

North Umpqua Highway E.A. Underway

The North Umpqua Highway project is located entirely within the Umpqua National Forest in Douglas County, in southwestern Oregon. The project begins at MP 52.8 along State Highway 138 (SH 138) east of Roseburg and ends at MP 67.2 near Stump Lake. It is an east-west, two-lane rural state-owned arterial roadway, providing principle access to over half of the Umpqua National Forest. This is also known as Forest Highway 47 (FH 47).

The highway serves to transport timber, goods, services, passenger traffic and recreation traffic between I-5 and Highway 97. It provides access from western Oregon to Crater Lake National Park and to portions of the Winema Rogue River, and Deschutes National Forests. The highway also provides access to Diamond Lake, the largest recreation complex on national forest lands in Oregon. Much of the highway parallels the North Umpqua River, which is designated as a Federal Wild and Scenic River and also a State Scenic Waterway. The total project length is approximately 14.4 miles.

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is proposing to complete the preliminary design and environmental documentation.

Other agencies that will participate will be: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W), National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The proposed improvements consist of upgrading the existing North Umpqua Highway to a safe, two-lane roadway consistent with AASHTO and ODOT design and safety standards. The proposed work will generally be along the existing road, although minor horizontal and vertical alignment changes may be necessary to provide a more uniform driving experience and safe travel speeds. This roadway section is located between two improved, widened sections and proposed improvements should be consistent with the adjoining sections of highway.

The construction contract is scheduled for advertisement in FY 2008, subject to available funding.

Project Partners



Federal Highway Administration
 Western Federal Lands
 Highways Division



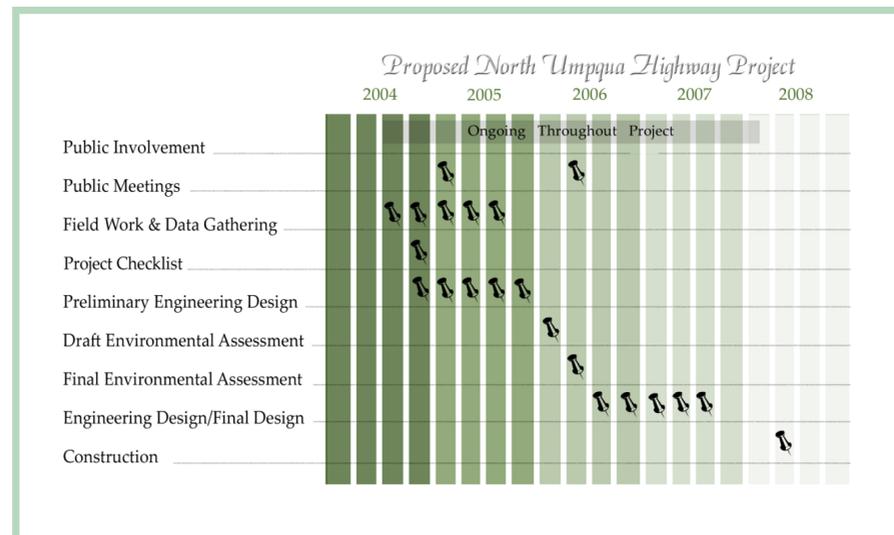
Oregon Department of
 Transportation



U.S. Forest Service

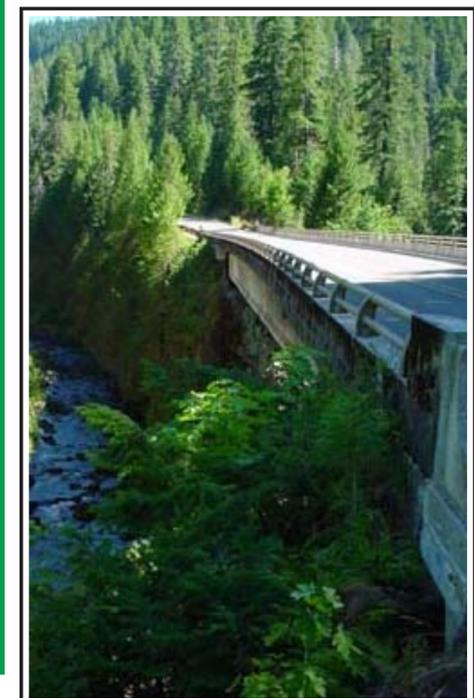
FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division
 610 E. Fifth Street
 Vancouver, WA 98661

Proposed Project Schedule



NEPA What is it?

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is a federal law that makes sure that government gives proper consideration to the environment before construction of a major structure such as a new road, airport or building. Public participation is an important part of the NEPA process. To comply with this law, the Federal Highway Administration will be preparing an environmental document to assess the impacts of improving the North Umpqua Highway. A first step in this process involves early coordination efforts with the public and other agencies. Through this process project officials listen to ideas and concerns of people and agencies affected by the project and identify a range of alternatives and issues needing further study. Early coordination ensures that people have a voice in the process when a proposed project affects them. There will be several opportunities along the way for public input and review of the North Umpqua Highway Environmental Assessment (EA). The entire process is projected to culminate in the summer of 2006.



Project Activities

In the Fall and Winter of 2004, you will see crews working on the roadway gathering:

- Geotechnical Information of the roadway
- Survey data for roadway design and stream analysis

Upcoming field work to be completed during the Spring and Summer of 2005:

- Biological resource studies for Federally listed Threatened or Endangered Species., USFS Sensitive Species and other wildlife species.
- Botanical Surveys for Federally listed Threatened or Endangered and USFS sensitive plant species, and to identify general habitat conditions.
- Analysis of stream crossings to assess fish passage concerns
- Cultural Resource Studies
- Various site visits with regulatory agencies.

These surveys will be conducted to provide information about natural resources that may be present within the project area. This information will be used as a baseline to compare potential effects of construction and operation of different project alternatives on existing natural resources.

How long will the EA Study take?

The draft Environmental Assessment is tentatively scheduled to be published for comment in January of 2006. Public meetings will be conducted and newsletters distributed to make the NEPA process interactive and meaningful. Through this process citizens are better able to communicate with government officials, and in doing so, have the opportunity to influence the outcome of government decisions. The final EA is tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2006.



Project Development

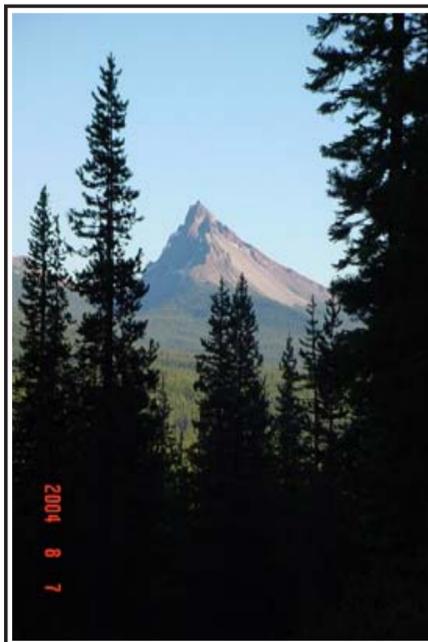
Planning Steps

1. Compile and review previous public comments and input from adjacent projects.
2. Research existing conditions
3. Project introduction and scoping
4. Data gathering and organize project checklist
5. **Public Meeting - scoping & alternatives**
6. Develop purpose and need statement
7. Identify possible improvement alternatives
8. Selected alternatives review
10. Conduct studies and alternatives evaluation
13. Prepare Draft Environmental Assessment
12. **Public Meeting - Alternative Evaluation**
16. Comment Period
17. Prepare final Environmental Assessment

We Are Here

How to get involved with this project

1. Fill out the enclosed comment form and return it to us at the address provided below
2. Send all general comments via e-mail to: northumpquahighway@fhwa.dot.gov
3. Get on the project mailing list by e-mailing: northumpquahighway@fhwa.dot.gov
4. Send comments to: Marlo Medellin, Project Manager
Western Federal Lands Highway Division
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
5. Attend the next public meeting



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is this project needed?

This project is needed because:

- Use of the road is expected to continue to increase
- Sections of the road are narrow for safe two-way traffic
- It is the major access to a large popular recreational area
- The roadway is deteriorating and will need major repairs in the near future

2. Who is conducting the study and how long will it take?

The project lead is the Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Project partners include the US Forest Service and the Oregon Department of Transportation. Affected communities, which will be actively involved, include the communities of Roseburg, Diamond Lake, Idleld Park, Steamboat & Glide along with Douglas County.

A team of private engineering and environmental firms has been assembled to complete the Study and resource work.

The Environmental Assessment is scheduled to be finished by Summer 2006.

3. Has WFLHD already decided what they are going to do?

No, The Western Federal Lands Highway Division has identified problems with the current road. The public involvement process for the Environmental Assessment will identify potential solutions (alternatives), study and analyze the proposed alternatives, and finally identify and recommend the "Preferred Alternative." The "No-build Alternative" will also be considered throughout the process. This alternative would keep the road in its current state.

4. How will the alternatives be identified?

Alternatives will be developed through a process of combining information gathered from the public on adjacent projects and technical studies. Potential impacts on the environment are very important considerations in the development and evaluation of alternatives. Studies will be conducted on environmental resources including: wetlands, wildlife, vegetation, cultural and historic properties, businesses, homes, and recreation areas.

5. What is a Project Checklist?

The Project Checklist describes why the project is needed, scope of the proposed improvement, alternatives being considered, an initial estimate of environmental resources, potential impacts, and related issues. The checklist provides those people whom the proposed project may affect and government agencies that have regulatory or administrative interest an opportunity to become informed and involved in the project development process. The information in the checklist helps determine what type of environmental document is required for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The checklist also contains the results of the location studies, engineering investigations, and environmental studies completed to date.

