Targhee Pass Environmental Assessment

U.S. 20 Projects

Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)

Targhee Pass Environmental Assessment (EA)

ITD initiated the EA to engage the public, evaluate impacts, risks, benefits, opportunities, and costs associated with reconstruction of Targhee Pass (U.S. 20 between its junction with Idaho 87 and the Montana state line – 4 miles).

Targhee Pass Environmental Assessment (EA)

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency on this EA and will be signing the final study document. The EA is being completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

- The purpose of the project is to improve driver safety, traffic flow, and roadway structural integrity the roadway.
  - Wildlife movement across U.S. 20 is a safety issue for both drivers and wildlife, and traffic can impede migratory, dispersal, and daily movements of wildlife.

Targhee Pass EA Purpose & Need

PURPOSE: The purpose of the proposed project is to improve driver safety, traffic flow, and roadway structural integrity of US 20 between the Junction of SH 87 and the Montana state line, also known as Targhee Pass.

NEED: Specific needs supporting improvement to this portion of US 20 are:

Driver Safety

- Crash data indicate safety concerns related to road icing, blowing/drifting snow, and wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Traffic Flow

- Traffic flow is hindered at times by congestion and slower moving vehicles climbing Targhee Pass.

Roadway Structure

- Roadway pavement and foundation age exceed the expected life cycle of 40 years. Poor drainage creates soft spots and allows frost heaving of the road during the winter. Recent investigations show the aged road foundation is not suitable for long term pavement stability.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Other important community issues to be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment include:

- Improving safety for pedestrians and bicycles within the project area.
- Enhancing wildlife movement across US 20 within the project area. Wildlife movement across US 20 is a safety issue for both drivers and wildlife and can impede migratory, dispersal, and daily movements of wildlife (Clevenger and Huijser, 2011).

Alternative 1 (No-Build)

Replace existing pavement only

No roadway improvements associated with:

- Traffic Flow/Capacity
- Driver Safety
- Bike and Pedestrian
- Wildlife-vehicle collision reduction and wildlife movement enhancement

The No-Build Alternative provides a comparison of future conditions **without** improvements to future **conditions** with improvements.

Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5 – Transportation Elements

Needs	Transportation Elements
Roadway Structure	• Replace pavement • Replace ballast (road subsurface) • Drainage improvements including improved culvert at Howard Spring
Traffic Flow/Capacity	• Climbing lane added entire length • Left and right turn lanes into Big Horn Hills Estates, both entrances
Driver Safety	• Cut back trees in areas where shading increases ice • Shoulders widened to 6 to 8-feet • Curve reductions, road geometry improvements • Measures to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions

Alternative 2

Three wildlife crossing structures and **wildlife fence** throughout the four-mile project corridor.

Alternative 3

Animal Detection System would be implemented throughout the four-mile project corridor. The system would alert drivers to the presence of animals. This alternative does not include wildlife fencing.

Alternative 4

Fencing throughout the 4four-mile segment with **one wildlife overpass** structure in the upper segment of the pass.

In the lower segment, one or more **at-grade wildlife crosswalks** would be created, with an **animal detection system** at to detect animals and warn approaching drivers.

Alternative 5

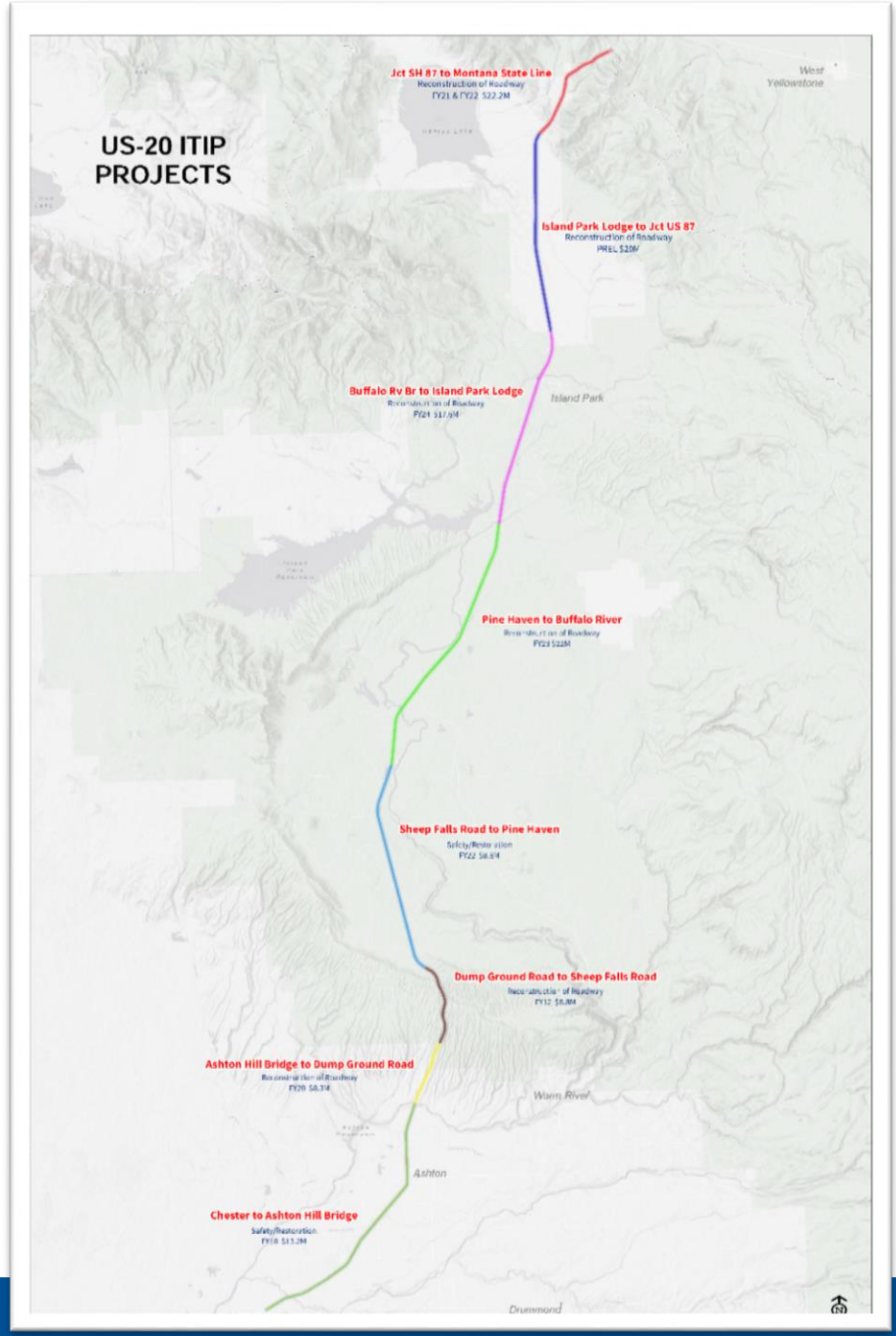
Fencing, wildlife overpasses, and animal detection systems would not be installed. ITD would rely on **operational measures** such as variable message signs to alert drivers of potential wildlife presence on the road.

Targhee Pass EA Schedule

OCT-DEC 2016	JAN-JUNE 2017	JULY-AUG 2017	AUG-DEC 2017	JAN-SPRING 2018	EARLY SUMMER 2018
Study initiation Public Meeting #1	Incorporate comments	Public Meeting #2 Alternatives workshop	Public Meeting #3 Present draft alternatives	Complete impact analysis	Public Meeting #4 Present EA document
Stakeholder assessment Public scoping & comment period (12/15/16-1/30/17)	Refine Purpose & Need Evaluate strategies for reducing wildlife collisions & maintaining wildlife movement	Incorporate comments Develop draft alternatives	30-day public comment period Incorporate comments & refine alternatives	Prepare environmental assessment (EA) document	30-day public comment period Finalize EA Prepare & publicize decision

U.S. 20 Projects

- Chester to Ashton
- Sheep Falls to Pine Haven
- Pine Havel to Buffalo River
- Buffalo River to Island Park Lodge



U.S. 20 Projects (continued)

- Currently collecting additional field data (cultural, environmental, etc.).

- Public meeting in Ashton in late May with more information on environmental work and schedule.

Questions?