



Update: Right-of-Way, Appraisals and Acquisitions

The right-of-way process for the US-93 Evaro to Polson project is moving steadily forward throughout all eight design projects. The most concentrated efforts are in the Jocko Hollow area north of Arlee and the areas between Ronan and Polson. The majority of the appraisal work has been completed for all projects, and concerted efforts are being made to assure the design considerations are being adequately addressed in the acquisitions. Limited access control is an integral part of the project and is being addressed to increase safety throughout the corridor and for each parcel.

It is anticipated the acquisition process for the eight design projects will be completed by the end of 2004. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Maureen Walsh or Dee Oakland at (406) 541-7877.

Project Team Contacts

Montana Department of Transportation

Joel Marshik
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-6002, (888) 231-5819

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Joe Hovenkotter
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
(406) 675-2700

Federal Highway Administration

Craig Genzlinger
2880 Skyway Drive
Helena, MT 59602
(406) 449-5303

Consulting Engineers, Skillings-Connolly

Gerald Smith
2685 Palmer St, Suite C
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 541-7877, (800) 454-7545

Public Involvement, Skillings-Connolly

Meg O'Leary
2685 Palmer St, Suite C
Missoula, MT 59808
(800) 454-7545, x174
moleary@skillings.com

TTY access

Dial (800) 335-7592, then (888) 231-5819

US-93

Evaro to Polson Corridor

www.skillings.com/US93
www.skillings.com/US93SEIS

Schedule in Brief

- **November 2004** Construction begins on roadway section extending from Arlee to White Coyote Road
- **Late 2004** Draft SEIS completed for Ninepipe/Ronan
- **Early 2005** Public review and comment period, open house and public hearing on Draft SEIS for Ninepipe/Ronan
- **Spring 2005** Construction begins on roadway section extending from Minesinger Road to MT-35
- **Summer 2005** Final SEIS completed and Record of Decision published for Ninepipe/Ronan

Designs Nearly Complete

The design and implementation of eight roadway projects along US-93 from Evaro to Polson are well underway. The lengthy right-of-way acquisition process is anticipated to be complete later this year. For details, please see "Update: Right-of-Way, Appraisals, and Acquisitions" on the back panel of this newsletter. Construction will begin once design and right-of-way negotiations are completed.

Evaluation and analysis for the ninth project—the Ninepipe/Ronan section—continues to move ahead through a second round of environmental review.

Lay of the Land

The project corridor extends over 56 miles from the community of Evaro through Polson. All but one-half mile of the corridor is located within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The project includes eight separate components nearing the construction phase, the Ninepipe/Ronan section currently under study, and the Polson section that remains to be evaluated.

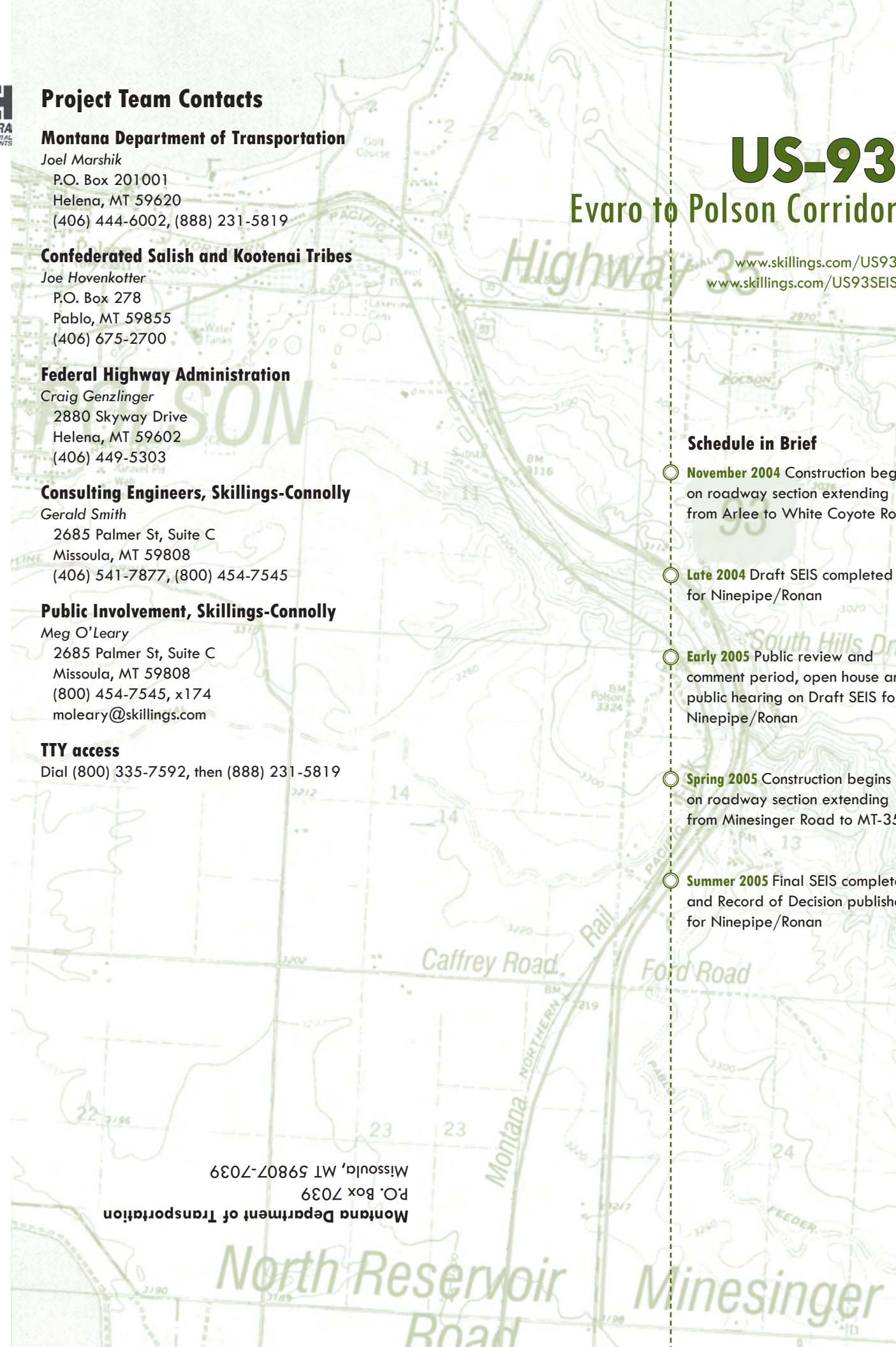
Environmental Review Continues for Ninepipe/Ronan

Due to additional environmental, cultural issues and social concerns not evaluated in the original 1996 EIS, a Draft Supplemental EIS (SEIS) is being prepared to evaluate development of the 11.2 mile Ninepipe/Ronan section of US-93, extending from the Red Horn Road/Dublin Gulch Road intersection to the Spring Creek/Baptiste Road intersection.

The project team is at work finalizing the Draft SEIS, anticipated for release in late 2004. The document identifies the alternatives under consideration, recommends a preferred alternative and reflects public comment carefully considered and addressed by the project team during the course of the environmental review process.

An open house and public hearing held in conjunction with the release of the Draft SEIS in early 2005 will provide another opportunity for community involvement. We encourage your participation. Watch your mailbox for details on meeting date, time and location.

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Olympia, WA
PERMIT NO. 78



Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 7039
Missoula, MT 59807-7039

Alternatives Considered in SEIS for Ninepipe/Ronan

Ronan Alternatives

1. 4-lane with a raised landscaped median on existing alignment
2. 4-lane with a two-way left turn lane on existing alignment
3. Couplet with two lanes each direction largely within existing right-of-way on existing US-93 and First Avenue SW
4. Couplet with two lanes each direction with neighborhood buffers (requires additional right-of-way for buffers) on existing US-93 and First Avenue SW
5. 2-lane with two-way left turn lane on existing alignment and improve existing intersections and parallel streets

Ronan Preliminary Preferred Alternative

The preliminary preferred alignment is Alternative #4. The southbound lane of First Avenue SW will include both a planting area and buffer. Most of the right-of-way will be purchased from the east side of the street to provide the maximum buffer to neighborhoods located to the west.

Rural Section Preliminary Preferred Alternative

The project team and local partners determined that it would be necessary to combine several components from a list of nine alternatives to create the Preliminary Preferred Alternative for the rural section of the Ninepipe/Ronan project. They include:

- 2-lane undivided roadway throughout most of the rural section
- Northbound passing lane on Post Creek Hill
- Southbound passing lane south of Eagle Pass Trail
- 4-lane divided roadway approaching Ronan

8 Design Projects in Brief

Evaro To McClure Road

- Extension of the 4-lane undivided roadway about 1.4 miles through Evaro
- 3-lane roadway from Evaro to McClure Road, except for approximately one mile of heavily forested area in the vicinity of Joe's Smoke Ring where a 2-lane roadway will be constructed
- 3-lane roadway features include alternating passing lanes for north- and southbound traffic; the relocation of approximately one mile of MRL Railroad line in Evaro; and 10 wildlife crossing structures including a new bridge over the MRL Railroad near Joe's Smoke Ring and one wildlife overcrossing in the forested area

McClure Road to north end of Arlee

- Construction of a primarily 3-lane roadway, extending approximately 1.3 miles south of Arlee
- 3-lane roadway consists of alternating passing lanes for north- and southbound traffic
- Construction of a divided 4-lane roadway from McClure Road to Arlee and a couplet within Arlee
- Streetscape improvements to increase bicycle and pedestrian use within the town of Arlee

North end of Arlee to White Coyote Road

- Construction of a primarily 3-lane roadway with alternating passing lanes for north- and southbound traffic
- Construction of a new bridge across Jocko River
- Significant wetland and riparian area work within the vicinity of the Jocko River

White Coyote Road to south end of Ravalli

- Construction of a primarily 3-lane roadway, except for a 2.7 mile section through Ravalli Canyon which will be a 2-lane roadway
- 3-lane roadway consists of alternating passing lanes for north- and southbound traffic
- 10 wildlife crossing structures including new bridges across Spring Creek and Jocko Side Channel

South end of Ravalli to Medicine Tree

- Construction of a primarily 3-lane roadway with alternating passing lanes for north- and southbound traffic
- Construction of an interchange near National Bison Range and Scenic Overlook on Ravalli Hill

- Frontage road and streetscape improvements to increase bicycle and pedestrian use within the town of Ravalli
- 4 wildlife crossing structures

Medicine Tree to Red Horn Road

- Construction of a primarily 3-lane roadway with alternating passing lanes for north- and southbound traffic
- Construction of a bridge over Mission Creek
- 10 wildlife crossing structures
- Significant wetland and riparian area work

Spring Creek Road to Minesinger Road

- Construction of a divided 4-lane roadway
- Separated bicycle-pedestrian path for the entire length of this roadway section
- Streetscape improvements to increase bicycle and pedestrian use within the town Pablo
- Significant wetland and riparian work in the vicinity of Mud Creek
- 5 wildlife crossing structures

Minesinger Road to MT-35

- Construction of a divided 4-lane roadway
- One wildlife crossing
- Overlook of Flathead Lake from the top of Polson Hill
- Improvements at intersection of MT-35 and US-93, including landscaping, sidewalks, additional turning lanes and stop lights
- Separated bicycle-pedestrian path the entire length of this roadway section (a few miles of the northern section will continue on a separate alignment along the old MRL Railroad grade down Polson Hill)

Anticipated Construction Phasing

The Montana Department of Transportation has agreed on a tentative construction schedule, but the priority may change depending on cost estimates and availability of funding. The current priority follows:

- North end Arlee to White Coyote Road
- Minesinger Road to MT-35
- Spring Creek Road to Minesinger Road
- Evaro to McClure Road
- Medicine Tree to Red Horn Road
- McClure Road to north end of Arlee
- White Coyote Road to south end of Ravalli
- South end of Ravalli to Medicine Tree

