

# CATTLE POINT ROAD REALIGNMENT PROJECT

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## FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



September 2012

San Juan County, Washington



Federal Highway Administration  
Western Federal Lands  
Highway Division



National Park Service  
San Juan Island  
National Historical Park

Prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969,  
40 CFR PARTS 1500-1508 AND 23 CFR 771



FHWA-WA PLD SAJH 10(1)

**CATTLE POINT ROAD REALIGNMENT PROJECT  
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c) (and where applicable, 49 U.S.C. 303)

by the  
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration  
Western Federal Lands Highway Division  
and  
U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service  
San Juan Island National Historical Park

Cooperating Agencies:

San Juan County, Washington, Washington State Department of Natural Resources

August 27, 2012  
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**ABSTRACT:** This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) includes changes to the Draft EIS (DEIS) made in response to agency and public comments received during the DEIS comment period. Changes are indicated with a vertical line in the document margin. As a result of DEIS comments, it was determined that a portion of the alternative D tunnel alignment lies within the protection zone of a community water well located near the upper ridge of Mt. Finlayson. Changes were made to chapters 3 and 4 of the FEIS to address this new information

The FEIS analyzes a no action alternative and three action alternatives for providing continued road access to residents and visitors traveling to the east end of the Cattle Point peninsula. The project is needed because approximately 500 feet of the Cattle Point Road, which is the only road access to the east end of the peninsula, is being threatened by coastal bluff erosion.

The FEIS documents the environmental analysis and mitigation measures for the project alternatives as well as a de minimis 4(f) determination for impacts to a publicly-owned park, historic site, and trail. Alternative B is identified as the preferred alternative. This alternative would realign approximately 4,950 feet of the Cattle Point Road to the north about 300 feet from its present location. It is estimated that the preferred alternative would protect the roadway from coastal bluff erosion for about 105+ years.



# Summary

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**Lead Agencies:** Federal Highway Administration - U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Park Service - U.S. Department of the Interior

**Cooperating Agencies:** San Juan County, Washington  
Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Approximately 500 feet of the Cattle Point Road (road) located in the San Juan Island National Historical Park (park) is threatened by coastal erosion. Coastal wind and wave action is eroding the base of the bluff that supports the road. At the current erosion rate, it is estimated that the bluff scarp would reach a point 2 feet horizontal-distance from the outside face of the guardrail post in about 14 years from present (i.e. 2026). It is expected that bluff erosion would continue progressively, eventually causing roadway damage and closure. Failure of the road would cut off vehicular access to the east end of the Cattle Point peninsula.

Cattle Point Road provides the only road access to the Cattle Point area, which includes lands within the park as well as state and privately-owned land on the southeast tip of the island. The road allows pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors traveling by vehicle to enjoy the features of the area. It is also the only road access to private property at the east end of the Cattle Point peninsula, which is home to approximately 270 residents. The road is classified as a rural major collector. The portion of road in the project area is owned and maintained by San Juan County.

Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the National Park Service (NPS) are considering realigning a section of the road away from the eroding bluff. The proposed project is located on San Juan Island in San Juan County, Washington.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to maintain vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian road access to the Cattle Point area through the San Juan Island National Historical Park. Maintaining this access includes continuing to provide a safe and pleasant roadway experience for residents and visitors without the threat of road failure from coastal erosion.

## **Need**

The proposed project is needed because the only road access to the Cattle Point area of San Juan Island is threatened by coastal bluff erosion. Coastal bluff erosion is predicted to progress within 2 feet of the outside face of the guardrail post at stake 26 (Baumann study area) in about 14 years from present. It is expected that bluff erosion would continue progressively, eventually causing roadway damage and closure. Failure of the road would cut off the only vehicular access to the east end of the Cattle Point peninsula.

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) documents the analysis of the potential environmental consequences of the proposed project. The following alternatives are evaluated in this document:

### **Alternative A: No Action**

The existing use, maintenance, management, and other activities associated with the road and area would continue without change. This alternative is used as a baseline of current conditions to compare to other alternatives.

### **Alternative B: Hybrid Mid-Slope Realignment-Preferred**

This alternative involves mid-slope realignment to the north of the existing road away from the bluff to increase the life expectancy of the road. This alternative has been identified as the preferred alternative.

### **Alternative C: Long Tunnel on Minor Realignment**

This alternative involves a short realignment to the north of the existing road almost entirely within a bored or conventionally-excavated tunnel to reduce the visual impacts of the realignment.

### **Alternative D: Mid-Slope Alignment with Short Tunnel**

This alternative involves mid-slope realignment to the north of the existing road and utilizes a short tunnel to lower the road profile through the top of the ridgeline.

A number of other alternatives were considered but eliminated from further analysis as described in section 2.5.2.

The FHWA and NPS are co-lead agencies for this project. The FHWA is involved because National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation and preliminary project planning is being funded through the Public Lands Highway Program of the Highway Trust Fund. The FHWA has stewardship and oversight responsibilities for funds disbursed from the Highway Trust Fund. In addition, the FHWA has expertise in developing transportation projects on federal lands. The park is involved with the project because the road is located within the park boundary and the NPS is the land management agency for the park. Cattle Point Road is the major route used by visitors to access the park.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and San Juan County (county) are cooperating agencies. The Cattle Point Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA), which is located on the eastern boundary of the park and is included in the project area, is managed by the DNR. The NRCA would be affected by any of the action alternatives. The portion of Cattle Point Road that is located in the project area is owned and maintained by the county and provides access for county residents and visitors.

All three action alternatives (B, C, and D) address the purpose and need of the project with differing impacts to the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the park, the NRCA, and the island environment. Based on the evaluation of impacts in this document, alternative B is the “preferred alternative” of the FHWA and NPS.

Alternative B conforms to the agency management goals and values as described in chapter 1. It minimizes the impacts to the natural and cultural resources in the park and the NRCA while continuing to allow access to park features. It also provides residents with a safe vehicular transportation route between the Cattle Point peninsula and the rest of the island without the threat of coastal erosion, while minimizing socioeconomic impacts and design complexity.

Alternative B has also been identified by the FHWA and NPS as the “environmentally preferred alternative.” This is defined as the alternative that best meets the intent of NEPA. Each

alternative, including the no action alternative, has positive and negative impacts to the human and natural environment. Alternative B provides the best balance of minimizing impacts to the biological and physical environment while meeting the responsibility that the project must fulfill as described in NEPA.

The DEIS was made available for public review for 60 days following the date of the notice of availability (NOA) in the Federal Register on September 7, 2010. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) includes changes in the DEIS made in response to agency and public comments received during the comment period. Changes made to the text of the DEIS are indicated with a vertical line in the margin of the FEIS.

The FEIS will be released to the public and announced through EPA's Notice of Filing in the Federal Register. Following a 30-day no action period, the co-lead agencies will decide to proceed with one of the following options:

1. Implement Alternative A, the No Action Alternative,
2. Implement the Preferred Alternative B, or
3. Implement another alternative with impacts that have been evaluated in this document.

The decision will be documented in a Record of Decision (ROD), which will be announced through a NOA in the Federal Register. The ROD will be issued no sooner than 30 days after publication of the FEIS in the Federal Register. The Federal Highway Administration and National Park Service will issue separate RODs.

If an action alternative is selected for implementation, additional decisions would also be made regarding project implementation. These decisions would involve finalizing road design details and issues, funding and timing of construction, and identifying further opportunities to mitigate, minimize, or avoid impacts to resources.

Selection of an action alternative may require:

- Compliance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 (chapter 5)
- DNR and county compliance with the State Environmental Policy Act (section 1.4.2)
- Conferencing with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (chapter 6)
- Consultation with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (chapter 6)
- A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (chapter 6)
- Coastal Zone Management Act consistency review from the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE) (chapters 3 and 6)
- Construction and permanent easement/rights of way (ROW) from the park and DNR for construction and road relocation (chapter 3)
- Further project development and design refinement (chapter 2)
- Further development of mitigation measures and details (chapter 4)
- Finalization of a revegetation and monitoring plan (chapter 2, 3, and 4)

- Addressing operations and maintenance costs (chapter 2)

These requirements were identified through information gathering during the scoping effort and in development of this document. This effort involved outreach to other agencies, organizations, and the public. In addition to the requirements listed above, comments obtained through the scoping effort were focused on the need to maintain access for Cattle Point residents and on protection of natural, scenic, and recreational resources, including grassland and forest habitats, wildlife, and view-sheds. Specific concerns were raised regarding the park and DNR trail system.

A number of key resources in the Cattle Point area and issues related to the project are described in section 1.5 of this document. Chapter 4 discusses the impacts related to the issues that have been identified in evaluation of the alternatives. The only major impact identified is the adverse impact to transportation presented by Alternative A, the no action alternative.

None of the alternatives is expected to affect waters of the U.S. Therefore, other than NPDES compliance requirements, no permits would be required under the Clean Water Act. The area is designated as a Class II attainment area under the Clean Air Act; however, no special provisions apply.

This FEIS has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, as amended), including the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations found in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1500 -1508. This FEIS complies with the implementing procedures for NEPA for the FHWA (Environmental Impact and Related Procedures 23 CFR 771) and the NPS (Environmental Impact Analysis and Decision Making Director's Order #12, revised October 5, 2011). It also addresses County and DNR issues and needs as identified through their involvement as cooperating agencies.

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