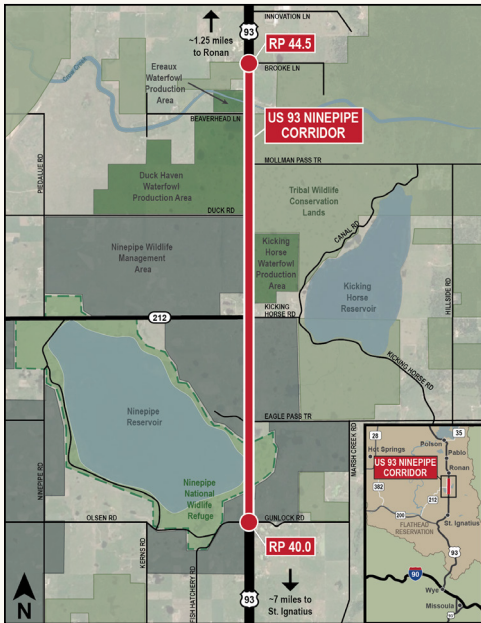


# NINEPIPE CORRIDOR



# FEASIBILITY STUDY



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has conducted a feasibility study for the Ninepipe segment of US Highway 93 (US 93) between Reference Points (RP) 40.0 (Gunlock Road) and 44.5 (Brooke Lane) within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The study has been a collaborative process between MDT, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), resource agencies, stakeholders, and the public.

Since completion of previous environmental documentation efforts, MDT has developed projects in stretches of US 93 adjacent to the Ninepipe segment and has encountered multiple challenges relating to constructability, impacts, and costs. The intent of the *US 93 Ninepipe Corridor Feasibility Study* was to proactively address these challenges before a project is nominated by identifying potential constraints and considering the viability of the preferred alternative identified in the 2008 [Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement \(SEIS\) and a Section 4\(f\) Evaluation](#).

## COMMENTS WELCOME ON THE DRAFT STUDY!

MDT welcomes your comments on the draft feasibility study! Beginning January 6, 2023, the report is available for review at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/US93Ninepipe](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/US93Ninepipe). Comments can be submitted online at [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment\\_form.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml) or to the study contacts below. Please note comments are for the *US 93 Ninepipe Corridor Feasibility Study* and submit by **February 6, 2023**.

## QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS



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LEARN MORE ABOUT VISION ZERO AT: [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/US93Ninepipe](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/US93Ninepipe)

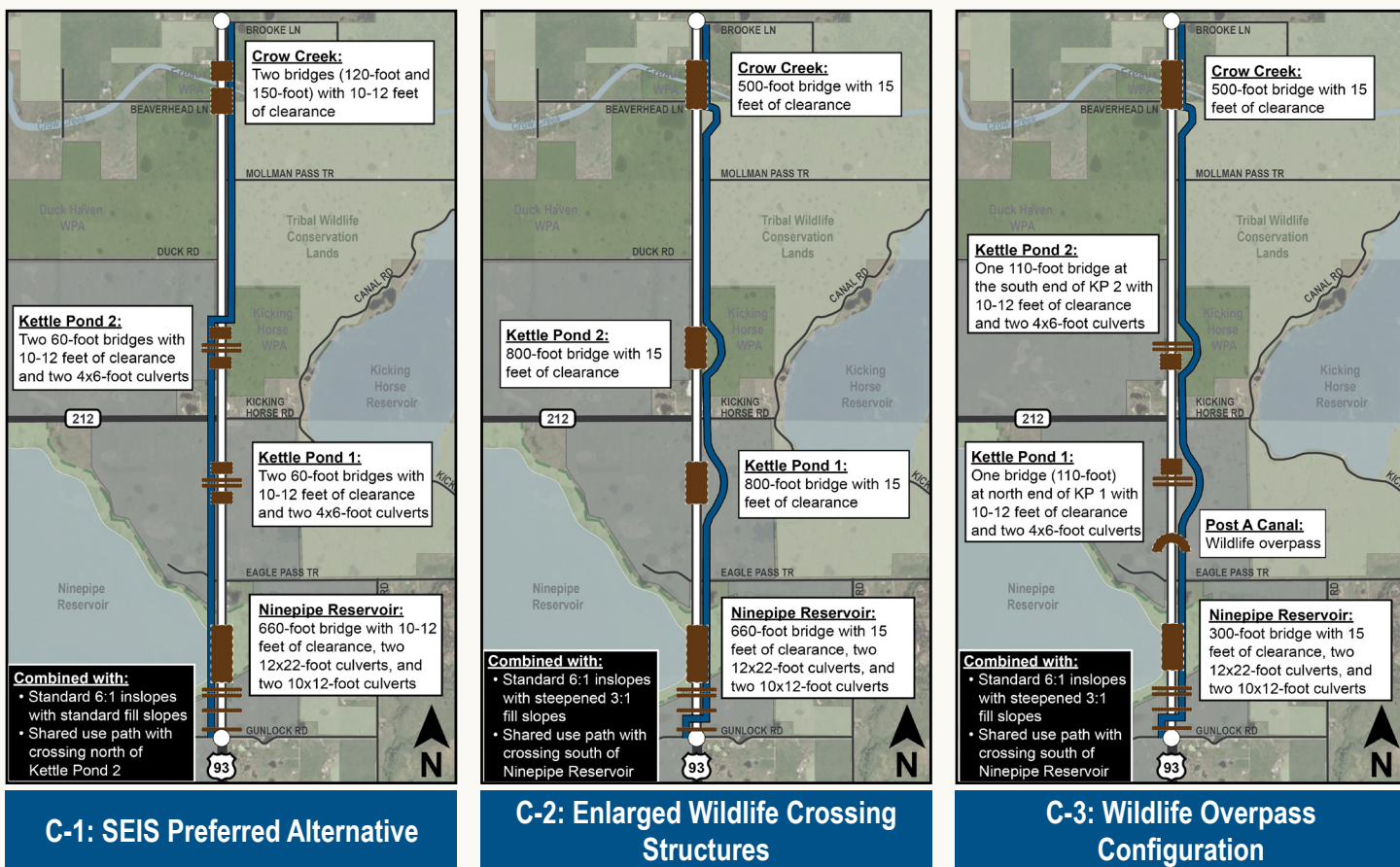
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## CORRIDOR OPTIONS

Due to constructability challenges encountered in other segments of the US 93 Evaro to Polson corridor and the amount of time since completion of the SEIS, MDT initiated this feasibility study to evaluate if the SEIS preferred alternative would be viable in terms of impacts, costs, and constructability considerations. Additionally, changed conditions since 2008 prompted a desire to investigate the feasibility of modified reconstruction options which may reduce impacts and potentially be more cost effective and easier to implement.

For this study, the SEIS preferred alternative (identified as Option C-1) was established as the baseline configuration, with two 12-foot lanes, widened 8-foot shoulders, standard slopes, provision of a shared use path (SUP), and crossing structures as outlined in the 2008 SEIS. Options C-2 and C-3 were developed for this feasibility study to improve transportation system performance and enhance wildlife accommodations with the goal of reducing resource impacts and wildlife-vehicle conflicts. Key features associated with each of the corridor options are illustrated below.



## EVALUATION PROCESS AND RESULTS

A screening process was used to determine which corridor options would be feasible to implement and to understand the tradeoffs between resource impacts, overall benefits, and project costs. Options were evaluated numerically according to their performance under six screening criteria, including transportation, ecological environment, fish and wildlife, human environment, constructability, and cost categories.

The study determined that all three options are likely feasible to implement. There are no known conditions that would prohibit construction of the options given adequate funding availability. Of the three options considered, Option C-3 was determined to be less impactful with more benefits and a lower cost. Based on these results, **Option C-3 was identified as the preferred option to advance for future project development.**

For any future corridor projects advanced from this study, next steps would include funding identification, project nomination, project development including environmental documentation, and collaboration with resource agencies, stakeholders, and the public. No funding has been identified for corridor projects at this time.

