U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Western Federal Lands Highway Division
Vancouver, Washington

Juniper Dunes Access Road
WA Franklin 2013(1)

Finding of No Significant Impact

April 2015

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Juniper Dunes Access Road
Franklin County, WA
Decision Document and Finding of No Significant Impact

WA Franklin 2013(1)

Submitted
Pursuant to Public Law 91-190
National Environmental Policy Act
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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands Highway Division

Cooperating Agencies:
U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management
Franklin County

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Date Approved

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BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Franklin County (collectively referred to as "Project Partners"), is planning to construct a public access road to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness and off-highway vehicle areas (Juniper Dunes).

Juniper Dunes is located approximately 10 miles northeast of Pasco, Washington, in Franklin County. Juniper Dunes is used primarily for off-highway vehicles (OHVs), but is also used for picnicking and camping, and some hiking, horseback riding, and hunting. Currently, the 19,600 acres of publically-owned land in Juniper Dunes is accessed by Peterson Road, which intersects with Pasco-Kahlotus Road. Portions of Peterson Road are private, with no access easement.

Juniper Dunes consists of three adjoining areas comprising a total of approximately 19,600 acres. Each area has different use regulations:

- Juniper Dunes Wilderness - The 7,100-acre wilderness area, designated in 1984, is fenced. Motorized and mechanized use (including bicycles and game carts) is strictly prohibited within the wilderness area.
- OHV "Open" Area - A 3,920-acre OHV area is designated as "Open" to OHV use. Cross-country travel is permissible throughout the "Open" area.
- ACEC - Lastly, within the 8,620-acre Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), currently motorized travel is limited to existing routes – to protect natural resources no off-route travel is allowed.

The purpose of this project is to provide a legal public access road to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area and adjacent OHV open area, starting at a public road and ending at a staging area in the Juniper Dunes OHV open area. The needs associated with this project are:

- Users currently access Juniper Dunes area by a private road that does not have an access easement.
- The owners of the road have closed Peterson Road in the past, cutting off access to the public.
- Peterson Road is not constructed or maintained by the County, so it does not meet County standards for safety and maintenance.
- There has been damage to private property along Peterson Road from users of the road.
- The most accessible parking area for the OHV area is outside of the OHV area and is near to private property.
- The poor road conditions make it difficult for law enforcement and emergency medical services to access the area.

DECISION

FHWA is the lead agency for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance for this project. After reviewing the *Juniper Dunes Access Road Environmental Assessment* (FHWA, February 2015) (EA), the specialists' reports, applicable Federal Highway Administration, BLM and Franklin County input, and tribal and public comments for the proposed project, the Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the FHWA has selected Alternative 2 in the EA as the best alternative to meet the purpose and need for the project. Construction of Alternative 2 will include implementation of the management requirements and mitigation measures listed in Appendix A. Alternative 2 will be referred to as the Selected Alternative in this document.

FHWA has determined that the Selected Alternative for the construction of a new access road to Juniper Dunes will have no significant impact on the human environment. This conclusion is based on the analysis contained in the EA, and public comments received, as summarized in this document.

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

The Selected Alternative will build a new road from Pasco-Kahlotus Road to the designated endpoint in the OHV area (for a map, see Figure 1-1 in EA). It will start at Pasco-Kahlotus Road about 1 mile east of the intersection with Peterson Road. The Selected Alternative travels generally north 4.2 miles to the designated endpoint. The endpoint is at the intersection of existing OHV routes where there is a flat, open area that would allow space for a parking area to be added in the future by BLM, if necessary. The road will have two 12-foot travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders (28 feet wide total). The first mile will be asphalt over rock base and the remainder chip seal. Signage will be provided at the intersection of Peterson Road and Pasco-Kahlotus Road that will indicate that there is no Juniper Dunes access and will direct users one mile east to the new road.

The Selected Alternative includes fencing along the right-of-way (ROW) to reduce the incidence of Juniper Dunes users trespassing on private property, and Project Partners will coordinate with property owners on fence locations to continue to allow landowners access to their property.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The Selected Alternative best addresses the project's purpose and need, is less expensive than the other build alternatives analyzed in the EA, and has the fewest risks to increased cost and schedule.

FHWA, in collaboration with the BLM and Franklin County, developed this alternative with consideration of issues raised through the scoping process and comment period from area residents, federal, state, local agencies and Indian Tribes. This decision includes consideration of the EA analysis and evaluation, including best scientific information, and the extent that each of the alternatives met the purpose and need for action

The Selected Alternative meets the purpose of the project, because it will provide a legal public access road to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area and adjacent off-highway vehicle (OHV) open area.

The Selected Alternative meets all the needs in the purpose and need statement, as described below:

- *Users currently access the Wilderness and OHV areas by a private road (Peterson Road) that does not have an access easement.* With the Selected Alternative, Franklin County would acquire property to own the right of way (ROW) on a new alignment, one mile east of Peterson Road.
- *The owners of the road have closed Peterson Road in the past, cutting off access to the Wilderness and OHV area to the public.* The Selected Alternative will be on a new publicly owned alignment separate from Peterson Road, ensuring continuous public access to Juniper Dunes.
- *Peterson Road is not constructed or maintained by the County, so it does not meet County standards for safety and maintenance.* The Selected Alternative will be a public road, and therefore will be designed and built to County standards and will be maintained by the County.
- *There has been damage to private property along Peterson Road from users of the road.* The Selected Alternative will move access to Juniper Dunes to a new alignment, reducing the usage of Peterson Road and the likelihood of damage to private property along Peterson Road. The Selected Alternative will include fences where appropriate on the boundary of the new ROW, to reduce potential damage to private property along the new road.
- *The most accessible parking area for the OHV area is outside of the OHV area and is near to private property. The location of the parking area outside of the OHV area leads to use of OHV in unauthorized areas. The proximity of the parking area to private land has caused impacts to private property.* The endpoint of the Selected Alternative is located in the OHV area, over 0.2 miles from private property. The existing parking area near private property is at the north end of Peterson Road. It will be less accessible because users will use the Selected Alternative and not Peterson Road to access Juniper Dunes.
- *The poor road conditions make it difficult for law enforcement and emergency medical services to access the area.* The Selected Alternative will be a public road and will be built and maintained to County standards, therefore improving the road for access by law enforcement and emergency medical services.

In addition to best meeting the Purpose and Need, the Selected Alternative also results in the least acreage of property (40.76 acres) converted to ROW of the build alternatives. The Selected Alternative will acquire the greatest amount of private land at 29.12 acres, however, over 9 acres of that private land is vacant. While all build alternatives have a relatively small impact on farmland in the context of Franklin County as a whole, the Selected Alternative will have the least impact to farmland that is currently in use of any of the build alternatives.

At approximately 4.2 miles, the Selected Alternative is the shortest of the build alternatives and a preliminary cost calculation estimates that it would be the least expensive of the build alternatives.

The Selected Alternative will avoid the irrigation pipe that is buried near Peterson Road.

The Selected Alternative will not impact previously recorded cultural resources or recreation uses in Smith Canyon.

The Board of Franklin County Commissioners selected the Selected Alternative as their preferred alternative on April 8, 2015, in resolution 2015-147 (see Appendix B).

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Four other alternatives, besides the Selected Alternative were analyzed in the EA:

No Build Alternative

All alternatives are compared to the No Build Alternative, which includes already planned and programmed improvements, but no new capital investments. The Juniper Dunes No Build Alternative did not include improvements to the existing access on Peterson Road, nor would a new road be built to access Juniper Dunes. Franklin County would continue the current practice of not maintaining Peterson Road. There would be no future work to Peterson Road by Franklin County, unless the status of its ownership changed.

FHWA did not select the No Build Alternative because it would not create a legal public access road to Juniper Dunes and therefore would not address the purpose and need of the project. All of the issues from the purpose and need would likely continue to be unresolved, unless private parties improve the road or the status of ownership changes.

Alternative 1A

Alternative 1A was not selected as the preferred alternative. Alternative 1A would have built a public road from the intersection of Peterson Road and Pasco-Kahlotus Road to the designated project endpoint in the OHV area. This alternative is the same as the existing route. It would have traveled north for about 4.2 miles, then traveled east for about 1 mile on an existing alignment of an OHV path. It would have been about 5.2 miles long.

Alternative 1A does not meet the purpose and need of the project as well as the Selected Alternative. FHWA did not select Alternative 1A for the reasons listed below.

This alternative included design deficiencies that would not be improved with construction of the Alternative as described in the EA. Currently, Peterson Road intersects Pasco-Kahlotus Road at an acute angle. To improve this design deficiency and create a perpendicular intersection, Peterson Road would need to be realigned to the east on its northern approach, which would require additional private property acquisition. Realigning the northern approach would cause it to be off-set from the southern approach at an unsafe distance. The unsafe intersection off-set could be remedied by moving the southern approach of Peterson Road to the west, which would require even more property acquisition than was described in the EA.

As stated in the needs of the Purpose and Need the most accessible parking area for the OHV area is outside of the OHV area near private property. Because the parking area is outside of the OHV area it leads to OHV use in unauthorized areas. The proximity of the parking area to private land has caused impacts to private property. Alternative 1A does not address this need because with this route users would continue to pass by this parking area and may continue to use it, leading to unauthorized OHV use and impacts to private property.

Alternative 1A would have caused the greatest acreage of property to be converted to ROW (51.41 acres) compared to other alternatives. The Selected Alternative results in 40.76 acres of ROW conversion.

Alternative 1A would have been built over or near the irrigation pipe that is buried near Peterson Road. Due to its age and location underground near where the road would be built, it is likely that construction would damage the pipe or require relocation. A preliminary cost of replacing or moving the pipe was estimated in the EA at about $210 per linear foot. Replacing or moving a ½ mile of pipe was estimated to cost over $500,000. Replacing or moving 1 mile of pipe was estimated to cost over $1 million.

At approximately 5.2 miles, Alternative 1A is longer than the Selected Alternative, and a preliminary cost calculation estimates that it would be more expensive than the Selected Alternative. The length of this alternative coupled with this potential additional cost of replacing or moving the irrigation pipe make this alternative more expensive than the Selected Alternative.

Alternative 1B

Alternative 1B would have built a road from the intersection of Peterson Road and Pasco-Kahlotus Road to the designated project endpoint in the OHV area. This alternative would have traveled north for approximately 3.2 miles, then traveled east along the north side of the Smith Canyon section for about 1 mile, then traveled north for about 1.2 miles along the section line one mile east of Peterson Road. It would have been about 5.4 miles long.

Alternative 1B does not meet the purpose and need of the project as well as the Selected Alternative. Therefore, FHWA did not select Alternative 1B for the reasons listed below.

This alternative included design deficiencies that would not be improved with construction of the Alternative as described in the EA. Currently, Peterson Road intersects Pasco-Kahlotus Road at an acute angle. To improve this design deficiency and create a perpendicular intersection, Peterson Road would need to be realigned to the east on its northern approach, which would require additional private property acquisition. Realigning the northern approach would cause it to be off-set from the southern approach at an unsafe distance. The unsafe intersection off-set could be remedied by moving the southern approach of Peterson Road to the west, which would require even more property acquisition than was described in the EA.

Alternative 1B would have more acreage of property (48.02 acres) converted to ROW than the Selected Alternative (40.76 acres).

While still a relatively small impact, Alternative 1B would have had the highest impact to prime or unique farmland of any of the build alternatives.

Alternative 1B would have been built over or near the irrigation pipe that is buried near Peterson Road. Due to its age and location underground near where the road would be built, it is likely that construction would damage the pipe or require relocation. A preliminary cost of replacing or moving the pipe was estimated in the EA at about $210 per linear foot. Replacing or moving a ½ mile of pipe was estimated to cost over $500,000. Replacing or moving 1 mile of pipe was estimated to cost over $1 million.

At approximately 5.4 miles, Alternative 1B is longer than the Selected Alternative, and a preliminary cost calculation estimates that it would be more expensive than the Selected

Alternative. The length of this alternative coupled with this potential additional cost of replacing or moving the irrigation pipe make this alternative more expensive than the Selected Alternative.

Alternative 1C

Alternative 1C would have built a road from the intersection of Peterson Road and Pasco-Kahlotus Road to the designated project endpoint in the OHV area. This alternative would have traveled north for approximately 2.5 miles, then travel for about 1 mile through Smith Canyon, along an alignment where the existing OHV path is, then traveled north for about 1.7 miles along the section line one mile east of Peterson Road. It would have been about 5.2 miles long.

Alternative 1C does not meet the purpose and need of the project as well as the Selected Alternative. FHWA did not select Alternative 1C for the reasons listed below.

This alternative included design deficiencies that would not be improved with construction of the Alternative as described in the EA. Currently, Peterson Road intersects Pasco-Kahlotus Road at an acute angle. To improve this design deficiency and create a perpendicular intersection, Peterson Road would need to be realigned to the east on its northern approach, which would require additional private property acquisition. Realigning the northern approach would cause it to be off-set from the southern approach at an unsafe distance. The unsafe intersection off-set could be remedied by moving the southern approach of Peterson Road to the west, which would require even more property acquisition than was described in the EA.

Alternative 1C would have more acreage of property (47.08 acres) converted to ROW than the Selected Alternative (40.76 acres).

Alternative 1C would have been built over or near the irrigation pipe that is buried near Peterson Road. Due to its age and location underground near where the road would be built, it is likely that construction would damage the pipe or require relocation. A preliminary cost of replacing or moving the pipe was estimated in the EA at about $210 per linear foot. Replacing or moving a ½ mile of pipe was estimated to cost over $500,000. Replacing or moving 1 mile of pipe was estimated to cost over $1 million.

At approximately 5.2 miles, Alternative 1C is longer than the Selected Alternative, and a preliminary cost calculation estimates that it would be more expensive than the Selected Alternative. The length of this alternative coupled with this potential additional cost of replacing or moving the irrigation pipe make this alternative more expensive than the Selected Alternative.

Alternative 1C would have impacted one previously recorded cultural resource, a site potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

A number of comments from the public meetings stated that Smith Canyon is used by families and younger or less experienced riders. Alternative 1C would have traveled approximately east-west through the bottom of Smith Canyon, bisecting the canyon. Many OHV users ride down one side of the canyon and up the other side, crossing the proposed alignment. The proposed new road through the canyon would need to be fenced in order to keep OHV users from crossing the road while riding and to minimize potential OHV and road vehicle conflicts. Fencing the road would have limited the recreation opportunities for OHV use in Smith Canyon.

In addition to the selected alternative and the four alternatives considered in detail, numerous other alternatives were considered but not analyzed further (See Section 3.8 of the EA)

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

FHWA, BLM and Franklin County held a public open house at the Trade, Recreation, Agricultural, and Convention Center (TRAC center) in Pasco, Washington on July 31, 2014. FHWA advertised the public open house by distributing information through various means:

- Direct mailing. Project Partners assembled a mailing list of property owners and residents within 2.5 miles of the project, public agencies with potential interest in the project, and Juniper Dunes user groups for whom Franklin County had contact information.
- Public notices in the local *Mid-Columbia* section of the Tri-City Herald, the main newspaper for the Tri-Cities. The notices ran on Sunday, July 27, and Wednesday, July 30, 2014.
- The FHWA and Franklin County websites.
- The TRAC center website and reader board. The reader board is outside the TRAC center and is visible from Interstate 182, as well as local roads.
- Fliers to businesses that cater to OHV users in the area. Franklin County contacted businesses that cater to OHV users and sent fliers for them to post advertising the meeting.

FHWA organized the meeting as an open house format with a slideshow presentation. Franklin County gave a PowerPoint presentation which lasted about 30 minutes, and opened the floor up for questions and comments afterward. The presentation included a description of:

- The Juniper Dunes Area
- History of the area, including the history of access to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness and OHV areas.
- The purpose and scope of the Juniper Dunes Access Project
- Potential routes or alternatives
- The project timeline and the current stage.

A copy of the presentation and informational handout are included in the EA appendices.

A total of 41 comment cards were received during or after the meeting. The general themes of the comments/questions include:

- Support or opposition to the project or one or more of the proposed routes.
- Concern that the project would increase impacts to surrounding land.
- Comment on the timing and schedule of the project and/or access to Juniper Dunes.
- Suggestions for improvements to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness and OHV areas outside of the scope of this project or other comments outside of the scope of this project.
- Comments and information about Smith Canyon (an area of BLM-managed land outside of the Juniper Dunes Wilderness and OHV areas, that is adjacent to all alternatives).

FHWA received four comment cards that suggested alternate routes not presented at the public meeting: a route entirely using BLM land, a route from Elm Road to the north of Juniper Dunes, a route from the east off Pasco-Kahlotus Road, and a suggestion to extend the road further than

the designated endpoint. All of these suggested routes were considered but dismissed from further consideration as described in the Alternatives Considered but Dismissed section (Section 3.8) of the EA.

On February 17, 2015, FHWA, BLM and Franklin County held an open house at the TRAC Center in Pasco during the public comment period of the EA. Franklin County and FHWA gave a brief presentation, and provided technical experts for questions. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a public comment card if they had a comment, and FHWA received 18 comments from the meeting. Most of the comments supported the project and/or a specific alternative. Some expressed concern about impacts to private property near the proposed routes.

FHWA received over 40 comments prior to the EA comment period (See EA Appendix D for a copy of the comments), and 18 comments during the February-March EA comment period (see Appendix D of this document for a copy of the comments).

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

As part of its government-to-government responsibility to consult with Native American Tribes, FHWA has provided the opportunity for involvement in the NEPA process to tribes with interest in the area.

On June 20, 2014, FHWA mailed letters to the following tribes requesting government-to-government consultation:

- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Umatilla Tribe)
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (Colville Tribe)
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation)

The Colville Tribe responded on July 9, 2014, with comments on how to define the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The Umatilla Tribe and Yakama Nation did not reply.

On November 13, 2014, FHWA mailed a letter to the Washington State Historic Preservation Office/Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (SHPO) to initiate Section 106 consultation. This letter described how FHWA defined the APE and requested concurrence with a “No Historic Properties Affected” effect recommendation for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106). Similar letters were sent to the tribes on November 14, 2014 requesting tribes to notify FHWA of properties of cultural or religious significance they believe are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Below is a summary of other correspondence with tribes.

- On December 9, 2014, FHWA received a response letter from the Colville Tribe with concerns about the cultural resources report, but also concurring with the No Historic Properties Affected recommendation.
- On December 11, 2014, FHWA received a response letter from the SHPO concurring with FHWA’s No Historic Properties Affected recommendation.
- On December 18, 2014, FHWA emailed the Umatilla Tribe and Yakama Nation asking if they had any concerns with the project.

- On December 19, 2014 the Umatilla Tribe replied in an email that they defer to the other interested tribes regarding this project.
- On January 8, 2015, the Yakama Nation replied in an email stating that the Yakama Nation has no comments regarding the project and does not require further consultation.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ADDRESSED

The EA analyzed the effects of the proposed action on numerous resources including: transportation and circulation; land use; vegetation; water resources; wetlands; floodplains; fish and wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species and sensitive species; archaeological and historical resources; recreation; section 4(f); soils and geology; noise; visual quality; hazardous material; air quality; prime farmland; socioeconomics; environmental justice; and cumulative impacts for all these topics. FHWA's findings with respect to the environmental effects of the Selected Alternative on those resources measurably affected or with residual minor issues are discussed below. These findings are based on the evidence and conclusions set forth in the EA.

Transportation and Circulation

The Selected Alternative will provide legal public access to Juniper Dunes. Traffic to Juniper Dunes is expected to increase after the Selected Alternative is constructed. This growth is due to projected annual growth of usage, but also due to the removal of questions over the legality of access to Juniper Dunes. Traffic on Peterson Road is expected to decrease, because the majority of users of Juniper Dunes would use the Selected Alternative to access Juniper Dunes and there will be signs to deter users from this road. The Selected Alternative will have a perpendicular intersection with Pasco-Kahlotus Road and provide the most direct access to the project endpoint in the OHV Area. The project will remedy the existing sight distance issues at the location of the proposed intersection of the Selected Alternative alignment and Pasco-Kahlotus Road.

Due to funding constraints, the first mile of the road will be paved and the remainder will be gravel with chip seal.

Signage will be placed at the intersection of Pasco-Kahlotus Road and Peterson Road stating that it provides no Juniper Dunes access and directing users to the proposed route. Despite the signs, some users of Juniper Dunes might still use Peterson Road to access Juniper Dunes unless property owners block off access. Over time, it is likely that most Juniper Dunes users would travel on the Selected Alternative rather than Peterson Road, because it will be the officially designated route and the first mile will be paved. The Selected Alternative will mostly separate users of Juniper Dunes from people accessing the residences, farms, and other uses off of Peterson Road.

During construction, there will be construction delays that will temporarily affect Pasco-Kahlotus Road. Construction delays will be minimized to the extent possible.

The Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to transportation and circulation because impacts will be localized to a small project area and the impacted roads have a low volume of users.

Land Use

The Selected Alternative will be used specifically to access the Juniper Dunes area for recreation. It would provide road access to “landlocked” parcels that currently do not have public access, thus allowing for residential or agricultural development of the parcels. This development would be limited by the existing zoning and the fact that many parcels in the area are owned by BLM. Approximately 40 acres of land in the proposed ROW will be directly converted to transportation use.

Combined with the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, the Selected Alternative could result in a slightly higher potential for changes to the rate of land development in and near the project area than the No Build Alternative because they would provide access to some previously “landlocked” parcels, which could lead to residential or agricultural development. Because the conversion of land to ROW is minimal compared to the amount of agricultural land in the project area, and the development of “landlocked” parcels is limited by zoning, the Selected Alternative would not result in a significant impact to land use.

Property Acquisitions

The Selected Alternative will require the acquisition of private property to convert to ROW and will require federal land to be converted to ROW. This project would have no residential or commercial displacements.

The Selected Alternative will impact the perimeter of some irrigation circles because it travels adjacent to private property on the section line. These impacts result in a decrease of farmable land, unless mitigated. The Selected Alternative will require 11.64 acres of easements on federal property and will require acquisition of 29.12 acres of private land. Of the private land acquisition, 9.71 acres of the impact will be on vacant land.

Construction easements may be required for the temporary staging of materials and equipment during construction. Property used would be returned to the property owner after construction or when it is no longer needed. Temporary impacts to irrigation equipment could occur.

The Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to property because there will be no residential or commercial displacements, and private property impacts will be mitigated or compensated.

Water Resources

The Selected Alternative will not have any impacts on streams because there are no streams in the project area. The Selected Alternative includes paving the first mile, which will increase impervious surface in this area by approximately 3.15 acres.

Paving over currently unpaved areas leads to increased stormwater runoff. During periods without rainfall, pollutants from vehicles collect on paved road surfaces, including nitrogen from exhaust particles settling on the road surface and trace heavy metals such as cadmium, copper, lead, nickel, and chromium. Stormwater will run off the paved area of the road and infiltrate into the ground adjacent to the road. Because the area receives less than 10 inches of rain per year, and the type of soil has a relatively high rate of infiltration, there would be minimal impacts from the added impervious surface. Accordingly, the Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to water resources.

Wetlands and Floodplains

The Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact on wetlands or floodplains because there are no wetlands or floodplains in the project area.

Fish, Wildlife and Vegetation

Federal Threatened, Endangered, or Proposed Species

No federally-listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species are likely to occur in or near the project area. Since no unique habitats or federally-listed species are known to occur, vegetation removal for the project would not result in destruction of unique habitats or in habitat loss for federally threatened or endangered species.

Federal Candidate Species

Although it is not known to occur within the vicinity, the project may reduce habitat available for one candidate species, the Washington ground squirrel. The probability of occurrence for Washington ground squirrel in the study area is low since it lies on the edge of the species predicted range, WDFW surveys for the squirrels nearby were negative, and BLM biologists had no sightings during various other springtime surveys (Lowe, pers. Comm., 2014).

Federal Species of Concern

The Selected Alternative may reduce habitat available for several federal species of concern that include or may include the project area in their territories. These species include: burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, loggerhead shrike, Pallid Townsend's big-eared bat, northern sagebrush lizard and gray cryptantha. Construction may displace these species but they are expected to move to adjacent suitable habitat. Overall, potential for project related injury, mortality, and habitat loss to these species is low because the project will only impact a small area of habitat (less than 40 acres) in relation to the large amount (greater than 15,000 acres) that is protected in Juniper Dunes as a whole.

Special Status Wildlife Species

Vegetation present in the project area makes up a very small portion of the potential habitat adjacent to the construction site. Birds with the potential to occur in the project area, may be displaced from the project area by noise and visual disturbances caused by construction, but are expected to move to adjacent suitable habitat, and return to the project area after construction is completed.

Similar to the effects discussion for listed species, potential for project related injury, mortality, and habitat loss to Special Status species is low because the project will only impact a small area of habitat (less than 45 acres) in relation to the large amount (greater than 15,000 acres) that is protected in Juniper Dunes as a whole.

Mammals

Special status mammals with the potential to occur in the project area, may use the project area as dispersal and feeding habitat. Bats and jackrabbits are primarily active at night and are unlikely to be disturbed by daytime construction unless they are roosting or denning nearby. Habitat in the project site is not essential or unique habitat for bats or jackrabbits and they would be expected to move to adjacent suitable habitat and would likely return to the project area after

construction is completed; therefore the project impacts are low and no further conservation measures are recommended.

Herpetiles

Vegetation present in the project area is not essential or unique for herpetiles. No direct effects are anticipated.

Special Status Plant Species

Based on preliminary design and impact assumptions described previously, the Selected Alternative will directly affect a maximum of 36.6 acres of undeveloped vegetation. While no special status plants species were detected during the field survey, undetected plant individuals could still occur in the project area. The Selected Alternative would likely result in mortality to the prickly pear cactus populations found in the area, however they are not currently listed by BLM. The loss of individual plants may affect the local population of that particular species, but is not expected to affect a large percent of that species in the area.

Fish

No fish occur in the project area.

Vegetation

The Selected Alternative will impact 36.6 acres of habitat, including 17.4 acres of habitat with 70% or greater of native species. However, since the Juniper Dunes area is over 19,600 acres, with 15,720 acres of habitat protected with limited or no OHV use, impacts to habitat from the build alternatives would be minimal (less than 1/4th of 1% of protected acreage).

Indirect Impacts

Indirect impacts could include effects on future food resources and foraging areas, or long-term changes in increased human disturbance or changes to associated land use. In general, the project could generate long term changes to either human activity levels or land use in the action area because it is increasing roadway capacity and providing improved access to previously less accessible areas.

Indirect effects from increased traffic as a result of the project may slightly increase the number of collisions with wildlife, but would not be expected to create a barrier to wildlife movement because “at low traffic intensity (<2,500) the small proportion of fauna casualties and animals repelled causes limited impact on the proportion of animals successfully crossing a road barrier” (Forman et al. 2003). The increased ADT and SADT estimated would still remain below volumes that would be likely to make the new roadway impermeable to passage by any listed species addressed in this document. However, locating the road within currently un-roaded habitat would increase indirect impacts to wildlife through increased fragmentation, which favors generalist species such as ravens and coyotes that prey on and compete with special status wildlife.

Fish, Wildlife and Vegetation Conclusion

As described above, impacts to fish, wildlife and vegetation from the Selected Alternative will be minimal in comparison to the total amount of protected habitat in the Juniper Dunes area. There will be temporary impacts from construction, but most species of wildlife would be expected to

move to adjacent suitable habitat and likely return to the project area after construction is completed. Mitigation measures, described in Appendix A, will minimize impacts to wildlife and vegetation, and the project is not expected to result in the listing of any species under the ESA. Based on the facts above, the Selected Alternative is not expected to cause significant impacts to fish, wildlife and vegetation.

Cultural and Historic Resources

No previously recorded cultural resources will be affected by the Selected Alternative. As described in the EA, the project's area of potential effect possesses low potential for prehistoric and historic activity because it is in a relatively low biological productivity landscape without surface water or significant plant, animal, or lithic resources attractive to prehistoric or historic people that were not available elsewhere in greater abundance. Additionally, no sites were located during the archeological investigations. Accordingly, the Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to cultural or historic resources.

Recreation

Generally, the build alternatives would improve recreational access because they would provide a legal public access to Juniper Dunes. The Selected Alternative will build a road on the last mile between the northeast corner of Smith Canyon and the OHV open area, which some users currently use to travel between the two areas on OHVs. A fenced road would limit users' ability to travel off-road between the two areas. Design considerations could be made to allow for an OHV pathway adjacent to the road if BLM wants to continue to allow travel between the two areas.

The Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to recreation because people would continue to be able to use Juniper Dunes for the same recreational activities as prior to the project. Additionally, if necessary, the Selected Alternative could be designed to not preclude travel between Smith Canyon and the OHV area.

Soils and Geology

The project will be designed to reduce cut-slopes and meet all design standards to minimize impacts to soils and geology. Overall, the Selected Alternative will have only minor and localized impacts to the soils and geology of the area.

Mitigation is required for exposed cut-slopes subject to erosion over the short term until vegetation is reestablished. Cut-slopes will be designed and constructed in accordance with standard geotechnical slope design procedures. In cut-slope areas, the objective of mitigation will be to maximize re-vegetation of the cut-slopes by using various methods such as staked wattle rolls, scattering wood debris, mulching, seeding, fertilizing, conserving topsoil, and planting native shrub species where appropriate and feasible.

Native species are more adapted to the growing characteristics of the area and will improve the rate of re-vegetation over the long term. Short-term erosion at the construction site will be minimized with these Best Management Practices in place. Accordingly, the Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to soils and geology.

Noise

The Selected Alternative is expected to increase traffic over the No Build Alternative, but overall traffic volumes are expected to remain low (20-year projected SADT is 243 vehicles per day). There are no residences within ½ mile of the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative is not expected to result in a long-term increase in noise impacts because of the low traffic volume and absence of residences near the project.

The project will cause a temporary increase in noise levels in the project area due to construction activities associated with the Selected Alternative. To minimize the temporarily higher noise levels, all equipment would be required to comply with FHWA's standard noise mitigation measures.

The Selected Alternative will not result in significant noise impacts because the traffic on the new road will be low and all temporary impacts will be mitigated.

Visual Quality

The Selected alternative will result in a visual impact from the minor cuts and fills in the area directly around the construction. Impacts would only be visible in the area near where the road will be built.

The land use around the road is agricultural and not described or characterized as scenic. The cuts and fills are minor and will only be visible around the immediate construction area for the road. The road is not seen from a distance, nor does it conflict with the surrounding land uses, therefore, the Selected Alternative will not result in significant visual impacts.

Hazardous Materials

There are no impacts from hazardous materials because there are no known hazardous material sites within the construction site.

There is a potential for hazardous material spills to occur during construction of the project. Prior to construction, a Hazardous Material Spill Plan will be developed. In the event of a hazardous material spill, the responses detailed in the spill plan would be implemented.

The Selected Alternative will not result in a significant hazardous material impact.

Air Quality

The project corridor is situated within an EPA air quality "attainment" area for all regulated pollutants. The construction of a paved surface for the first mile of the Selected Alternative will eliminate dust production along that segment. The amount of expected growth in vehicle traffic from this project is so small, it will not have measurable impacts on air quality, nor will it be expected to cause the area to be designated a non-attainment area. No long-term or regional adverse impacts to air quality are anticipated from the Selected Alternative. Therefore, the Selected Alternative will not result in a significant air quality impact.

Prime Farmland

The Selected Alternative will have impacts on prime, unique, statewide and/or locally important farmlands. However, the amount of farmland that will be converted by the Selected Alternative is less than 0.001% of all farmland in Franklin County.

There is potential for long-term cumulative impacts in Franklin County if there is substantial conversion of prime farmland for all types of projects (private development, public, etc.). However, data presented in the EA illustrated there is not an overall trend of decrease in farm acreage despite the increase in county population. This project, combined with all other development of farmland, would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact to prime, unique, statewide and/or locally important farmlands because of the following reasons: there is vacant land that could replace farmland being converted and become important farmland with the introduction of irrigation; and there are not enough projects in Franklin County converting large amounts of farmland in the reasonably foreseeable future; and despite the population growth in Franklin County over the last five decades there is not a trend of reduction in farmland. Therefore, the Selected Alternative will not result in a significant impact to prime, unique, statewide or locally important farmland.

Utilities

The Selected Alternative will require the relocation of up to two power poles and a riser for the underground telephone lines near the intersection of Pasco-Kahlotus Road. The relocation work would be performed by the utility owner. Relocation of the gas main is not expected, but some reinforcement work on the main may be necessary. Coordination with the utility owners will occur as project design advances. The Selected Alternative will not cause significant impacts to utilities because all utilities will be relocated.

Socioeconomics

The project would not affect the trends in population location, distribution, and density in the project area because it would be used specifically to access the Juniper Dunes area for recreation. The Selected Alternative will provide road access to "landlocked" parcels that currently do not have public access, thus allowing for residential or agricultural development of the parcels. The Selected Alternative results in some privately owned property acquisitions. Landowners will be compensated fairly for any loss of property under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

The Selected Alternative will not have a significant impact on socioeconomics because the proposed project is not expected to substantially affect the socioeconomics of the region or the project area

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 requires federal agencies to analyze projects to determine if it would result in "…disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minorities and low-income populations." In other words, FHWA needs to determine if minority or low-income populations are affected more than other populations by the project.

The project does not result in any residential or commercial displacements. Short-term, construction related impacts and long-term impacts and benefits would affect project users equally. Opportunities for employment during project construction and the long-term road safety improvements will be extended to minority and low income populations in nearby communities as a benefit.

Based on the analysis, the Selected Alternative would not result in, "… disproportionately high and adverse… effects on minorities and low-income populations" or have significant impacts to these populations.

Construction Staging Areas

Construction of the Selected Alternative will require staging areas for construction equipment, fill and surfacing material, and a suitable site to dispose of excess waste soil excavated during construction. There are no government-proposed staging sites, material waste sites, or material source sites. These activities will occur at commercial or non-commercial sources designated by the contractor.

Commercial sources are established, have provided material to public and private entities on a regular basis over the last 2 years, have appropriate state and local permits, and do not require expansion outside their currently established and permitted area. Non-commercial sources would include all other sources, including established quarries and disposal locations previously used for similar activities.

Should a non-commercial source be used, use of the area: (a) would not affect properties on or eligible for listing to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); (b) would have no more than a may affect, not likely to adversely affect level of impact to species or habitat listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); and (c) would not encroach into waters of the U.S. or wetlands protected under Executive Order 11990.

the Selected Alternative would not have significant construction impacts, due to requirements stated above for contractor selected staging areas.

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures and design features are developed to avoid, reduce, eliminate, rectify, or compensate for the undesirable effects of proposed activities. All mitigation measures described in the EA related to the Selected Alternative will be implemented. The mitigation measures are located in Appendix A of this FONSI.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FHWA evaluated the effects of the project relative to the definition of significance established by the CEQ Regulations in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1508.27. FHWA reviewed and considered the EA and documentation included in the Project Record, and determined that the Selected Alternative will not have a significant effect on the human environment. As a result, no environmental impact statement will be prepared.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

USDOT section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 states that "the Secretary shall not approve any program or project which requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance as determined by the Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction thereof, or any land from an historic site of national, State, or local significance as so determined by such officials unless (1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and (2) such program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such park, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic sites resulting from such use."

There are two 4(f) properties in the project area. Each of these properties qualifies as a 4(f) resource for different reasons:

1. The Juniper Dunes OHV Area. It is considered a 4(f) property because it is a recreation area.
2. The Juniper Dunes ACEC. It is considered a 4(f) property because it is similar to a wildlife refuge.

FHWA, with BLM's concurrence, determined impacts to the 4(f) properties were *de minimis*. The FHWA conducted a public comment period for the *de minimis* determination concurrent to the EA comment period (February-March 2015). The FHWA conducted a public meeting during the EA comment period to present 4(f) findings. No 4(f) comments were received during the public comment period.

The impacts of the project on the recreation area and wildlife refuge that qualifies for Section 4(f) protection have been determined to be *de minimis*:

1. The transportation use of the Section 4(f) property, together with any impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation or enhancement measures incorporated into the project, does not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that qualify the resource for protection under Section 4(f);
2. The public has been afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the effects of the project on the protected activities, features, or attributes of the Section 4(f) property; and
3. The official with jurisdiction over the property, after being informed of FHWA's intent to make the *de minimis* impact finding, concurred in writing on January 12, 2015 that the project will not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f).

Other Laws and Regulations

FHWA reviewed each resource-specific section in the EA Chapter 4 and determined that each addresses compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Seth English-Young, Environmental Specialist, Federal Highway Administration, Western Federal Lands, 610 E Fifth Street, Vancouver, WA 98661, (360) 619-7803.

CONCLUSION

FHWA finds the EA and related documentation adequately and accurately address the need, environmental issues, impacts of the proposed action, and contains appropriate mitigation measures. Furthermore, FHWA finds that the EA, including the information listed above, documents full compliance with the NEPA and other related environmental laws, executive orders, and implementing regulations. The EA with the supplemental information in this Decision Document and FONSI provides sufficient evidence and analyses for determining that the proposed project will have no significant impact on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

APPENDIX A MITIGATION MEASURES

The following table summarizes the mitigation measures that would be implemented with the construction of the Selected Alternative. Many of the mitigation measures are duplicative and apply to more than one resource.

Resource	Mitigation Measures
Property Acquisitions	• Just compensation, per the Uniform Act. • If a property acquisition impacts the perimeter of an irrigation circle, a possible mitigation measure is to retrofit the irrigation sprinkler span with a "hinge." • Compensation for construction easements could include payment to property owners in exchange for the use of their property during construction. Temporary impacts to property, due to temporary construction uses, would be compensated according to fair-market or contributory value.

Fish, Wildlife and Vegetation	• Revegetation with a BLM-approved native seed mixture. • All mulch and straw bales would be certified weed free. • All equipment working in project area would be free of weed seed. • Precautions would be taken to prevent the introduction and spread of weeds caused by moving weed-infested sand, gravel, borrow, and fill material. • All herbicide applications will follow manufacturer herbicide label instructions, specifications, and precautions; all federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations; and BLM policy. In instances where herbicide labels, federal, or state stipulations overlap, the more restrictive criteria will apply. • Applications will be made by a certified applicator consistent with the manufacturer's label and BLM Pesticide Use Proposal. • Chemical applications will not be made if average wind speeds exceed 8 mph. • Herbicides would be used during periods of low human use, where feasible. • Notify and or coordinate vegetation management activities with land owners within or adjacent to the ROW proposed for treatment. • Herbicide treatment would be implemented in accordance with the vegetation treatment using BLM's 2007 herbicides Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (BLM 2007), and any subsequent updates, revisions, or replacements. The following herbicides are suggested for the noxious weeds and invasive plants common to the proposed sites, but are not exclusive:

Herbicides	Maximum Rate
Picloram	1.0 # a.i./acre
2,4-D Amine	1.9 # a.i./acre
Chlorsulfuron	0.141 # a.i./acre

- Vegetation clearing outside of burrowing owl nesting season (approximately March through September), or surveys will be conducted immediately prior to construction to ensure that nesting birds are not present.
- If active ferruginous hawk nests are found:
  - Human access and ground-based activities should be avoided within a distance of 820 feet of nests during the hawks' most sensitive period (March 1 to May 31).
  - Prolonged activities should be avoided, and noisy, prolonged activities should not occur, within 0.6 miles of nests during the breeding season (March 1 to August 15).
  - Construction or other developments near occupied nests should be delayed until after the young have dispersed, which generally occurs about a month after fledging.
- Vegetation clearing would occur outside the migratory bird nesting season (approximately May 15 to July 15), or surveys will be conducted immediately prior to construction to ensure that nesting birds are not present.

Note: If these guidelines cause disruptions to the construction schedule, more specific avoidance measures will be developed in coordination with BLM and WDFW.

Soils and Geology	• Cut-slopes would be designed to take advantage of the characteristics of the natural rock and soil material as it is encountered. • Cut-slopes in soil or granular materials would be designed as flat as practicable to minimize ravel, surface erosion, and slope instability and to promote revegetation while maintaining an acceptable level of slope stability. • Topsoil would be conserved and stockpiled for later use to enhance revegetation success. • Locally native plants would be used to improve the revegetation rate. • Where appropriate, straw wattles would be staked at appropriate spacing. • Appropriate sediment and erosion control BMPs would be put into place before construction begins and would be maintained in working order throughout the construction period and until vegetation is established.

Noise	• All equipment would have sound control devices no less effective than those provided on the original equipment. All equipment would have muffled exhaust.
	• All equipment would comply with pertinent noise standards of the EPA.
	• No construction would be performed within 100 feet of any occupied residence on Sundays, legal holidays, or between the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am on other days.
	• Should a specific noise impact complaint occur during construction, one or more of the following measures may be required:
	  o Shutting off idling equipment when possible
	  o Rescheduling construction operations to avoid periods of noise annoyance identified in complaint
	  o Notifying nearby residents when extremely noisy work would be occurring
	  o Installing temporary or portable acoustic barriers around stationary construction noise sources, if possible.

Hazardous Materials	• Prior to construction, a Hazardous Material Spill Plan would be developed. In the event of a hazardous material spill, the responses detailed in the spill plan would be implemented.
Air Quality	• Dust control measures (e.g. water application) would be implemented during construction.
Utilities	• Project Partners would work closely with the utility owners to minimize service outages and to provide advance notice of outages to affected parties.

APPENDIX B BOARD OF FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS RESOLUTION

FRANKLIN COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 2015 147

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

RE: SELECTING ALTERNATIVE 2 AS THE PREFERENCE OF FRANKLIN COUNTY FOR THE JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD PROJECT

WHEREAS, Franklin County has a county road project (CRP) 602 for the construction of an access road to the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area and adjacent off-highway vehicle (OHV) area, to which there is currently no public access; and

WHEREAS, Franklin County has received a discretionary grant from the federal Bureau of Land Management and a federal lands access program grant from the Federal Highway Administration to assist in completing the project, the cost of which is estimated to be between $1.80 million and $2.25 million; and

WHEREAS, Franklin County has entered into a memorandum of agreement with the federal Bureau of Land Management and the Federal Highway Administration to delineate the roles played by each in the execution of the project, which includes the Federal Highway Administration assuming NEPA responsibility and, if applicable, issuing a finding of no significant impact for the project; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Highway Administration, having reached the point in the NEPA process where a general route location must be selected, has requested from Franklin County a formal preference as to said route location; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners, as the legislative authority of Franklin County, is tasked with administering to the county road system (RCW 36.75.040); and

WHEREAS, Chapter 36.81 RCW sets forth the process by which a new road can be established within the county, which includes issuance of a report on said topic by the County Engineer and the holding of a public hearing; and

WHEREAS, a report on the establishment of a Juniper Dunes access road was released by the County Engineer; and notice of a public hearing was published in the newspaper of record and the Tri-City Herald; and a public hearing was subsequently held on April 8, 2015; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Franklin County Commissioners constitutes the legislative authority of Franklin County and, agreeing with the recommendations made by the County Engineer, desires to select Alternative 2 as its preference for the general location of the Juniper Dunes access road, finding such as being in the best interest of Franklin County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Franklin County Commissioners hereby selects Alternative 2 as its preference for the general location of the Juniper Dunes access road and directs the Franklin County Public Works Department to report such to the Federal Highway Administration.

APPROVED this 8 day of April, 2015.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Chairman

Rick Miller - Absent

Chairman Pro Tem

Member

Attest

Clerk of the Board

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ERRATA

Section, Page	Original Version	Corrected Version	Notes
1.3, pg 4	It would have two 11-foot travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders (26 feet wide total).	It would have two **12**-foot travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders (**28** feet wide total).	Correction to width of proposed road.
3.6, pg 10	It would have two 11-foot travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders (26 feet wide total).	It would have two **12**-foot travel lanes with 2-foot shoulders (**28** feet wide total).	Correction to width of proposed road.
4.3, pg 24	It was built prior to 1975 and it runs for at least 1/2 mile north from the intersection with Pasco-Kahlotus Road.	It was built prior to 1975 and it runs for at least **1** mile north from the intersection with Pasco-Kahlotus Road.	Updated information about the private irrigation pipe in Peterson Road.
4.7.2, pg 40	…is provided in Table .	… is provided in **Table 4-9**.	Added reference to table.
4.16, pg 63	Although not a public utility, a private irrigation pipe runs for at least 1/2 mile under Peterson Road north from the intersection of Pasco-Kahlotus Road.	Although not a public utility, a private irrigation pipe runs for at least **1** mile under Peterson Road north from the intersection of Pasco-Kahlotus Road.	Updated information about the private irrigation pipe in Peterson Road.

APPENDIX D PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE FEBRUARY 2015 EA

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☒ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☒ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☒ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☒ Camping
   ☒ Other: Litter Clean up

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☒ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

   None as of Now

GENERAL COMMENTS

Last family place to enjoy the outdoors, go camping, and relax. Dozens of places around the Tri-Cities have been developed or locked out. I'm only 13 years old and hope to be able to enjoy the Juniper Area untill I can take my kids out there someday, And Beyond

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☒ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☒ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☒ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☒ Camping
   ☒ Other: litter clean up

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☒ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

   none as of now

GENERAL COMMENTS

Juniper Area is the last place familys have to enjoy the outdoors. People must have a place to unplug and relax.

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☑ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☑ Other: Peak Putters

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☑ 6-12 ☐ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☑ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☑ Off-roading ☑ Hunting ☑ Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☑ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☑ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

_____

_____

_____

GENERAL COMMENTS

If not part of this plan, would still be interested in vault toilets and some garbage pickup.
Improved access would improve law enforcement and emergency services to the area.

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☐ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☒ Other: Farm Next to road proposal. Alt 1A

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☐ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☐ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☐Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☒ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

_____

_____

_____

GENERAL COMMENTS

We have No problems with Juniper Dunes. Our problem is the distruction of Joy riding threw our farm fields, or Some one looking for a short route back home. the whole project Needs to be fenced and enforced. Other than that have fun.

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☐ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☒ Other: Farm next to Sherwood Rd

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☐ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☐ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☐Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☒ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

_____

_____

_____

GENERAL COMMENTS

Unless this project is Funded. It will not Keep people from riding into our Fields, AS they do NOW.

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☐ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☑ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☑ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☑ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☑ Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☑ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☑ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

   Garbage cans need to be put in with Restrooms

GENERAL COMMENTS

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☐ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☒ Franklin County resident
   ☒ Other: Midnite Mudders

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☒ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☒ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☒ Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☒ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☐ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

_____

_____

_____

GENERAL COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☒ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☒ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☒ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☒ Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☒ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

   No very well written EA

GENERAL COMMENTS

Been working for this for 4 30+ years!

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☒ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☒ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☒ Hiking ☒ Cycling ☒ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☒ Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ☒ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

_____

_____

_____

GENERAL COMMENTS

_____

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_____

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

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5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

   WOULD THERE STILL BE ACCESS FROM THE NEW ENDPOINT/ STAGING AREA TO THE EXISTING KIOSK @ THE DUNES FOR VEHICLES?

GENERAL COMMENTS

PLEASE MAKE THIS HAPPEN! I WOULD DEFINITELY VISIT MORE OFTEN IF THE ROAD IS PUT IN. THE CURRENT ROAD AND ACCESS WITHIN JUNIPER DUNES DAMAGES TRAILERS DUE TO THE DEEP WHOOPS.
ROAD NEEDS MAINTAINED IN THE INTERIM.!

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Juniper dunes
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2015 10:24:00 AM

[redacted]

Thank you for your comment—I will share it with the project team. Safety is a very important consideration when making decisions on road location and design.

I will add you to the mailing list and we will keep you informed as we move forward in the process.

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

[redacted]
Sent: Saturday, February 14, 2015 5:58 PM
To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: Juniper dunes

I am a home/land owner a few miles east of Peterson Road on Pasco-Kahlotus Hwy. I'd like to comment on Alternative 2 in regard to road safety. I have lived here 14 years and seen many accidents in just the few miles from Peterson Road east to Ice Harbor Dam Road. There are many crosses designating fatal accidents. Peterson Road is already an intersection, even tho unofficial, and is known to many as the access. I read in a Wilderness hiking guide how to gain access to Juniper Dune from Peterson Road, when the real hiking area is from the east entrance. I strongly encourage the county to consider safety foremost and keep the access point via Peterson Road.

[redacted]

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 8:34 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Juniper Dunes comments

[redacted]
Thank you for your comments. As with all comments, I will share them with the project team.

Seth

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

From: [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2015 8:16 PM
To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: Juniper Dunes comments

Attached you will find my comments from the February 17, 2015 meeting on Juniper Dunes.

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE 2/17/2015
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ■ Visitor ☐ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☐ 0 ☐ 1-2 ■ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☐ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ■ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☐Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Alt 1A ☐ Alt 1B ☐ Alt 1C ■ Alt 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ■ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

_____

_____

_____

GENERAL COMMENTS

THIS PROJECT IS NEEDED TO PROVIDE LEAGAL PUBLIC ACCESS WITH NO INTERFERENCE FROM PROPERTY OWNERS TO JUNIPER DUNES

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

[redacted]

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 9:28 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Juniper Dunes Area Access Road

Thank you for the comment. As with all comments, I will share with the project team. For any alternative, Franklin County is a contributing partner to the project.

We have received a few comments regarding improvements to Peterson Road benefitting the residents off of Peterson Road. It should be noted that the purpose of this project, and the reason that there is Federal funding involved, is to access Juniper Dunes. But we do understand that the alternatives on Peterson Road would have benefits and impacts to the residents off of Peterson Road, and that is a consideration in selecting the alternative to proceed.

Thanks,
Seth

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

From: [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 6:40 PM
To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: Juniper Dunes Area Access Road

My family and I have been using Juniper Dunes for off-road recreation (motorcycles) since 1985. We ride there just about every weekend during the winter and spring months. After reviewing the information presented at the February 17th open house we prefer Alternative #2 although we are in favor of any plan that gains legal access to this area.I feel that if Petterson road is used the county should also help fund the project because of the number of houses that use this road for access.
Thank you.
[redacted]

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 2:47 PM
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Juniper Dunes

[redacted]
Thank you for your comment. I have shared it with the project team (FHWA, BLM and Franklin County). We understand that any of the alternatives will have impacts to individuals (farmers, landowners, etc) and that our selection and construction of a route will have consequences.

You bring up an interesting point that this project will provide access at no cost to users of Juniper Dunes. While user fees at Juniper Dunes are not being considered with this project, I will share the comment with BLM for their use in future recreation planning and decision-making.

Regards,

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

-----Original Message-----
From: [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 1:55 PM
To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA); gdejongh@co.franklin.wa.us
Subject: Juniper Dunes

See attached letter.

TO: Seth English-Young
Western Federal Land Highway Division
seth.english-young@dot.gov

February 24, 2015

Regarding: Juniper Dunes Area Access Road

PARCEL NO. 110-530-015: if I have to give up 5.32 acres, I am not going to be happy about it. From my own long, hard experience I must warn you about the responsibility you will have with the mainline going down the middle of the road or to the side, it will make no difference. Whether it is new or old mainline you always have the chance of it breaking and leaking and damaging the farmers crops and if someone is driving at night and there is a hole in the road there is a possibility of an accident or even a death. You can bet you will be sued. You need to think about these things.

For all of these reasons, you should consider Alternative 2 (the red line). There will be less expense and less danger. The campers and the bike riders are going to get their wishes with no cost to them and I don't think that is fair at all.

You are not going to please everyone with the decisions you have to make.

[redacted]

Cc: Grant DeJongh

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 1:50 PM
To: [redacted]
Cc: Grant Dejongh (gdejongh@co.franklin.wa.us)
Subject: RE: Juniper Dunes - Comments

[redacted]

Thank you for your email. I share all public comments with the project team (Franklin County, BLM and Federal Highway Administration) for consideration. As you can imagine, people have many differing opinions and reasons on what Alternative is their preferred option.

If you have further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 11:40 AM
To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Cc: gdejongh@co.franklin.wa.us
Subject: Juniper Dunes - Comments

Hi Seth

During the Feb. 17 open house, I remembered a problem my husband and I had when we refinanced our house several years ago.

When the man doing the appraisal came to our house, he had a MAJOR problem with access to our property. It was his opinion that we did not have guaranteed access to our property. This was because access could only be made using private roads and there was a no trespassing sign on Peterson Road. We explained that access had never been a problem, that the roads had been named, and that the roads appeared on Franklin County's official maps. We were able to get the property refinanced, but he included his concern in his written appraisal.

While that wasn't a problem for us, it could be a problem for other home owners. For that reason and others, we feel that any of the Option 1 alternatives would be a great benefit to the homeowners off Peterson Road.

– – – – – – – – – – –

I would also like to point out that there are about 34 families living in our residential area off Haugen Road. This does not include the 3 families that live on Peterson Road. When I looked at my map of the area, I was able to identify eight 5 acre parcels that do not yet have a house on them. There is a potential for growth in this area that does not depend on a farmer subdividing and selling any of his property. Given the growth in Pasco, this is one of the areas that would be of interest to someone wanting to "live in the country" without being too far from town. Upgrading the road will make it easier to develop this area. This is a very attractive area for people wanting to raise their kids "in the country" and have horses or other livestock. This is why we moved into this area.

– – – – – – – – – – – –

It is my belief that it would be in the long term, best interest of Franklin County to have one of the Option 1 alternatives selected. At some point in the future Peterson Road (at a minimum) will need to become a county road and upgraded. By doing this upgrade now, some of the costs will be covered by grant money.

If you have any questions or would like to talk to me further, don't hesitate to call or email.

[redacted]

[redacted]

JUNIPER DUNES ACCESS ROAD OPEN HOUSE
PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your relationship to the Juniper Dunes Area? *(Mark all that apply)*

   ☐ Visitor ☒ Adjacent property owner/resident ☐ Franklin County resident
   ☐ Other: _____

2. On average, how many times a year do you visit the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ 0 ☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-12 ☐ More than 12

3. What type of activities do you do when visiting the Juniper Dunes Area? (*Mark all that apply.*)

   ☐ Hiking ☐ Cycling ☐ Off-roading ☐ Hunting ☐Camping
   ☐ Other: _____

4. Which route presented do you prefer?

   ☐ Route 1A ☐ Route 1B ☐ Route 1C ☐ Route 2 ☐ I prefer none of these.

5. Do you support this project to provide an access road to the Juniper Dunes Area?

   ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ I support an access road, but not through this project.

6. Are there any access problems that you feel this project does not address?

   Route 1 will also provide better access for the 40-50 homeowners in the area. Route 2 will only meet the needs of people going to Juniper Dunes.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Since the road will become a county road, it should be useful to the local residents (taxpayers) The county keeps emphasizing that Peterson Rd does not provide safe access to the dunes for emergency purposes. Isn't it important for the homeowners to also receive emergency services in a timely & safe way? Our County Rd. & Fire Protection taxes should be used in a way that benefits the residents and visitors.

Contact Information - OPTIONAL

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone number: _____

Email: _____

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 9:56 AM
To: [redacted]

Thank you for the email. As with all comments, yours will be shared with the project partners (FHWA, BLM, and Franklin County) for consideration in selecting the alternative to proceed with. I do understand from your comment that there would be benefits to the residents who live off of Peterson Road if that road is improved.

I have added your email to the mailing list to update you when new project information is available.

Regards,

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

From: [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 8:52 AM
To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: Juniper Dunes

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2015 1:08 PM
To: [redacted]
Cc: Wong, Keith (FHWA)
Subject: RE: Juniper Dunes Project

[redacted]
Thank you for your comments. As with all comments, I have passed them on to the project team (FHWA, BLM, and Franklin County) for consideration. Below are a few responses to some of your comments and questions:

- I understand your concerns about vandalism and damage to private property from users of Peterson Road and Juniper Dunes.
- I was not familiar with the extent of the Good Agricultural Practices inspections. Thank you for that information.
- *(Your question) How will we be guaranteed our crops and irrigation will be protected from harm?*
    - My response: Project partners will work with adjacent landowners to figure out ways to reduce potential impacts to property, whether by fencing or other means. As you know, this cannot guarantee that property will be protected, but we will strive to reduce impacts as much as possible.
- *(Your question) Will there be restrooms in the park and who will monitor and maintain them and the garbage? How will rules be enforced there? Who will pay for this? We suggest a park entry fee or toll.*
    - My response: This project does not include restrooms, garbage cans, or any other ancillary improvements to Juniper Dunes. Once a legal route is established to Juniper Dunes, amenities like those may be added by BLM at their discretion. Ongoing enforcement and monitoring of Juniper Dunes is the responsibility of BLM and is outside of the scope of this project. Though this project should allow BLM and Franklin County Police and Fire better access to Juniper Dunes for enforcement, monitoring, and emergency services. A fee or toll is not proposed as part of this project, but may be considered by BLM once access to Juniper Dunes is established.
- I have received your statement of preference for Alternative 2.

Thank you again for taking the time to comment. I will add your email to the mailing list for project updates.

Regards,

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

From: [redacted]
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2015 7:24 AM
To: Wong, Keith (FHWA); English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: Juniper Dunes Project

Mr. Wong and Mr. English-Young,

Attached is our letter of concern and suggestions for the Juniper Dunes Project. It is our hope that you will read understand our concerns.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]
March 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Wong and Mr. English-Young,

This letter is to express to you our concerns about the Juniper Dunes Project being planned.

We have farmed and lived in the Block 17 area for over 30 years. We have grown crops next to Peterson Road and off other parts of Falls Road. These are some of the problems we have had over the years with people who have been using Juniper Dunes:

-Vandalism to irrigation systems--A costly and time consuming repair and loss to crop.
-Garbage left behind.
-Crops been driven through to the extent that part of the crop is destroyed.

How do we know it was bikers, 4 wheelers and 4 x 4's? Because of the tracks making it obvious where they originated.

Are you aware of that in Washington State many farmers including us must pass Good Agriculture Practices inspection and requirements in order to sell our potatoes and sometimes our sweet corn and other crops? A brief summary of a limited number of requirements are as follows:

-Land risk Assessments are performed on a regular basis making sure crop is safe from any and all outside contaminates (we do daily assessments).
-No foreign material of any kind can be found in the field. (Glass and garbage is always a major concern)
-No oils, gasoline or products that would contaminate the crop are to be found.
- Water quality testing.
-All equipment that comes in contact with crop is to be in clean and in proper working order.
-No sewage of any kind.
-Wild and Domestic Animals are too be kept out of the field.

The list goes and on. Our concerns are based on past experiences. How will we be guaranteed our crops and irrigation will be protected from harm? Not passing Good Agriculture Practices will result in our crop being rejected; A loss that we might not be able to recover from because of the thousands possibly millions of dollars lost. There has been mention that area will be monitored; the only true way to monitor such an area is from the sky and ground. Will there be restrooms in the park and who will monitor and maintain them and the garbage? How will rules be enforced there? Who will pay for this? We suggest a park entry fee or toll. We have many concerns about this project and are not happy about it. Our past experiences have not been good with some of the people that have been their already. We are extremely concerned about the damages that will increase and the costs involved.

If you must build a road, we would like to see it happen on the road furthest east, Alternative 2 the red line. It will be most cost effective and land effective. If you choose any other alternative, you will have to dig up and replace mainline irrigation something that cannot be done during a crop growing season and it will be costly and you will interrupt more farming and land ownership if you go with any other alternative road. Alternative 2 is more of a straight line and will result in less cost to develop and maintain because it is a straight line. Also Alternative 2 is the furthest away from us and some of the other farmers. ***The further away from us the better!***

More information on the Good Agriculture Practices can be found through the U.S.D.A. at this link:
http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/HarmonizedGAP

Sincerely,

[redacted]

English-Young, Seth (FHWA)

From: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 11:46 AM
To: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Juniper Dunes Road
Attachments: Final Juniper Dunes Range of Alts Memo-10-23-14 with appendices D&E.pdf

[redacted]
Thank you for your comment. As with all comments, I have passed it on to the project partners (FHWA, BLM, and Franklin County) for consideration.

Regarding other routes, I have attached a memo from October 2014 that explains the decision on what alternatives to carry forward for study in the EA. Pages 5 through 9 of the memo discusses "Alternatives Considered but Dismissed." With all the appendices, the memo is a large file size, so I have only attached the text of the memo and Appendix D (Map of Reasonable Range of Alternatives) and Appendix E (map of the "Alternatives Considered but Dismissed"). If you would like a copy of Appendix A (Correspondence with Tribes), Appendix B (Public Involvement Materials), Appendix C (Public Comments) , I can mail it to you.

I believe that the route #6 (Joy Road), route #9 (2 miles east of Peterson Road) and route #10 (other locations off of Pasco-Kahlotus Road) in the memo (pages 8 and 9) address the routes that you have suggested in this comment letter and your September 2014 comment letter. The memo explains why we did not choose to study those routes in the EA.

Your other comments regarding advantages and disadvantages of alternatives are noted.

The Ferruginous hawk is a Federal Species of Concern, a BLM sensitive species, and a State Threatened Species. The BLM Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (of which the BLM portion of parcel 20 is included) are designated ACEC in order to protect the Ferruginous hawk and Swainson's hawk habitats. The EA (page 20) does consider the Ferruginous hawk as currently a low likelihood to occur in the project area, and states that the nearest occupied nest is 1.7 miles east of Alternative 2. Historically, or in the future, Ferruginous hawks could use the project area for habitat.

I have included your email address for future project updates.

Regards,

Seth English-Young
Environmental Specialist
Federal Highway Administration
Western Federal Lands
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, WA 98661
360-619-7803

[redacted]
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2015 8:59 PM

To: English-Young, Seth (FHWA)
Subject: Juniper Dunes Road

3/13/15

Mr. Seth English-Young

Re: Juniper Dunes Road

I would like to that you for the venue to comment on the proposed road to provide access for the Juniper Dunes.

[redacted]

We operate a Farm that in your proposed route 1a-1b-1c would basically surround our farm on three sides. Route 2 would provide the least amount of encroachment from a social, environmental, as well impact to our farming operation.

We located out here in 1999 to a site that would have the least amount of public impact from our farm operation. The traffic that would be generated from this new access would bring a heightened conflict between our operation and the public. To mitigate this Route 2 would relieve us from the most impact on our operation.

We still believe in the interest of the tax paying

public that there was not enough study or effort to place an access road further east off the Pasco-Kahlotus Hwy. It would be nice if we could see the report that shows how much time or effort to see why the route that would provide the shortest distances to BLM Ground and provide the least amount of private impact. Why was this route not qualified for this report?

Route 1a would cross a large irrigation Main line that provides the water supply for our farm. The risk from it rupturing would create a huge risk if the road would be damaged resulting in human risk from accident.

Route 2 would use the least amount of acres for ROW @ 40.76 This would be at least 7-11 less acres than the other routes considered.

Swing Span center pivots will not work with the type of cropping as well as the equipment that we use to harvest our crops. There is also a long term maintenance issue, Swing Span circles have an inherently higher cost to operate and maintain that would be more than a onetime cost concurrently when time comes to replace such equipment the machine always run up to 40% more in cost.

I find it interesting that Ferruginous Hawks Are stated not to be a problem, but when we have talked to BLM in the Past they claimed that Section 20 had those hawks in that area so I'm not about the accuracy of report that claims that they are 1.7 miles east of this project.

Route 2 scored the lowest on the NRCS impact rating with a 114 this should also be a factor in the process selection. I think the use of .001% of all farm land in Franklin County is a misnomer here because what matters is the farm ground located in the project.

We are also concerned from the noise created by the additional vehicles along with ORV's, we have a considerable amount of cattle next to this project and the potential to disrupt them and create fear from noise and traffic is real to the animals.

Our first comment would be able to see the supporting paper work that made other routes further East on the Pasco-Kahlotus Hwy a non-option considering the savings on distance and IMPACT.

The second preferred route would be Route 2, this would in many ways would create the least amount of impact on our farm, cattle, equipment and ROW.

Route 1a-1b-1c would create terrible and lingering problems for our operation from vehicle and public conflict.

Thank you

[redacted]

[redacted]