. Boards provided information about the purpose and need, the schedule of the Project, alternatives being considered, and potential resources in the project area (Appendix B).

Attendees were able to provide comments directly to the Project team, on comment forms, or via WYDOT email address: dot-burgess-jct-ea@wyo.gov. Comments were taken from May 29, 2013 through July 8, 2013. The meeting was advertised in the newspaper, letters to agencies, and postcards sent to property owners in the project area (Appendix C).

A total of 16 people signed in at the June 2013 meeting. A total of 2 comments were received between June 5, 2013 and July 8, 2013. One comment was received via phone prior to the public meeting and one comment was received on the Project comment form (Appendix D).

The following is a summary of comments:

- Plan construction to blend highway with natural looking landscaping
 - Re-vegetate with native species
- Provide for recreation and tourism along the scenic byway
 - Access to Forest System Roads and developed sites
 - Wildlife viewing and photo opportunities

- In favor of having a fence along each side of the corridor to prevent livestock from being on the roadway (they are a big hazard at night)

Following the meeting, an article about the Project was printed in the Sheridan Press (Appendix E).

Appendix A. Agency Scoping Letters



Forest
Service

Bighorn National Forest
Tongue Ranger District

2013 Eastside 2nd Street
Sheridan, WY 82801-9638
307-674-2600
TDD 307-674-2604

File Code: 1950

Date: September 7, 2007

Ken Muller
Resident Engineer
WYDOT District 4, Sheridan
10 E. Brundage Lane
Sheridan, WY 82801

Dear Ken:

On July 31, 2007, staff from the Tongue Ranger District and Bighorn National Forest reviewed the proposed "Burgess Junction South" project on US Highway 14 with you and Rick Clark. The project limits are on the Greybull – Burgess Junction segment of US 14, between Mile Post 37.98 and 47.75 scheduled for construction in 2012. The purpose of this early reconnaissance was to identify and share specific Forest Service land and resource interests, concerns and issues associated with the project. This information is provided to guide & assist WYDOT in future planning for the project.

Attendees: Ken Muller, Resident Engineer (RE), WYDOT District 4, Sheridan
Craig Yancey, District Ranger, Tongue Ranger District, Bighorn NF
Harold Golden, Wildlife Biologist, Tongue Ranger District, Bighorn NF
Cheri Jones, Recreation & Special Uses, Tongue Ranger Dist, Bighorn NF
Amy Nowakowski, Aquatics and Hydrology, Bighorn NF
Rick Clark, Statewide Forest Service Liaison with WYDOT

Project Purpose & Need:

Reconstruction to widen the roadway surface, add shoulders and improve the safety slope (recovery zone) to meet NHS standards for the road's functional classification (rural principal arterial).

NEPA Document: Projected to be Environmental Assessment (EA) and DN/FONSI. Identify and include locations for materials, storage, staging, borrow, waste, plant sites for NEPA document.

Planning & Design Issues:

- 1) Shoulder width
Per Muller, four (4') feet is the minimum distance required per standards. WYDOT is looking at both four (4') and six (6') shoulder widths. The impacts to the existing ground are the same for both widths. This is due to the way "clear zone" is defined. It is measured from the edge line of the travel way. Consequently, a wider shoulder would have a shorter safety slope (6:1) and a shorter shoulder would have a longer safety slope. These widths are consistent with other segments of US Highway 14 on this corridor. The Bighorn NF is comfortable with the proposed shoulder widths.
- 2) Requirement that design speed must meet posted speed



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Per Muller, several horizontal curves and one vertical curve do not meet current design standards. The locations of the subject curves were noted. Slight changes in the roadway alignment, super elevation and/or road surface elevation will be included in future reconstruction plans for these locations to meet standards.

3) Rights-of-Way (ROW)

- Highway easement

There is apparently no easement deed for the existing highway ROW (per research by Clark in consultation with Bighorn NF and Region 2) The Forest would support granting a Letter of Consent (upon receipt of application from the FHWA) that leads to a permanent easement deed following reconstruction. This should be an outcome of the project.

- ROW Fence

- a) Portions of the existing ROW are unfenced (open range) and fenced. To improve safety the Forest Service propose a fenced ROW for the length of the project. This would also facilitate removal of existing cattleguards on the highway.
- b) Some ROW fence would potentially be in wetland (if built on alignment). Alternate fence design may be required for those locations (i.e., buck and rail).
- c) Because both sheep and cattle allotments exist with the project and both require differing fencing needs, WYDOT's fencing design criteria will need to be coordinated between the Forest Service, grazing permittees, and Wyoming Department of Game and Fish.

4) Material Sources, Storage and Staging

This project will require a significant amount of borrow material to create the additional shoulder width and flatter safety slopes. A potential new gravel/material source is being evaluated independent of this project. Other opportunities to obtain borrow material and topsoil should be identified and considered. Locations for material storage and staging are needed.

5) Private Land

Voss Trust; Passage Resort; Cole Benton; Elkhorn Trailer Court (Helen Hanft)

Forest Service Land & Resource Interests and Concerns

1) Livestock Grazing

- Several sections of existing ROW fence would likely be relocated closer to the roadway and a new permanent ROW. This would result in small changes to current allotment boundaries and possibly additional livestock forage being available that is presently fenced within the ROW.
- There are different classes of livestock being grazed along, and opposite on the corridor (i.e., sheep versus cattle). This would affect the selection and type of ROW fence to be built.
- Reconstruction of the roadway will result in the removal of several existing heavy duty cattle guards and bases. If WYDOT has no further need for them, and if they are suitable for reuse, the Forest is interested in them once removed by WYDOT. (Ken Muller to coordinate with Lee Harrelson – Forest Engineer)
- Consultation and coordination with affected livestock permittees, including a possible project tour, is recommended to build understanding and support for the project. The District Range Conservationist can facilitate this coordination and feedback with the livestock users.

2) Visual Resources

- This section of US 14 is designated as part of the Big Horn Scenic Byway. Project planning, including any affects on visual resources, should be consistent with the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) completed in 1998.
- A proposal to install a significant amount of snow fence in the corridor was proposed in the past. The Forest continues to oppose the installation of wooden snow fence because of the visual impact to the viewing corridor. The Forest supports the use of suitable native plant species to create living/green snow fences.
- Minimal timber clearing would be associated with the project.

3) Recreation

- Owen Creek Campground Road Approach
WYDOT would like to square the campground road approach with the highway. The possibility of moving the current parking area to a new location across the roadway was discussed (potential borrow site).
- Evaluate the opportunity to enhance public safety by providing for separation between highway vehicles and snowmobiles at the trail crossing. Would a buried box culvert sufficiently large (14' X 14') to accommodate the snowmobile groomer be possible?
- Maintain and/or create turn-outs and parking (winter/summer use) as consistent with needs, forest plan direction, and scenic byway CMP.
Seek feedback from the public concerning their interests and desires along the highway segment at a public scoping meeting.

4) Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquatic Species

- Wildlife movement and migration routes for large mammals have not been documented along the project segment. The Game and Fish recommended discussing it with Darwin Rector and his crew since they know where the majority of animals hit and killed are located. The Wildlife Biologist stated that additional wildlife movement or connectivity studies/data are not required to support the project.
- Several locations along the project segment are known to provide habitat for moose (e.g., Owen Creek). Viewing of animals by travelers is common. Consider the need and opportunity to create a turnout for safe viewing and/or interpretation in lieu of just using the shoulder of the road.
- Maintain fish passage at Owen Creek. Replacement of the existing CMP culvert with a bridge or bottomless arch is preferred.
- Maintain fish passage at Sheeley Creek and eliminate barrier at outfall (if present).
- Consider wildlife movement and species when selecting ROW fence and specifications. Coordinate with Wyoming Department of Game and Fish.

5) Wetlands

Mitigation for wetland impacts or losses in kind and quantity is required. The Forest can provide suitable locations for mitigation or enhancement. It was mentioned that the creation of wetlands with a direct hydrologic connection to perennial flows or water sources is much more successful and therefore preferred.

6) Forest Land & Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan)

- Roadless Areas
Several designated Roadless Areas are located adjacent to the highway corridor. The roadless area maps can be accessed at the following link --

<ftp://ftp2.fs.fed.us/incoming/r2/bqnf/recreation/highway14/> and are also enclosed. The *North and South RACR* maps show the inventoried roadless areas currently applicable. Because recent court decisions have changed the applicable roadless inventory and specific boundaries, there's a chance that the Forest Plan Revision maps may apply at some time during this extended planning process. Consequently WYDOT should check back to see if the situation changes. Roadless areas are managed currently under the 2001 Clinton Roadless Rule. Authorization is required from the Chief of the Forest Service for any action(s) that would conflict with the use of lands under a Roadless designation.

- Snow fence

The installation of large amounts of linear snow fence would not meet the visual resource guideline for Retention in the Forest Plan. A site specific forest plan amendment would be required to authorize any installation. However, the Forest does not support the erection of snow fence or a forest plan amendment.

7) Cultural Resources

All affected project and ancillary surface locations to be surveyed for cultural and historic resources.

As soon as the Forest sends the needed information (wildlife crossings, roadless area delineation, fencing criteria, cultural recommendations) to WYDOT, WYDOT will send a report on what is there now, what is needed, existing condition, accidents, etc.

WYDOT will make an aerial flight this fall to do the mapping. Next spring, they will delineate the wetlands that could be affected. After this, they will issue a set of preliminary plans with the rough vertical and horizontal alignment.

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved at this early stage in the project development. Please contact Cheri Jones if you need further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Craig L. Yancey
CRAIG L. YANCEY
District Ranger

cc: Kevin Powell, Environmental Manager, WYDOT Environmental Manager
Rick Clark; FS Liaison with WYDOT



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006

Phone: (307) 777-4600 Fax: (307) 777-4699

wgfd.wyo.gov

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July 3, 2013

WER 13181
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Scoping for the US 14, Burgess Junction South
Widening and Pavement Overlay
Project No. N372005
Sheridan County

Timothy Stark
Engineering Services Engineer
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340

Dear Mr. Stark:

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has reviewed the scoping for the US 14, Burgess Junction South widening and pavement overlay project for the Wyoming Department of Transportation in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration in Sheridan County. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

Terrestrial Considerations:

The primary terrestrial wildlife issue that should be analyzed in the forthcoming EA is the potential impact of the proposed project on specific big game habitats and movement in the project area. The proposed project is within designated moose crucial yearlong range, which is also overlapped by mule deer and elk spring/summer/fall range. As such, mule deer, elk and moose move across this segment of highway at several points throughout the year. To mitigate potential impacts to big game movement in this area, we recommend the 'Bighorn' 2-pole wooden fence design for this segment of the road to allow big game animals to quickly move out of the road right-of-way, reducing the likelihood of wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Aquatic Considerations:

This project will cross the following streams: Prospect, Compartment, Owen, Sheeley and Marcum Creeks. Every precaution should be taken to ensure that sediments, fuels, etc. do not enter these creeks during the project.

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Timothy Stark
July 3, 2013
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From the information we have, it appears the project consists of overlay and widening in a few spots. If there are any plans to do any work in the streams and/or riparian areas we would like to review the detailed plans once they are completed.

Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) is a priority for the State of Wyoming, and in many cases, the intentional or unintentional spread of organisms from one body of water to another would be considered a violation of State statute and Wyoming Game and Fish Commission Regulation. To prevent the spread of AIS, the following is required:

If equipment has been used in a high risk infested water [a water known to contain Dreissenid mussels* (zebra/quagga mussels)], the equipment must be inspected by an authorized aquatic invasive species inspector recognized by the state of Wyoming prior to its use in any Wyoming water.

Any equipment entering the State by land from March through November (regardless of where it was last used), must be inspected by an authorized aquatic invasive species inspector prior to its use in any Wyoming waters.

If aquatic invasive species are found, the equipment will need to be decontaminated by an authorized aquatic invasive species inspector.

Any time equipment is moved from one 4th level (8-digit) Hydrological Unit Code watershed to another within Wyoming, the following guidelines are recommended:

DRAIN: Drain all water from watercraft, gear, equipment, and tanks. Leave wet compartments open to dry.

CLEAN: Clean all plants, mud, and debris from vehicle, tanks, watercraft, and equipment.

DRY: Dry everything thoroughly. In Wyoming, we recommend drying for 5 days in Summer (June - August); 18 days in Spring (March - May) and Fall (September - November); or 3 days in Winter (December - February) when temperatures are at or below freezing.

*A list of high risk infested waters and locations in Wyoming to obtain an AIS inspection can be found at: wgfd.wyo.gov

Timothy Stark
July 3, 2013
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tim Thomas, Sheridan Wildlife Biologist, at (307) 672-7418 ext. 228 or Paul Mavrakis, Sheridan Region Fisheries Supervisor, at (307) 672-7418 ext. 236.

Sincerely,




Mark Konishi
Deputy Director

MK/mf/gb

cc: USFWS
Tim Thomas – WGFD, Sheridan Region
Lynn Jahnke – WGFD, Sheridan Region
Paul Mavrakis – WGFD, Sheridan Region



SHERIDAN COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Rod Liesinger • Public Works Director
224 South Main St • Suite 428 • Sheridan, Wyoming 82801
Phone (307) 674-2920 • Fax (307) 674-2927

July 3, 2013

Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340
Attn: Timothy Stark, Engineering Services Engineer

Re: US HWY 14, Burgess Jct. South, Sheridan County Wyoming, WYDOT Project N372005

Dear Mr. Stark:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. We understand WYDOT is initiating the process to study potential environmental impacts associated with this project. Sheridan County's Public Works Office comments relate primarily to goals and policies which are contained within the County Comprehensive Plan.

The majority of the privately owned area south of Burgess Jct. is zoned Agricultural. There are, however, two commercially zoned areas. These include Elkhorn Trailer Park and Elk View Inn. The County's Future Land Use Plan reflects the same. The areas along Marcum Creek are within the County's Groundwater Protection Area.

Relevant goals and policies found in the Comprehensive Plan include:

Goal 2.1: The County will conserve and restore its riparian corridors and rivers and streams.

Policy 2.1a: Protect riparian corridors.

Goal 2.6: The County will support wildlife habitat protection.

Policy 2.6a: Minimize development impacts on crucial wildlife habitat.

Policy 2.6b: Coordinate with wildlife agencies to avoid wildlife/development conflicts.

Goal 2.11: The County will enhance outdoor recreation resource opportunities.

Policy 2.11b: Provide and retain access to public lands.

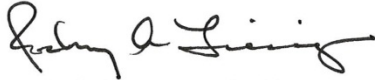
Goal 3.3: The County will continue to be a tourism destination.
Policy 3.3a: Enhance tourism opportunities.

Goal 4.2: The County will identify and preserve planned utility and transportation corridors.

Goal 7.4: Sheridan County will work with other governmental agencies to address issues of regional concern.
Policy 7.4a: Coordinate with agencies on issues of regional concern.

Again thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to this process. If you have questions please don't hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,



Rod Liesinger, P.E. Sheridan County Public Works Director

Cc: Mark Reid, Sheridan County Planning
Ken Muller, Sheridan County Engineering



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, OMAHA DISTRICT
WYOMING REGULATORY OFFICE
2232 DELL RANGE BOULEVARD, SUITE 210
CHEYENNE WY 82009-4942

July 5, 2013

Wyoming Regulatory Office

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Environmental Services Engineer
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3340

Dear Mr. Stark:

This letter is in response to a scoping request we received from your office on May 28, 2013, concerning environmental resources and issues of concern regarding Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) Project N372005, US 14, Burgess Junction South, Sheridan County, Wyoming.

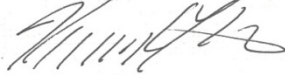
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulates the placement of dredged and fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States as authorized by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). The term "waters of the United States" has been broadly defined by statute, regulation, and judicial interpretation to include all waters that were, are, or could be used in interstate commerce such as streams, reservoirs, lakes and adjacent wetlands. The Corps regulations are published in the *Code of Federal Regulations* as 33 CFR Parts 320 through 332. Information on Section 404 program requirements in Wyoming can be obtained from our website <http://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/Missions/RegulatoryProgram/Wyoming.aspx>.

Based on the preliminary information provided and referenced, the proposed project involves widening and pavement overlay with isolated locations of US 14 being fully reconstructed. The project will improve approximately 11 miles of the highway. The purpose of the project is to improve safety, pavement serviceability, and access in to the Big Horn Nation Forest west of Sheridan.

The Burgess Junction South Project will likely impact waters of the United States, including but not limited to Sheeley Creek, Owen Creek, Compartment Creek, Prospect Creek, and adjacent wetlands. This will require a Department of the Army permit. Identification and delineation of all aquatic resources should occur as early as possible to support informed decision making. As part of the planning process, we recommend full consideration and prioritization of project alternatives that will avoid and minimize impacts to waters of the United States as required under the Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 230.10). Advanced efforts to address and demonstrate this approach will support a Corps review process that may permit a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative which minimizes adverse impacts on the aquatic environment.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have additional questions regarding aquatic resources or compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). You may contact me (307-772-2300 or kevin.c.little@usace.army.mil) concerning future project review and assistance. Please reference file NWO-2013-01209.

Sincerely,




Kevin Little
Program Manager
Wyoming Regulatory Office

Appendix B. Public Meeting Materials

Handouts

Burgess Junction South Project Improvements

JUNE 5, 2013


WYDOT Initiates Scoping

WYDOT is initiating scoping to study the potential environmental impacts associated with proposed improvements along an approximate 11-mile segment of U.S. Highway 14 (US 14) known as the Burgess Junction South Project. The project includes widening and pavement overlay with isolated locations of US 14 being fully reconstructed.

It is expected that information received will be used to prepare an environmental assessment (EA), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

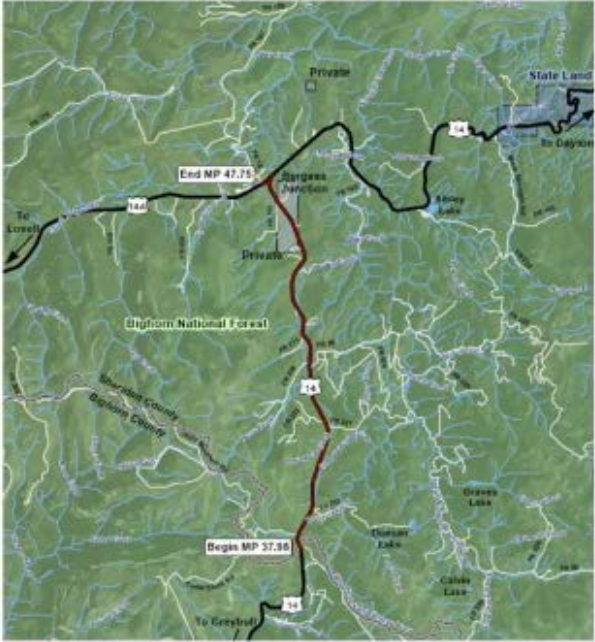

According to the NEPA regulations "There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action This process shall be termed

You have the opportunity provide input on the need for and alternatives being considered to improve safety, pavement serviceability, and access along US 14 as well as important resources or issues in the study area.

Project History

Reconstruction on US 14 began in the 1990s. Work extended from Dayton to Burgess Junction The proposed Project involves a segment of US 14 in the Bighorn National Forest from the Sheridan County line to Burgess Junction.

This is the last section of US 14 in the Bighorn National Forest to be improved.

Handouts

Why is WYDOT Considering Improvements?

The purpose of the Project is to improve safety, pavement serviceability, and access along US 14, which is the primary route in the Bighorn National Forest west of Sheridan.

The Project would solve the following transportation needs:

- Meet National Highway System (NHS) design standards for horizontal and vertical curves, roadway shoulders and "clear zone".
- Reduce crash rates in the corridor which have exceeded the average statewide crash rate 7 out of 10 years between 1997 and 2006.
- Upgrade pavement condition. The pavement along this segment of US 14 is fifteen years old and is rated as fair.
- Improve safe access to popular recreational activities in the Bighorn National Forest.

Three agencies are involved in the primary development and approval of the US 14 Burgess Junction South Project.



WYDOT will consider impacts to natural and community Resources

As part of scoping, WYDOT and FHWA are asking for your input on specific social and environmental resources or issues in the study area. These resources and issues will be analyzed during Project development and when the EA is prepared.



WYDOT is asking that comments be submitted by July 8, 2013.

Handouts

What is WYDOT Considering?

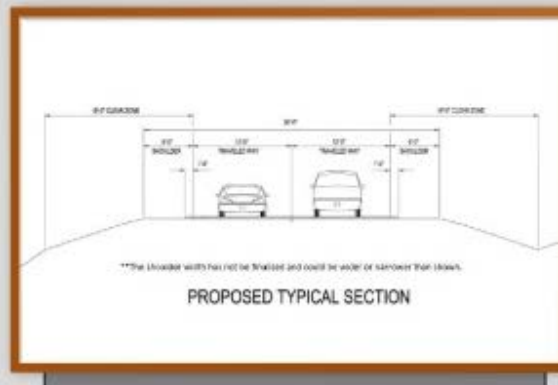
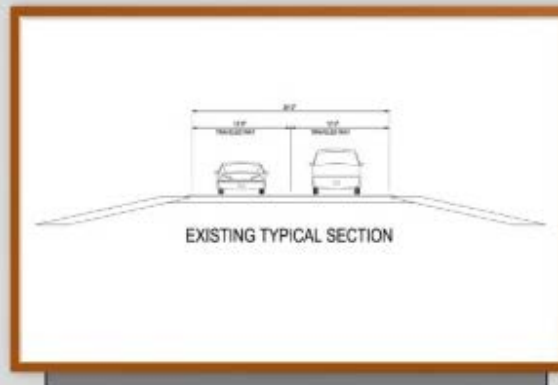
Alternative 1 – No Build

Under the No Build Alternative US 14 would not be improved. Routine maintenance activities would continue. This alternative would not improve safety, fix pavement condition or improve access to the Bighorn National Forest. However, the No Build Alternative is being considered to provide a baseline for assessing environmental impacts.

Alternative 2 – Build

The Build Alternative would include widening and pavement overlay with isolated locations of US 14 being fully reconstructed. The typical sections for the improvements are shown to the right. Curves that do not meet standards would be reconstructed and flattened. Drainage structures would be replaced. Pull off areas are under consideration. This alternative would improve safety, fix pavement condition and improve access to the Bighorn National Forest.

WYDOT is considering two alternatives – a build and no build alternative. WYDOT is asking for your input on the alternatives. Your input will be considered during Project development and as part of the EA that WYDOT will prepare in accordance NEPA.



Handouts

As the process continues

You will have the opportunity to continue to be involved in the NEPA process. This will include reviewing the EA when it is complete. You will have the opportunity to comment on social and environmental impacts and mitigation for the Project. Your input will help FHWA and WYDOT determine if a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be issued or if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared.



Scoping comments may be dropped off at the boxes located around the room tonight OR submitted to:

Timothy Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340
Fax: 307-777-7193

Email Comments to:
dot-burgess-jct-ea@wyo.gov

If you have questions regarding the Burgess Junction South Project, please contact:

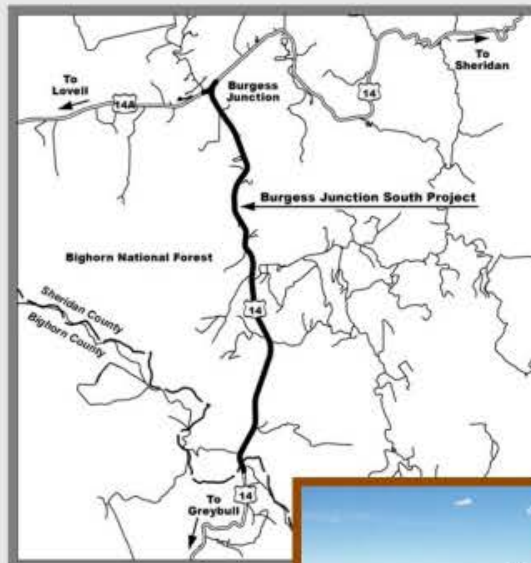
Ronda Holwell
WYDOT—Public Involvement Specialist
(307) 674-2300
ronda.holwell@wyo.gov

Meeting Boards

Welcome!

WYDOT is considering improvements on approximately 11 miles of U.S. Highway 14 (US 14) near Burgess Junction, the intersection of US 14 and US 14A. These improvements are being referred to as the Burgess Junction South Project.

Tonight you have the opportunity to learn about and provide input on the improvements being considered.



The format of the meeting is open-house style. Representatives from the Project Team are available to answer questions and take comments.

Meeting Boards

Why is WYDOT Considering Improvements?

Project Purpose

The purpose of the Project is to improve safety, pavement serviceability, and access along US 14, which is the primary route in the Big Horn National Forest west of Sheridan.

Project History

Reconstruction on US 14 began in the 1990s. Work extended from Dayton to Burgess Junction. This proposed Project involves a segment of US 14 in the Big Horn National Forest from the Sheridan County line to Burgess Junction. This is the last section of US 14 in the Big Horn National Forest to be improved.



The Project would solve these transportation needs

- Meet National Highway System (NHS) design standards for horizontal and vertical curves, roadway shoulders, and "clear zone".
- Reduce crash rates in the corridor which have exceeded the average statewide crash rate 7 out of 10 years between 1997 and 2006.
- Upgrade pavement condition. The pavement along this segment of US 14 is fifteen years old and is rated as fair.
- Improve safe access to popular recreational activities in the Big Horn National Forest.

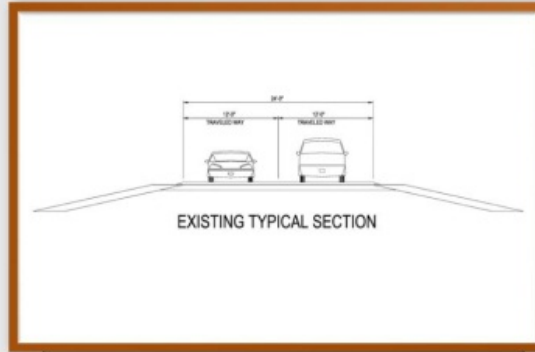
Meeting Boards

What is WYDOT Considering?

Alternative 1 – No Build

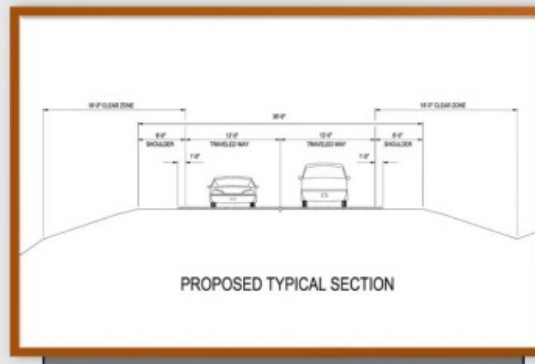
Under the No Build Alternative US 14 would not be improved. Routine maintenance activities would continue. This alternative would not improve safety, fix pavement condition or improve access to the Big Horn National Forest. However, the No Build Alternative is being considered to provide a baseline for assessing environmental impacts.

WYDOT is considering two alternatives – a build and no build alternative. WYDOT is asking for your input on the alternatives. Your input will be considered during Project development and as part of the EA that WYDOT will prepare in accordance with NEPA.



Alternative 2 – Build

The Build Alternative would include widening and pavement overlay with isolated locations of US 14 being fully reconstructed. The typical sections for the improvements are shown to the right. Curves that do not meet standards would be reconstructed and flattened. Drainage structures would be replaced. Pull off areas are under consideration. This alternative would improve safety, fix pavement condition and improve access to the Big Horn National Forest.



Meeting Boards

Who is Involved in the Burgess Junction South Project?

Project Agencies

Three agencies are involved in the primary development and approval of the US 14 Burgess Junction South Project.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

FHWA is responsible for funding highway projects across the country and maintaining safety for motorists. They are considered the lead federal agency for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).



Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT)

WYDOT is responsible for road construction and maintenance. It also has responsibility along with the FHWA to assure safety of motorists. They coordinate with FHWA in complying with the requirements of NEPA, which is required because WYDOT is proposing to make improvements to US 14.



United States Forest Service (USFS)

The Forest Service manages the Bighorn National Forest per the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The Forest Service cooperates with WYDOT and FHWA to develop a transportation project consistent with the Forest Plan. It allocates forest system lands needed for the highway right-of-way.



Other Agencies

In addition to the agencies involved in the Project development and design, several other federal, state, and local agencies can play a role in reviewing and permitting the Project including:

Federal Agencies

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Army Corps of Engineers

Local Agencies

- Sheridan County

State Agencies

- Wyoming Fish and Game Department
- Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer
- Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

Tribal Governments

Meeting Boards

Providing your “Scoping” Input

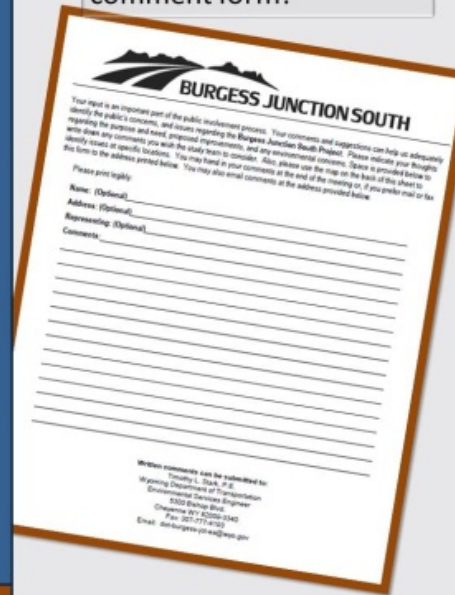
What is scoping?

According to the NEPA regulations “There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. This process shall be termed scoping.”

Some things WYDOT and FHWA consider in scoping:

- Participation in the process by affected Federal, State, and local agencies; Indian tribes; and other interested persons
- Identification of any issues to be analyzed in depth in the EA
- Identification and elimination from detailed study the issues which are not relevant or which have been covered by prior environmental review
- Consideration of other studies or plans which are being or will be prepared that are related to the scope of project under consideration
- Identification of environmental consultation requirements for other laws such as the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act
- Identification of study and tentative decision making schedule

Be sure to fill out your comment form!



BURGESS JUNCTION SOUTH

Your input is an important part of the public involvement process. Your comments and suggestions can help us address the public's concerns, and issues regarding the Burgess Junction South Project. Please indicate your thoughts regarding the project and need proposed improvements, and any environmental concerns. Please indicate your thoughts with check any comments you wish the study team to consider. Also please use the top of the back of this sheet to identify issues or specific locations. You may hand in your comments at the end of the meeting or, if you prefer, mail to the form to the address printed below. You may also email comments at the address provided below.

Please print legibly:

Name (Optional): _____

Address (Optional): _____

Representing (Optional): _____

Comments: _____

When comments can be submitted to:
 Timothy L. Stock, P.E.
 Wyoming Department of Transportation
 Environmental Services Engineer
 5000 Bishop Blvd.
 Cheyenne, WY 82002-0240
 Fax: 307-777-4152
 Email: dtm@wydot.gov

Your participation


WYDOT is initiating scoping to study the potential environmental impacts associated with the Burgess Junction South Project. It is expected that information received will be used to prepare an environmental assessment (EA), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). You have the opportunity provide input on the need for and alternatives being considered to improve safety, pavement serviceability, and access along US 14 as well as important resources or issues in the study area.




Meeting Boards

Environmental Resources


As part of scoping, WYDOT and FHWA are asking for your input on specific social and environmental resources or issues in the study area. These resources and issues will be analyzed during Project development and when the EA is prepared. Some of the known resources and issues are included below.




1




3




2




4




7




6



5





Visual Resources: US 14 has been designated as part of the Big Horn Scenic Byway. Pullouts will be considered as part of the Project to improve safety for motorists pulling off to enjoy scenic resources. Snow fences are being considered in the study area.

Wildlife and Threatened & Endangered Species: Effects to wildlife and Federally listed species will be examined including large game and Canada lynx.

Wetlands, Floodplains and Water of the US: The study area contains wetlands and other waters of the US associated with creeks in the study area. WYDOT will complete a wetland delineation and avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to these resources.

Recreation and Economic Impacts: There are private lodges along US 14 and the area is a popular recreation destination in the Big Horn National Forest.

Historic Properties: There may be historic or culturally significant sites in the area. WYDOT will complete cultural resource surveys and consult with tribal governments.

Grazing: There are grazing allotments in the study area. WYDOT will work with USFS and permittees regarding potential impacts.

Other Resources to be Studied: Land use, Social, Public Health & Safety, Utilities, Geology & Soils, Noise, Air Quality, Vegetation, Water Quality, Right-of-Way, Economics, Construction.

Meeting Boards

Schedule

The schedule for Project development and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is described below:

- Scoping and Data Collection

- Coordinate with the public and agencies to identify critical issues
 - Understand existing conditions and environment
- Refine Purpose and Need

- Identify and clarify transportation issues within the study area
- Develop Alternatives

- Refine alternatives based on the purpose and need for the project
 - Avoid and minimize impacts
- Alternatives Analysis

- Analyze the impacts of the alternatives on resources in conjunction with the effectiveness of the alternatives in meeting the purpose and need
 - Public comment gathered during the scoping process is also involved in the screening process
- Preparation of Environmental Document

- Prepare the environmental assessment (EA) that documents the purpose and need, impacts of all alternatives carried forward, and identifies a preferred alternative.
- Decision Document

- WYDOT and FHWA issue a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). If a FONSI is issued, final design and construction may proceed.
- Final Design

- Finalize design plans and prepare construction bid documents.
- Construction


- Construction of preferred alternative and implementation of mitigation commitments.

The study team is currently at this phase in the process.

As the process continues:

You will have the opportunity to continue to be involved in the NEPA process. This will include reviewing the EA when it is complete. You will have the opportunity to comment on social and environmental impacts and mitigation for the Project. Your input will help FHWA and WYDOT determine if a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be issued or if an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared.

The Project is scheduled for construction in 2021, but this date is tentative and subject to change.



Comment Sheet



Your input is an important part of the public involvement process. Your comments and suggestions can help us adequately identify the public's concerns, and issues regarding the **Burgess Junction South Project**. Please indicate your thoughts regarding the purpose and need, proposed improvements, and any environmental concerns. Space is provided below to write down any comments you wish the study team to consider. Also, please use the map on the back of this sheet to identify issues at specific locations. You may hand in your comments at the end of the meeting or, if you prefer mail or fax this form to the address printed below. You may also email comments at the address provided below.

Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) _____

Address: (Optional) _____

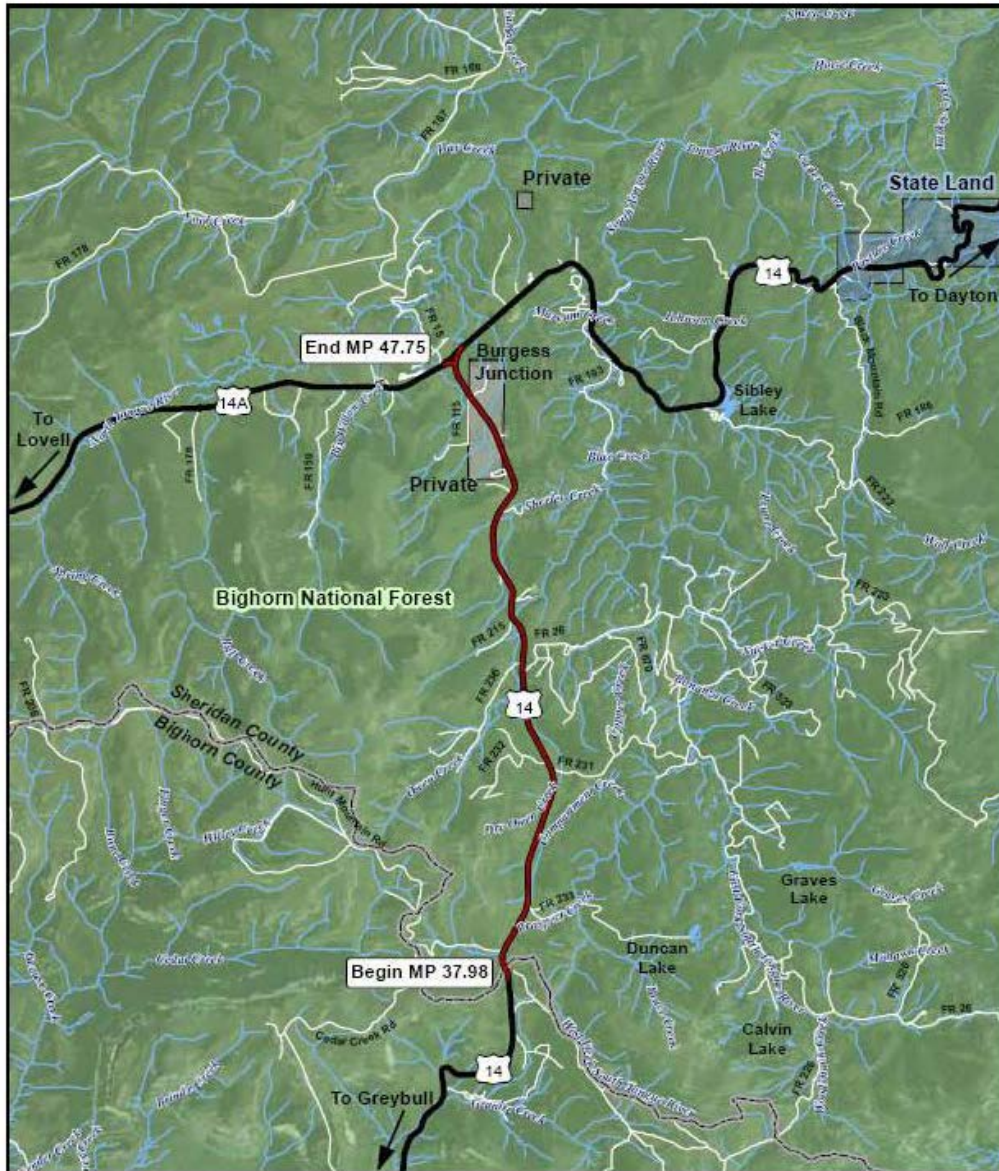
Representing: (Optional) _____

Comments: _____

Written comments can be submitted to:
Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
Fax: 307-777-4193
Email: dot-burgess-jct-ea@wyo.gov

Comment Sheet

Please use the map provided to make additional comments.



Appendix C. Public Postcard

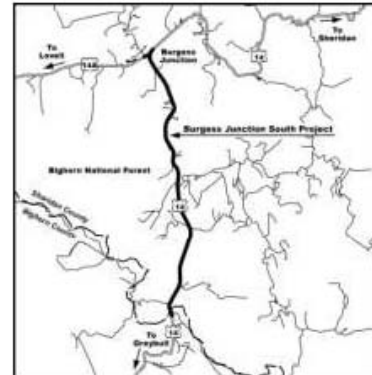


The Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is initiating scoping to study the potential environmental impacts to resources associated with work along a segment of U.S. Highway 14 (US 14) in Sheridan County also known as Burgess Junction South Project. The project is located on US 14 beginning at the Big Horn County Line and extends north for approximately 10.2 miles, ending at the north east limits of the Burgess Junction (intersection of US 14 and US 14A). The project would include widening, pavement overlay, and reconstructing isolated locations of US 14.

WYDOT is seeking public input on issues of concern associated with the need for the project, the alternatives that should or should not be considered and environmental resources in the area to be examined in the National Environmental Policy Act process.

A public meeting will be held on June 5, 2013 at the Tongue River Valley Community Center in Dayton at 1100 US Hwy 14, Dayton WY from 5pm to 7pm. If you are unable to attend the meeting but wish to submit comments, comments on the project will be accepted until July 8, 2013. Comments can be submitted to:

Timothy Stark
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Engineer
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340
Fax: 307-777-4193
Email: dot-burgess-ict-ea@wyo.gov



WYDOT
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009-3340



Appendix D. Comments Received

Ronda,

Got a call from Bill Mentock who owns a cabin on South Tongue near Arrowhead Lodge in the Bighorn National Forrest. Bill called to advise he will be unable to make the Public Meeting in Dayton on June 5th, 2013, but wanted to make sure his comments were noted. His primary concern was with the fencing along the proposed corridor. He is in favor of having a fence all along each side of the corridor to prevent livestock from being on the roadway. He drives this section of US 14 frequently and has had many close calls with livestock on the roadway with the greatest hazard being at night.

Jerry

--

Jerry Buckley, P.E.
Resident Engineer
WYDOT - Sheridan
10 East Brundage Lane
Sheridan, WY 82801
307-674-2331
Jerry.Buckley@wyo.gov

E-Mail to and from me, in connection with the transaction of public business, is subject to the Wyoming Public Records Act and may be disclosed to third parties.



BURGESS JUNCTION SOUTH

Your input is an important part of the public involvement process. Your comments and suggestions can help us adequately identify the public's concerns, and issues regarding the **Burgess Junction South Project**. Please indicate your thoughts regarding the purpose and need, proposed improvements, and any environmental concerns. Space is provided below to write down any comments you wish the study team to consider. Also, please use the map on the back of this sheet to identify issues at specific locations. You may hand in your comments at the end of the meeting or, if you prefer mail or fax this form to the address printed below. You may also email comments at the address provided below.

Please print legibly:

Name: (Optional) Kath Beckwith
 Address: (Optional) 2013 Eastside 2nd St Sheridan
 Representing: (Optional) Big Horn Nat Forest WY 82801
 Comments: Plan reconstruction to
 1) Blend highway with natural
appearing landscape
 a) meet or exceed scenic
integrity objectives (forest plan)
 b) revegetated w/ native
species or plantings
 c) steep 3:1 cuts & fills for road
 2) Provide for scenic recreation &
tourism along the scenic byway
 a) access to Forest System
Roads & developed sites
 b) wildlife viewing (moose central)
 c) photo opportunities

Written comments can be submitted to:
 Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
 Wyoming Department of Transportation
 Environmental Services Engineer
 5300 Bishop Blvd.
 Cheyenne WY 82009-3340
 Fax: 307-777-4193
 Email: dot-burgess-jct-qa@wyo.gov

Appendix E. Newspaper Article Following Public Meeting

Road project in Bighorns kicks off with public input » The Sheridan Press



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- Obituaries
- Classifieds
- About Us

Road Project In Bighorns Kicks Off With Public Input

Hannah Wiest
Date Posted: June 6, 2013

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About digital subscriptions

DAYTON — Reconstruction on 11 miles of U.S. Highway 14 south of Burgess Junction will improve safety and accessibility on a route that has exceeded the average statewide crash rate seven out of 10 years between 1997 and 2006, according to the Wyoming Department of Transportation.

"The highway south of Burgess Junction has not been improved for decades," WYDOT District Engineer Mark Gillett said. "It's not in really bad condition, but it's getting there. The other thing we've noticed is there are a lot of folks up there in the summer who see wildlife and just stop and there's no shoulders on that road.

"It creates a safety concern for us on the highway, so we're wanting to reconstruct the road and put wider shoulders on it so people can pull off and take pictures wherever they see wildlife," he said. "That will be a big safety improvement. Otherwise, we just want to improve the road and upgrade it to current standards." Gillett and other representatives from WYDOT, the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Forest Service were on hand at an open house Wednesday at the community center in Dayton to answer questions and receive input on the proposed Burgess Junction South project.

The three agencies have initiated scoping — a process used to determine the scope of significant issues related to a project. They are asking community members to provide input about how the Burgess Junction South project may affect cultural, recreational, environmental and economic resources in the area. Comments will be accepted through July 8.

Information received will likely be used to prepare an environmental assessment, which is required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

WYDOT Environmental Manager Kevin Powell said environmental considerations will include wildlife, wetlands, cultural resources, ranchers needs and recreational use. He said the design will try to work around wetlands areas, but if it can't, WYDOT will mitigate the wetlands by creating another wetlands area nearby.

"One of our concerns with wildlife is vehicle/animal collisions," Powell said. "We want to identify hot spots for collisions and determine if there is something that can be done to bring those collisions down."

Reconstruction work on Highway 14 began in the 1990s and has extended from Dayton to Burgess Junction. The proposed Burgess Junction South project will cover the portion of highway between the intersection of Highways 14 and 14A at Burgess Junction south to the Sheridan County line. It will be the last section of highway in the Bighorn National Forest to be improved.

<http://thesheridanpress.com/?p=6306>[6/25/2013 11:21:48 AM]

Road project in Bighorns kicks off with public input » The Sheridan Press

Proposed improvements include widening the road with 6-foot shoulders, fixing drainage areas and bringing curves up to National Highway System design standards. WYDOT will also add a “clear zone,” which essentially keeps all obstructions — sign posts, trees, etc. — out of a specified width around the highway.

The project was originally slated for 2021, but Gillett asked to move the construction date to 2017. Scoping and environmental assessment will take approximately one year. Public comments will be gathered throughout that time and incorporated into the design process, which should last about two years.

General public reaction has been minimal, Gillett said. One resident with a cattle grazing permit in the area asked that right-of-way fence be installed on both sides of the highway to prevent cattle from wandering onto the highway.

There is no proposed project cost for Burgess Junction South at this time, Gillett said.

About Hannah Wiest

Hannah Wiest is the government and outdoors reporter for The Sheridan Press. She has lived in Colorado and Montana but loves her sunny home state of Wyoming best. She joined The Press staff in February 2013.
[Email](#) | [Twitter](#)