



September 13, 2012

Jeff Patten
Operations Engineer
Federal Highway Administration
585 Shepard Way
Helena, MT 59601-9785

Subject: Request for Validation of Finding of No Significant Impact
HSIP-STPHS 50-1(14)8
TURN LANES-GALLATIN CANYON
Control Number: 2544002

Dear Jeff Patten,

Environmental Services has reviewed the above proposed project's impacts and has determined that this proposed project still qualifies as a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) under the provisions of 23 CFR 771.129(c). The original FONSI was signed September 29, 2006. This proposed action also continues to qualify as an environmental assessment/FONSI under the provisions of ARM 18.2.239 (Sections 75-1-103 and 75-1-201, MCA).

The EA was approved in 2005, and the FONSI approved in 2006 for SLOPE FLAT.-WID-GALLATIN CANYON, STPHS-NH 50-1(14)8. That original project, as proposed in the EA/FONSI, was subsequently split into three separate projects:

- 1) Intersection Improvements – US 191-MT 64, STPHS-NH 50-1(14)50, CN 2544003
 - Big Sky Spur Road, RP 46±, widening and traffic signal
 - Completed in December 2007

- 2) Slope Flattening/Widening – Gallatin Canyon, STPHS 50-1(14)8, CN A544/2544001
 - Big Sky Area (RP 45-48±) Two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) and right turn lanes
 - West Fork Gallatin at the Big Sky Area (RP 46±) Bridge replacement with TWLTL and right turn lane
 - Jack Smith Bridge Area (RP 49.7±) Slope Flattening
 - Swan Creek Campground Area (RP 57±) Installation of left-turn lane and bridge replacement, retaining wall along Gallatin River
 - Spanish Creek Area (RP 68±) Improvements to super-elevation on curve
 - Various locations of guardrail improvements along the Gallatin River (RP 32 to RP 70)
 - Completed in November 2010

3) Turn Lanes – Gallatin Canyon, HSIP-STPHS 50-1(14)8, CN 2544002

The scope of work for the subject project includes the installation of two-way left-turn lanes at the following locations:

- Red Cliff Campground, RP 41.5
- Karst Ranch Area, RP 55.3
- Moose Creek Area, RP 56.2
- Greek Creek Area, RP 58.3
- Castle Rock Inn, RP 64.9 to 66.0

Greek Creek culvert replacement

As a result of flooding in 2011 at this culvert crossing, MDT Maintenance requested a replacement culvert to address future flood potential and mitigate ongoing maintenance issues at this crossing. The culvert will be included in the Turn Lanes Gallatin Canyon project. This culvert replacement was included in a recently submitted Clean Water Act 404-permit application and authorization is pending. MDT received authorization of the SPA 124 notification on July 30, 2012.

Moose Creek parking area

The US Forest Service asked MDT to consider installing a left turn lane for south bound traffic at the Moose Creek approach. After analyzing their request, it was decided that a left turn lane will not be added for southbound traffic at the Moose Creek Forest Service Mountain Approach. MDT explained to the USFS that it involved a lot more than just restriping the roadway. Construction of a turn lane here would also require a retaining wall to avoid filling into the river.

Supplemental biological assessment

A supplemental biological assessment was submitted to the USFWS in May 2012 to update the informal consultation of 2004 for the parent project. The USFWS reviewed the supplemental biological assessment and concurred with the determinations of effect on June 5, 2012.

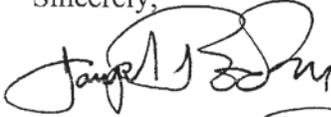
We have reviewed the biological, cultural, and hazardous waste reports and found this action will neither individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts.

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If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Barry Brosten at (406)-444-0804. He will be pleased to assist you.

Sincerely,



Tom Martin, P.E. 
Environmental Services Bureau Chief

e-copy:	Jeff Ebert	Butte District Administrator
	Paul Ferry	Highways Engineer
	Tom Martin	Environmental Services Bureau Chief
	Heidy Bruner	Environmental Services Bureau
	Suzy Price	Contract Plans Bureau Chief
	Tim Tilton	Contract Plans
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	Montana Legislative Branch	Environmental Quality Council (EQC)