

March 1, 2022

Lucia Olivera
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601-9785

Subject: 2022 Ronan-North Reevaluated Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
Project No. NH 5-2(172)47
Control No. 1744019

Dear Ms. Olivera:

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) Environmental Services Bureau has reviewed the subject project, the previously approved *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD) for the US 93 Ninepipe/Ronan Improvement Project*, current regulatory requirements, and current conditions at the project site. Based on this analysis, MDT concludes that the requirements of the National and Montana Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA and MEPA) can be met for the subject project through a reevaluated FSEIS as described at 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 771.129(b), rather than a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), as described at 23 CFR 771.130. The FSEIS was signed by your agency on February 14, 2008, and the ROD was signed on May 21, 2008.

This letter, referred to here as the 2022-Reevaluation of the FSEIS, is intended to request Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) concurrence that the following design changes proposed for the subject project would not result in significant changes that would require preparation of an SEIS. This 2022 Reevaluation focuses on changes to the design, the potential for new impacts, and new project-related issues that have arisen since the 2016 reevaluation of the FSEIS. This 2022 Reevaluation is limited to the subject project and its transitions. **Attachment 1** shows the subject project relative to the FSEIS project limits. **Attachment 2** details the subject project limits.

The 1.8-mile project is located on National Highway Route 5/US 93 on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Ronan, Lake County, Montana. US 93 is classified as a Principal Arterial. The project begins at Reference Post (RP) 47.0 near the Round Butte Road/Terrace Lake Road intersection and extends slightly north of the intersection of US 93 and Spring Creek Road/Baptiste Road (RP 48.8). At the southern terminus, on the southbound couplet, there will be a connection south of the US 93/Round Butte Road intersection, on 1st Avenue SW. To the north, the project ties into the previously reconstructed section of US 93 called Spring Creek-Minesinger Trail (NH 5-2 (123) 48, UPN H744).

The FSEIS was reevaluated and signed by your agency on April 7, 2016. The segment considered in the 2016-reevaluation was the proposed US 93 **Ronan-Urban** project (UPN 1744013). Details were included in the 2016-reevaluation that identified the split segment **Ronan-North** (NH 5-2 (172) 47, UPN 1744019), which is the specific subject segment of this 2022 Reevaluation. Due to funding and

coordination considerations, the remainder of Ronan-Urban is to be developed and is not the subject of this 2022 Reevaluation.

The purpose of, and need for, the subject project has not changed since the approval of the FSEIS. As described on Pages 2-1 and 2-3 in the FSEIS, the purpose of the subject project is to improve the level of service, mobility, traffic flow, system linkage, and safety of the transportation system. The project is needed because US 93 is important to local, regional, and nationwide transportation. The traffic volume is high, has been steadily increasing, and is projected to continue to increase. In addition, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are very limited.

Changes to the subject project that are the focus of this 2022 Reevaluation are described in the following section, **Description of Changed Conditions**.

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGED CONDITIONS

Since the finalization of the SEIS, two design changes have been incorporated into the Ronan – North design. Additionally, five environmental conditions were found to have changed from what was described in the previous re-evaluation.

Design Change 1: Stormwater Runoff Treatment and Detention

Design Change 1 would add stormwater runoff treatment to the Ronan-North project. The design team worked with Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), who identified the proposed location, to create a stormwater treatment approach that would mimic natural processes and require little maintenance. Please refer to **Attachment 3** that shows the proposed ponds and hydrodynamic separators.

The project drainage area that discharges to Ronan Spring Creek is generally north of Round Butte Road to the project high point, approximately one mile north on US 93 (RP 47.0 to 48.0). Currently, stormwater runoff from US 93 collects in roadside ditches and is conveyed under the highway to a flat wetland area, referred to as wetland (WL) 10 on project plans, resource and milestone documents, and the Clean Water Act 404 permit application materials. WL-10 drains to Ronan Spring Creek via a developed channel through the wetland area and does not receive any mechanical treatment. The subject project would add a hydrodynamic separator for mechanical sediment removal of stormwater before discharging to a longer, meandering reconstructed channel in WL-10, which would drain to Ronan Spring Creek. The wetland area is influenced by local hydrology and topography and is anticipated to re-establish.

The proposed stormwater runoff and treatment is a separate feature than the additional detention pond identified in the 2016-reevaluation. The hydrodynamic separators are considered part of the MDT facility and that MDT will complete routine maintenance and cleaning. The pond addressed in the 2016-reevaluation would be built near Eisenhower Street and Ronan Spring Creek, generally southwest of the subject project by approximately seven city blocks and west of RP 46.6.

The FSEIS identified the need to reduce highway-related stormwater and contaminants from entering wetlands and surface water (Section 5.9 Water Quality of FSEIS). Design Change 1 is consistent with the FSEIS by including stormwater facilities in the project design.

Design Change 2: Changes to Spring Creek Road/Baptiste Rd Intersection and Local Accesses

Design Change 2 would reconfigure the intersection of Spring Creek Road, Baptiste Road, and US 93. (see **Attachment 2**). Both Spring Creek Road and Baptiste Road are county roads that provide local residential and farm access. A crash cluster and documented runoff pattern at this location led the design team to consider how Spring Creek Road intersects US 93. The design team determined closing the east

approach (Spring Creek Road) and directing local access traffic to the signalized intersection proposed at US 93/Old US 93 (RP 47.8) would provide safer turning movements both on and off US 93. Proposed changes to US 93 include two additional through lanes and a center left-turn lane; the banked curve would be maintained. All these proposed elements would increase the complexity for turning vehicles to safely enter or depart US 93. Currently, the two county roads intersect US 93 along a curve and limited sight distance exists, especially for traffic turning to and from the low and inside of the curve, which is Spring Creek Road. The west approach at RP 48.2, Baptiste Road, would be relocated to intersect US 93 at a right angle and operate with stop sign control.

The existing Spring Creek Road entrance to US 93 would be closed and a cul-de-sac would be constructed east of US 93. The private farm access would be relocated into the cul-de-sac. The current portion of Spring Creek Road between the cul-de-sac and US 93 (approximately 300 feet) would be obliterated, and the current county road easement would be abandoned. Both Baptiste Road and Spring Creek Road, including the proposed cul-de-sac, would remain under Lake County maintenance. The proposed cul-de-sac would provide adequate turning space for vehicles, including maintenance vehicles, on Spring Creek Road. Both the affected landowner and Lake County Commissioners have concurred with this design approach.

Design Change 2 would modify the proposed road connections to reduce the potential for vehicle conflicts from through traffic or turning vehicles on Spring Creek Road across five lanes of high-speed, super-elevated roadway. The reduction of vehicle conflicts is consistent with the project purpose and need stated in the FSEIS (Page 2-1 of the FSEIS).

Environmental Update 1: Biological Resource Report (BRR) Addendum

An addendum to the August 2016 BRR for the Ronan-North project was completed on June 24, 2019 (2019 BRR Addendum). The 2019 BRR Addendum analyzed Design Changes 1 and 2, which are included in this 2022 Reevaluation. The following summarizes the determinations documented in the 2019 BRR Addendum:

- For vegetation and noxious weeds, the design changes will have similar impacts to those described in the 2016 BRR, which are minor because of the disturbed nature of the habitat.
- For general wildlife species, the analysis and determinations documented in the 2016 BRR remain valid.
 - Wildlife exclusionary fencing associated with the subject project would direct wildlife from RP 47.9 to the north end of the project, where an existing wildlife crossing is already in place under US 93.
- For threatened and endangered species, the 2019 BRR Addendum documents MDT's determination that the design changes would not warrant any changes to the determinations of effect presented in the October 24, 2017, Biological Assessment (BA) for any species that were analyzed.

Environmental Update 2: Additional Wetland Delineation

An additional wetland delineation was completed for the proposed project in 2016. The wetland delineation reconfirmed previous wetland boundaries identified in the FSEIS (Pages 4-83 and 4-84 of the FSEIS). In addition, approximately 1.8 acres of newly identified wetlands were delineated within the project area. The newly identified wetland areas were primarily in roadside ditches, in irrigation features, and on properties identified for the proposed stormwater detention pond. Details, including figures showing the locations of the delineated wetlands, are provided in the 2016 BRR.

Environmental Update 3: Recreational Resources

The couplet is proposed to begin north of Dairy Queen (STA. 300+00.00, Parcel ID 15310336401020000) and angle west towards 1st Avenue SW; the proposed footprint would intersect an approach from the southeastern area of Ronan School District property. The school district property consists of one large parcel that contains the high school, sports complex, and shop/bus barn area. The track is open to and used by the public when not in use for school sporting events. The Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP) website states that funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was used for the tennis courts located in the sports complex. The 2008 FSEIS included the school district property and its recreational aspects.

Once construction limits were established, MDT worked with the school district and FWP to gain concurrence that a Section 4(f) use and Section 6(f) conversion would not be triggered by the action. Please refer to **Attachment 4** for copies of concurrence documentation.

- Section 4(f): The school district agreed that the corner where an easement would occur for an updated approach is not considered part of the property considered recreational for protection under Section 4(f). With concurrence from the school district, that area is not significant in terms of Section 4(f).
- Section 6(f): FWP agreed that the easement would not be a conversion of a Section 6(f) property.

Environmental Update 4: Wildlife Fencing

The 2016 BRR and 2019 BRR Addendum discussed the potential for habitat fragmentation and animal/vehicle collision resulting from the project. A wildlife underpass was constructed on US 93, north of Baptiste Road, to help mitigate potential impacts to wildlife movement and dispersal across US 93 in the project area. Wildlife guide fencing would be installed as part of the project to help funnel animals to the north end where the existing crossing is located. Please refer to the 2019 BRR Addendum for a map showing the wildlife guide fencing.

Environmental Update 5: US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion (BO)

MDT received the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) “Biological Opinion (BO) on the Revised US 93 Evaro to Polson (RP 6.8 to 59.0) NH 5-2(159)37; UPN 8008000” dated November 16, 2020. While the BO title contains specific reference to another MDT project, the BO includes the area of the subject project.

As stated in the 2020-BO, the USFWS has concluded that the Ronan-North project, as proposed, is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of grizzly bears or bull trout. The USFWS acknowledged the determination that the proposed project will have no effect on the threatened Canada lynx, yellow-billed cuckoo, Spaulding’s campion, and water howellia. The USFWS also acknowledged the determination that the proposed project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the proposed wolverine and meltwater lednian stonefly, and the candidate whitebark pine.

Wolverine were withdrawn from consideration for ESA listing October 13, 2020. No other species have been added or removed from the list of threatened or endangered species since the 2016-reevlation.

Conditions from the BO on page III-46 and 47 for grizzly bear will be incorporated into the final project design. The special provisions will be included in the contract that requires adherence the terms and conditions.

PAST, PRESENT, AND REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE ACTIONS

To evaluate potential cumulative effects, research was conducted to identify other known or programmed projects in the vicinity of the project area.

- UPN 8008000, US 93 N-Post Creek Hill (PN INH 5-2(159)37, RP 36.8-40.0) – Reconstruction is expected to occur in 2025 or later. MDT has not identified any cumulative impacts, as the projects are six miles apart and in separate drainages.
- CSKT Transportation Project for Mission Valley Guardrail installed new guardrail and improved existing guardrail at six locations within the Mission Valley. This project was completed in 2020. Cumulative impacts are not expected, because the activities for this project were localized; would not impact any cultural, biological, or private property; and were immediately adjacent to a roadway facility.
- UPN 9460000, Round Butte Road Path, Ronan TA – West of RP 47.0 is an MDT Transportation Alternatives (TA) project in Ronan. Design and construction of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalk at the Ronan Middle School along Round Butte Road westward to the existing path west of the railroad tracks in Ronan. Sidewalk will be located on the north side of Round Butte Road. Right-of-way (ROW) would be obtained from Ronan Middle School and from one privately owned parcel. Construction is planned for 2022. The east terminus of the TA project will connect with existing sidewalks at the south project transition limits of the subject project. MDT would include special provisions for any tree removal that would require the work to be completed in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. No cultural or other biological concerns are anticipated with the project. The project has potential beneficial impacts by improving pedestrian network connectivity and safety between the two projects.

Coordination with the City of Ronan, Lake County, and CSKT has occurred and is on-going. MDT concludes that no significant transportation changes have occurred or will occur in the near future that would significantly change conditions on the ground or already identified cumulative and indirect impacts.

REEVALUATION

The following resource categories were previously examined in the FSEIS and have been reevaluated in the context of the subject project as currently proposed. Where applicable, new or updated information is provided. **Table 1** provides an overview of the resource categories and whether a change in impact or mitigation has occurred. Resource categories with changed conditions are described in greater detail as follows.

Table 1. Reevaluation of Resource Categories

RESOURCE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN IMPACT? YES/NO	CHANGE IN MITIGATION? YES/NO	DISCUSSION
A. TRAFFIC OPERATIONS & SAFETY	Yes	No	Design Change 1: No change in impact. Design Change 2: Improve safety. The Spring Creek Road termination will remove a stop sign controlled crossing onto US 93 in a high-speed area that would be on the low side of a superelevated curve. The proposed cul-de-sac will provide adequate turning space for vehicles on Spring Creek Road. The closure will shift vehicle conflicts between US 93 traffic and the cross-traffic on Spring Creek Road from a high-speed, super elevated curve to a signalized intersection with center turn lanes.

RESOURCE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN IMPACT? YES/NO	CHANGE IN MITIGATION? YES/NO	DISCUSSION
			<p>Summary: The design changes would improve safety. Therefore, the changes in impact to safety by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>
B. LAND USE	Yes	No	<p>Design Change 1: A presently vacant lot used for grazing would be utilized for stormwater treatment and detention. With Design Change 1, approximately 1.6 acres of the lot will be converted from agricultural use to transportation use. The land, owned by CSKT, would be put into a grant of easement for ROW and would be maintained by MDT.</p> <p>Design Change 2: The Spring Creek Road termination and proposed cul-de-sac would require a larger footprint. Approximately 0.5 additional acres will be acquired from a private landowner and converted from agricultural use to transportation use. Approximately 0.4 acres (where Spring Creek Road is abandoned) would be converted from transportation use to private ownership. This design change would also relocate an existing private approach to private property; the approach will remain privately owned (current landowner).</p> <p>Summary: The design changes would result in additional land being converted from agricultural use to transportation use. The changes in land use by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>
C. PRIME AND UNIQUE FARMLAND	Yes	No	<p>Design Change 1: Design Change 1 would convert approximately 1.6 additional acres of farmland of statewide importance to a transportation use for stormwater treatment.</p> <p>Design Change 2: Design Change 2 would convert approximately 0.5 additional acres of prime farmland (if irrigated) and farmland of local importance to a transportation use. An estimated 0.4 acres of prime farmland will revert from a public transportation use to private ownership, within this design area.</p> <p>Summary: The proposed changes documented in this 2022 Reevaluation increase farmland conversion by approximately 12% (from the 2016-reevaluation proposed impacts of 13.1 acres to 14.8 acres). The amount of farmland converted is not considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity because it would not constitute a substantial decrease in the amount of available farmland in the county. In addition, based on conditions observed from aerial photography and from on-the-ground observations, the majority of the land associated with the design changes is not currently in production or being irrigated. An NRCS-CPA-106 Form, <i>Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for Corridor Type Projects</i> was completed for the FSEIS. The FSEIS total corridor assessment points were less than the NRCS threshold that requires other alternatives consideration. The proposed design changes do not vary from the FSEIS conclusion.</p>
D. SOCIAL	No	No	No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.
E. ECONOMICS	No	No	No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.
F. PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS	No	No	No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.

RESOURCE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN IMPACT? YES/NO	CHANGE IN MITIGATION? YES/NO	DISCUSSION
G. AIR QUALITY	No	No	No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.
H. NOISE	No	No	No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.
I. WATER QUALITY	Yes	No	<p>Design Change 1: Improve water quality. The MDT-maintained hydrodynamic separator and the longer, meandering channel would provide beneficial impacts to water quality by reducing the potential for contaminants and sediment to enter Ronan Spring Creek from stormwater runoff.</p> <p>Design Change 2: No change in impact.</p> <p>Summary: The additional stormwater treatment and detention area would improve water quality. Therefore, the changes in impact to water quality by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>
J. WETLANDS	Yes	Yes	<p>Design Change 1: Approximately 0.44 acre of permanent wetland impact to the Category II pothole wetland (WL-10). With this design change, ponds and meander length would be added to slow the flow and increase retention time. The hydrology is not anticipated to change and wetlands are expected to regenerate. The stormwater treatment approach meets mitigation requirements in the FSEIS to improve water quality and minimize additional project stormwater runoff.</p> <p>Design Change 2: Reduce permanent wetland impacts.</p> <p>Summary: Overall, the previous estimate of wetland impacts has increased slightly. However, the WL-10 area are expected to regenerate upon completion of Design Change 1. The wetland impacts are included in the Clean Water Act permit application and will be mitigated at one of MDT’s wetland mitigation areas or through a bank. MDT will also meet CSKT’s mitigation ratio of 3:1 for wetland impacts within the tribal boundary. Therefore, the changes in impacts to wetlands by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>
K. FLOODPLAINS AND STREAMS	No	No	<p>Design Change 1: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapping was reviewed, and no designated floodplain or floodway are within the area proposed for the stormwater treatment area or along the US 93 corridor from RP 47.8 to 48.8. The stormwater treatment system would benefit Ronan Spring Creek by assisting with the attenuation of peak stormwater discharges following precipitation events, reducing flood concerns within the City of Ronan.</p> <p>Design Change 2: No change in impacts.</p> <p>Summary: The proposed stormwater treatment system is anticipated to improve water quality and minimize additional project stormwater runoff. Therefore, the changes in impacts to floodplains by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>

RESOURCE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN IMPACT? YES/NO	CHANGE IN MITIGATION? YES/NO	DISCUSSION
L. FISH AND WILDLIFE	Yes	No	<p>Design Change 1. Attenuate stormwater flows and improve water quality. Design Change 1 seeks to reduce sedimentation and turbidity in Ronan Spring Creek from stormwater runoff following precipitation events by allowing settlement of contaminants and attenuation of runoff flows. This could subsequently assist in maintaining habitat conditions for aquatic species within Ronan Spring Creek.</p> <p>Design Change 2: No change in impact.</p> <p>Environmental Update 4: Additional wildlife guide fencing to direct wildlife to the crossing at the north end of the project area could reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions.</p> <p>Environmental Update 5: Special provisions will be used in the contract to adhere to the USFWS-specific terms and conditions of the BO.</p> <p>Summary: As noted in the 2019 BRR Addendum, no new species have been added or removed from the list of species of special concern since the 2016-reevaluation. The proposed stormwater treatment system would reduce sedimentation and turbidity in Ronan Spring Creek, which could subsequently assist in maintaining habitat conditions for aquatic species in the creek. The additional wildlife fencing could reduce collision with wildlife and increase safety for the traveling public. The changes in impacts to fish and wildlife species by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>
M. THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES	No	No	<p>Design Changes 1 and 2: As stated in the 2019 BRR Addendum, the design changes were not significant enough to warrant any changes to the determinations of effect presented in the 2017 BA for any species that were analyzed.</p> <p>Environmental Update 1, 2, 4, and 5: As stated in the 2019 BRR Addendum, MDT determined that the design changes were not extensive enough to warrant any changes to the determinations of effect presented in the 2017 BA for any species that were analyzed.</p> <p>Summary: Wolverine were withdrawn from consideration for ESA listing October 13, 2020. No other species have been added or removed from the list of threatened or endangered species since the 2016-reevaluation. MDT determined that the design changes will not warrant any changes to determinations of effect. Therefore, the changes in impact to threatened and endangered species by incorporating these design changes would not be considered “significant” in terms of context and intensity.</p>

RESOURCE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN IMPACT? YES/NO	CHANGE IN MITIGATION? YES/NO	DISCUSSION
N. CULTURAL RESOURCES	No	No	<p>Design Change 1: No change in impact. The cultural resources survey completed under the 2016 reevaluation on the proposed stormwater treatment and detention parcel did not identify any historic or cultural resources on the property.</p> <p>Design Change 2: No change in impact. The FSEIS identified one listed site (i.e., Flathead Irrigation Project, 24LA91) within RP 47.8 to 48.8. Site 24LA91 includes existing canals and mainlines that the proposed roadway would cross. A determination of <i>No Adverse Effect</i> was concurred by the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, and mitigation measures were stipulated within the Memorandum of Agreement for the project (Page 5-130 of the FSEIS).</p> <p>Summary: The design changes will not change any impacts to cultural resources.</p>
O. PARKS AND RECREATION, 4(f), 6(f)	No	No	<p>Environmental Update #3: A small area owned by the School District was placed into an easement to improve the approach at its southeastern extent with the couplet. The ROW action was reviewed under Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) and no impacts were found.</p> <p>Summary: The design changes will not change any impacts to parks and recreation.</p>
P. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	No	No	<p>No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.</p> <p>The FSEIS recognized the possibility of contaminated soils and/or groundwater within the Ronan-Urban project (Pages 4-153 through 4-155 of the FSEIS). MDT initiated further studies and monitoring in 2013 to determine the status of the known contaminated sites (predominantly in the Ronan City limits, RP 46.0 to 47.5) and monitor new issues (if identified). Phase I and II investigations have been completed. Monitoring piezometers were installed to regularly monitor for contaminants. The monitoring continued through 2018 to assess the shallow groundwater aquifer, provide aquifer testing, and continue baseline groundwater monitoring. Results of the monitoring provided a baseline and indicated further monitoring would not result in significantly new information for special consideration during or after construction.</p>
Q. VISUAL	No	No	No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.
R. RIGHT-OF-WAY AND RELOCATIONS	Yes	No	<p>Design Change 1: Minor change in impact. Development of the stormwater treatment and detention area would require an easement of 1.6 acres from the CSKT.</p> <p>Design Change 2: Minor change in impact. The Spring Creek Road cul-de-sac will require acquisition of approximately 0.5 additional acres of land converted into public easement. Approximately 0.4 acres of Lake County public road easement will be transferred to private ownership for the abandoned 300 feet of Spring Creek Road.</p>

RESOURCE CATEGORY	CHANGE IN IMPACT? YES/NO	CHANGE IN MITIGATION? YES/NO	DISCUSSION
			<p>Summary: A total of approximately 1.6 acres of ROW would be acquired due to Design Change 1. Design Change 2 will require an increase of 0.5 acres for Lake County road easements that will be offset by abandonment of 0.4 acres for a total increase of 0.1 acres of land moved into public easement. The previous 13.1 acres of ROW acquisition identified in the 2016-reevaluation has increased to 14.8 acres.</p>
<p>S. GEOLOGY AND SOILS</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No changes have occurred since the FSEIS.</p>

PERMITS

No additional permits or authorizations are anticipated to be added to those identified in the FSEIS.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The main portion of public and agency involvement occurred during development of the FSEIS. Additional public and agency involvement occurred during development of the 2016-reevaluation including public informational meetings; city, county, and Tribal coordination; and individual landowner discussions. The US 93 corridor has a number of long-term committees developed as part of the FSEIS that are still active and have coordinated on the subject project and the changes identified herein. One of the US 93 corridor committees, the Technical Design Committee (TDC), includes individuals from the city, county, MDT, FHWA, and CSKT. The TDC has been involved with development of all the design changes associated with the subject project.

Due to the proposed design changes and the need to keep stakeholders informed on the project status and project splits, MDT held a public meeting in December 2016 where Design Changes 1 and 2 were discussed. Design Change 1 was shown on the exhibits but did not have specific discussion or any comments. At the December 2016 meeting, one comment supported Design Change 2, while one comment requested different (geometric) solutions be built. Comments were also received requesting advance notification of meetings and additional landowner discussions, which are being addressed during continued design efforts.

MDT hosted two virtual open houses on November 15 and 16, 2021, to discuss the project, its overall status, and the design changes. The meetings were well attended and no substantive public comment was received that would change any of the design elements for the project. MDT has a project website to keep the public aware of the schedule and any planned updates.

CONCLUSION

Through this 2022 Reevaluation, MDT has determined no substantive changes have occurred since the FSEIS and ROD were signed. The environmental updates described in this 2022 Reevaluation would not affect the ability of the Selected Alternative to meet the subject projects' stated purpose as described in the FSEIS and ROD. Additionally, MDT has determined the impacts of the environmental updates are not individually or cumulatively significant or significantly different from those described in the FSEIS or ROD. For these reasons, MDT has determined that the environmental updates would have no effect on the ultimate decision documented in the ROD and that approving this updated NEPA/MEPA evaluation would be consistent with 23 CFR 771.



Tom Martin, P.E.
Environmental Services Bureau Chief

REVIEWED/AUTHORIZED

By Tom Martin at 3:55 pm, Mar 03, 2022

Date _____



Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Tom McDonald
Tribal Council Chair

Date 3-1-22

Federal Highway Administration

Date _____

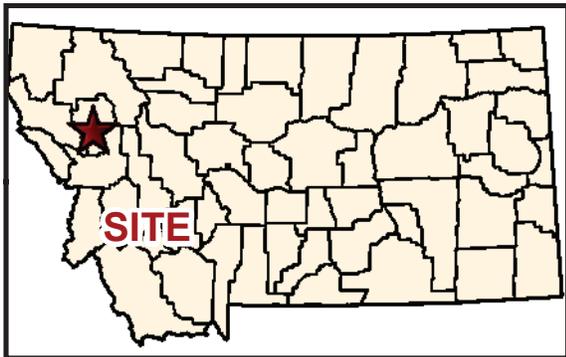
Electronic copies:

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|------------------|---|
| Bob Vosen | Missoula District Administrator |
| Damien Krings | MDT Highways Engineer |
| Dave Holien | MDT Consultant Design Bureau Chief (acting) |
| Miki Lloyd | MDT Project Design Manager |
| Jason Gilliam | MDT Right-of-Way Bureau Chief |
| Maureen Walsh | MDT Missoula Right-of-Way |
| Lisa Hurley | MDT Fiscal Programming Section |
| Darin Reynolds | MDT Construction Contracting Bureau Chief |
| Tom Martin | MDT Environmental Services Bureau |
| Tom Gocksch | MDT Environmental Services Bureau, Section Supervisor |
| Rebecca Ridenour | MDT Missoula District Project Development Engineer |

List of Attachments

1. Project Location Map
2. Design Change Location Map
 1. Stormwater Treatment and Detention
 2. Change to Spring Creek Road Local Access
3. Stormwater Treatment and Detention Design
4. Section 4(f) and Section 6(f) Coordination

ATTACHMENT 1

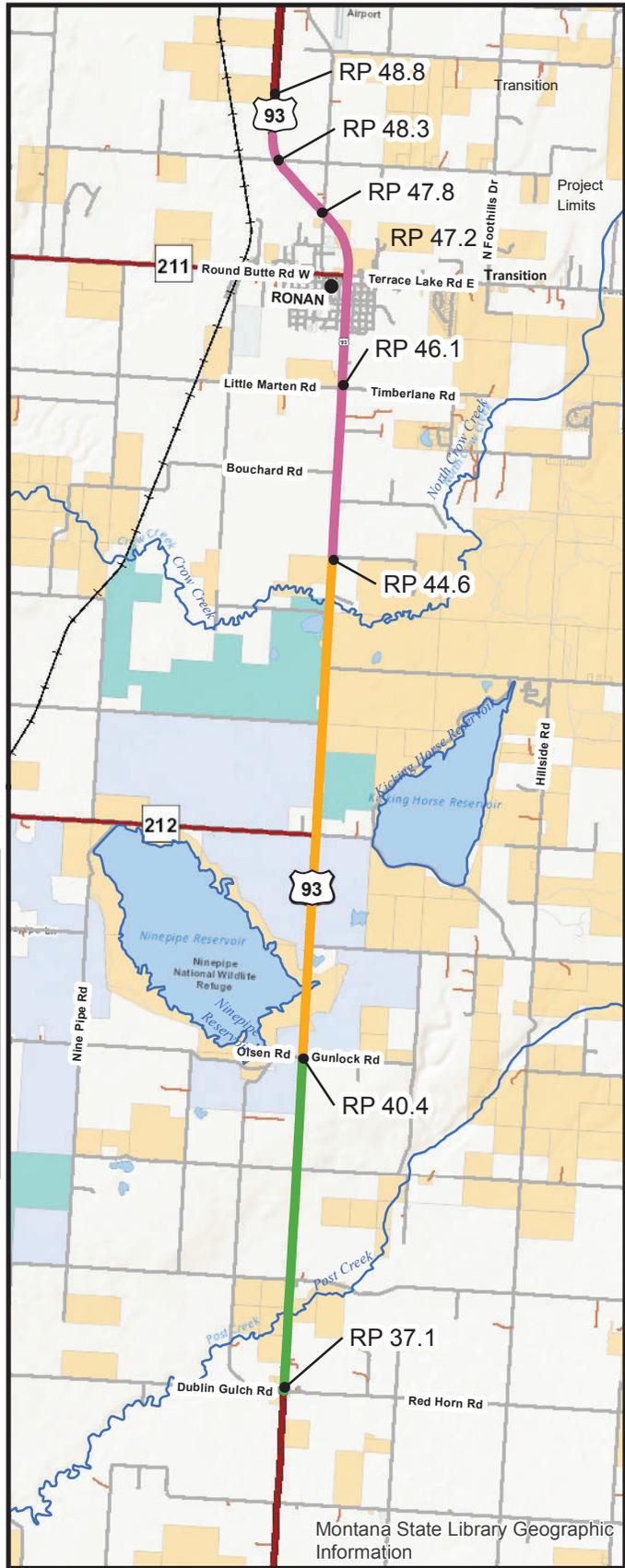


Legend

- Ronan-Urban
- Ninepipe
- US 93 N-Post Creek Hill



NO SCALE



US 93 Ninepipe/Ronan Corridor Segments Attachment 1

Montana State Library Geographic Information

ATTACHMENT 2



- DESIGN CHANGES**
- ① STORMWATER DETENTION POND
 - ② CHANGES TO SPRING CREEK ROAD AND LOCAL ACCESS

- LEGEND**
- PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION
 - EXISTING ROADWAYS
 - EXISTING WETLANDS
 - PROPOSED BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN PATH
 - OBLITERATE ROADWAY



2969 AIRPORT ROAD, SUITE 18
 HELENA, MT 59601
 PHONE: (406) 449-7764
 © KLJ 2021

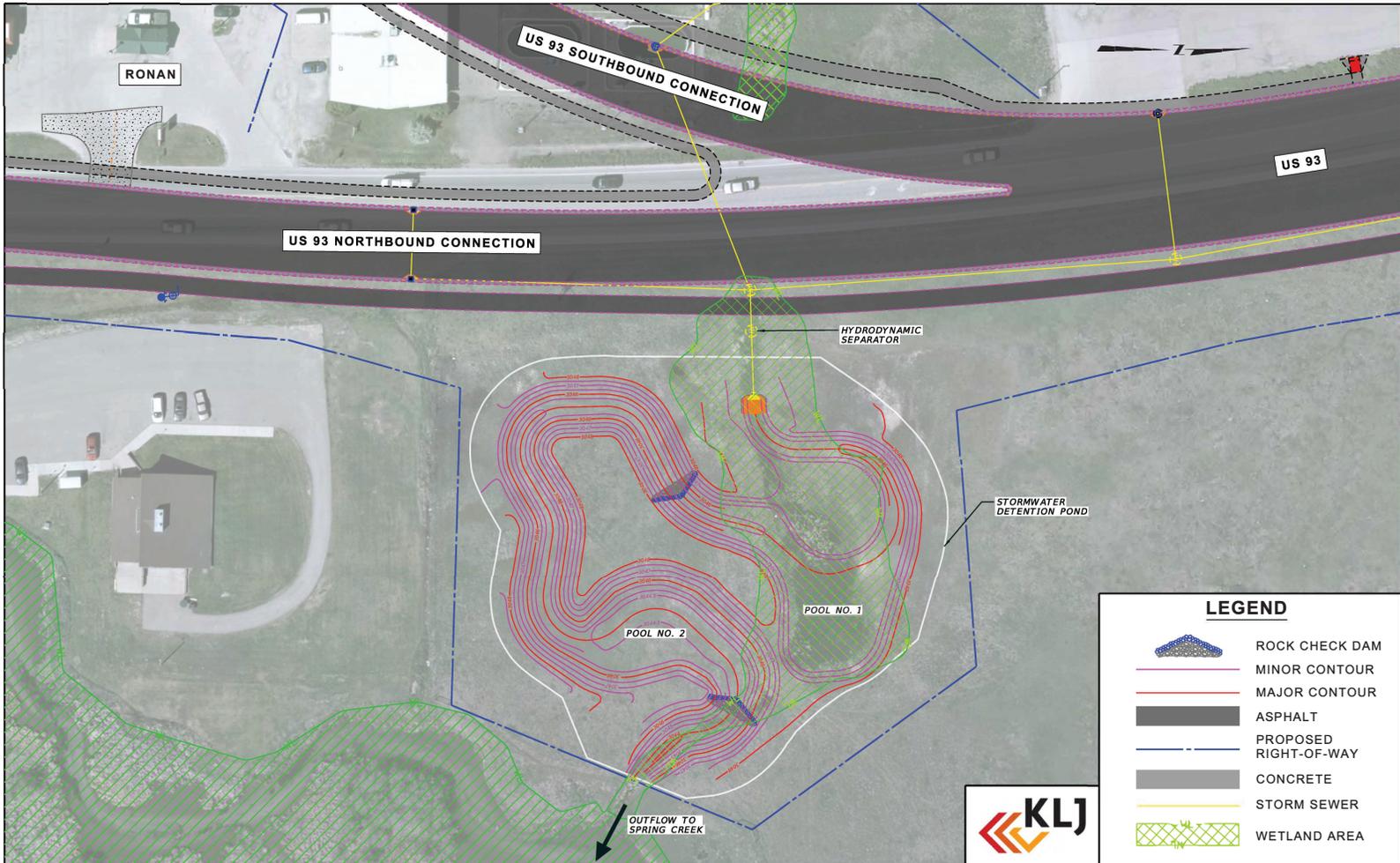
LAKE COUNTY RONAN - NORTH MONTANA

DESIGN CHANGES MAP

UPN NUMBER
 1744019

FIGURE
 1

ATTACHMENT 3



ATTACHMENT 3 - STORMWATER POND & TREATMENT

ATTACHMENT 4



Ronan School District No. 30

Superintendent
421 Andrew Street NW
Ronan, MT 59864-2302
Phone: (406) 676-3390 ext. 7200
Fax: (406) 676-3392

September 1, 2020

To: Rebecca Ridenour
From: Mark J. Johnston, Superintendent
Re: Highway Project

To whom it may concern,

The area that MDT is seeking to obtain from the Ronan School District is located at the southeastern corner of the school district property. While the large, school district-owned parcel has a track and football field that are open to the public, the area that MDT is seeking has permanent structures that are dedicated to instruction of vocational, industrial, and/or agricultural classes. The area with the instructional buildings does not contribute to the public recreational aspects of the track and football field area and is managed and maintained separately. The subject area discussed for right of way does not play an important role in meeting the public recreational objectives for the track and football field area.

The corner area of the school district property does not contribute a significant role to public recreational resources. The area that MDT is seeking an easement on is not used for public recreation nor would it hinder the public's continued use of the track and/or football field.

As the superintendent and official with jurisdiction over the property, I attest that the school district's use of the property that MDT is seeking an easement is not for public recreation. The proposed action would not be a use of a Section 4(f) property.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark J. Johnston
Superintendent
Ronan School District No. 30

Ridenour, Rebecca

From: Ridenour, Rebecca
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 7:56 AM
To: Lloyd, Miki
Cc: Crawford, Bruce; Walsh, Maureen
Subject: FW: LWCF question - Ronan North (CN 1744019)

Good morning, Miki.

Below is an email from Michelle McNamee, the new FWP contact for Land and Water Conservation Funding (Section 6f). Based on our recent conversations in the bi-weekly status meetings, I feel confident that we can answer affirmatively to the two conditions she listed. I also feel pretty comfortable progressing into final plans that our plan will not change with the ROW acreage required from the school.

I'm going to use this email to you as our official record in our files. I don't believe we need to do any more documentation unless the conditions change our response to the FWP criteria listed below.

Please let me know if you have questions or would like to discuss. Thank you.

Rebecca

From: McNamee, Michelle <Michelle.McNamee@mt.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 3:55 PM
To: Ridenour, Rebecca <rriidenour@mt.gov>
Cc: McArthur, Seth <SMcArthur@mt.gov>
Subject: Re: LWCF question - Ronan North (CN 1744019)

Dear Rebecca,

Thanks for checking in again. I have reviewed the LWCF Ronan Tennis Courts Project you referenced. It is an older project so we do not have much information on it.

You should not need to go through the LWCF conversion process as long as:

1. The recreational utility of the school's grounds is not compromised by your proposed right of way action; and
2. The proposed right of way action (to put the corner of the approach referenced in your map into a permanent easement for the roadway) does not significantly change from what you have submitted.

If it appears the proposed right of way action may change from what you originally submitted, please follow up immediately and provide me with the details.

I appreciate your patience with my response as we transition between LWCF Program Managers and I come up to speed. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Best,

Michelle

Michelle McNamee
Outdoor Recreation Program Manager
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

From: Ridenour, Rebecca
Sent: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 7:08 AM
To: McNamee, Michelle
Cc: McArthur, Seth
Subject: RE: LWCF question - Ronan North (CN 1744019)

Hello Michelle,

I am checking it to see if you have had a chance to look at my request I sent last week. I realize last week was a holiday week, so I am simply checking in.

Please feel free to call me if you would like to discuss my question. I'm still working from home and my number is 406-431-2689.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Rebecca

From: McArthur, Seth <SMcArthur@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 9:49 AM
To: Ridenour, Rebecca <rridenour@mt.gov>
Cc: McNamee, Michelle <Michelle.McNamee@mt.gov>
Subject: RE: LWCF question - Ronan North (CN 1744019)

Hi Rebecca,

We will be happy to take a look at this for you. I wanted to let you know that we are in the process of transitioning our LWCF program to a new Program Manager. Her name is Michelle McNamee. Michelle will be helping you through this process.

Thanks for your inquiry,

Seth McArthur
Snowmobile Program Manager

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 E. 6th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620
Ph: (406) 444-3753



THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

From: Ridenour, Rebecca <rridenour@mt.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 1, 2020 8:23 AM
To: McArthur, Seth <SMcArthur@mt.gov>
Subject: LWCF question - Ronan North (CN 1744019)

Good morning, Seth.

I am working on an MDT project in Ronan (called Ronan North). MDT is working on right of way acquisition and a parcel has come into question as far as Section 6(F) Land and Water Conservation funding is concerned.

The parcel in question is owned by the school district. It's a large parcel that contains the school, the sports complex, and a shop/bus barn area. The FWP website states that LWCF funds were used for the tennis courts.

I've included a Cadastral aerial to assist with my question. The tennis courts are outlined with a RED box. The right of way area is kitty-corner across the property, south of the track in the SE corner – see the red circle.

It appears Cadastral's line is a bit off – shifted to the north. Where our right of way acquisition is proposed, the dirt approach you see is actually on the schools property. Our right of way action would be to put the corner of that approach into a permanent easement for the roadway. Please see the attached diagram for a closer look.

The school uses the area for a shop and storage. There is a fence between those uses/activities and the sports complex (you can clearly see this on the Google street view).

Do we have a Section 6(f) situation to deal with here?

If it's easier to chat on the phone, please call me at 406-431-2689.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this issue.

Rebecca Ridenour

*Missoula District Project Development Engineer
Environmental Services Bureau - Montana Department of Transportation*



Please consider the environment before printing this email.

