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The popular Fernan Lake Road, which is narrow, winding and offers limited safe access to Lake Coeur d'Alene, may be reconstructed under a federal plan.

Report assesses routes for Fernan Lake Road

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COEUR d'ALENE — Fernan Lake Road would stay mostly right where it is in the latest proposals for reconstruction.

Fourteen alternate routes, including 10 that would have avoided Lake Fernan, were eliminated in a draft environmental impact statement completed last week by the Federal Highway Administration. Fernan Lake Road qualifies as a federal project because it's a Forest Service Road that serves as the primary connection to the Fernan Saddle.

"The project has been around a while," said Dave O'Brien, spokesman for the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. "That road was built in the 1930s. The population has increased dramatically and the amount of use has gone up considerably."

FHWA is proposing to reconstruct or resurface 10.7

Meeting Set

A public meeting on the draft environmental impact statement for the Fernan Lake Road safety improvement project will be 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. June 24 at Fernan Elementary School, 520 N. 21st Street, Coeur d'Alene. Information: www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/fernan

miles of Fernan Lake Road.

Three remaining alternatives would reconstruct five miles of roadway along the north shore of Fernan Lake and the west side of lower Fernan Creek.

Surface and culvert improvements would be slated for the remainder of the project in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest along upper Fernan Creek.

The preferred alternative would use the existing right of way along most of the lake. The road would be widened about two feet in the first five miles,

starting less than a half-mile from Interstate 90.

In recent years, 15 accidents, including two fatalities, have been reported in a two-mile stretch of the road.

Reconstruction proposed along the lakeshore includes improved alignment and grading, curve widening, guardrails and bridge reconstruction across Lilypad Bay, said Sajid Aftab, project manager for the highway administration.

The preferred alternative would have a curved bridge to reduce encroachment in Lilypad Bay and adjoining wetlands, Aftab said.

Although some homes are close to the narrow, winding roadway, the draft EIS doesn't address encroachment on private property in the preferred alternative.

If an alternative is selected by the end of this year, final design would be conducted in 2005 and 2006 with a two-year construction period beginning in 2007.

FHWA Clarification:

DEIS document addresses the potential impacts to the private properties along the Route.