

**U.S. 95 Thorncreek Road to Moscow Project
Public Open House Comment Sheet Transcription
January 18, 2006 and January 19, 2006**

Environmental Studies

#	Please provide your comments about the environmental studies conducted for this project.
ES1	Well-done, environmental concerns were justifiably covered/analyzed.
ES2	Studies were well-done and considered relevant issues and concerns. Was a mistake to not do them originally—but these do a good job.
ES3	ITD has done lots of good work on this whole project. I am concerned that the plant inventory may be biased—it is “Idaho Centric.” Some western are closer to Washington than land surveyed on the east is to eastern routes. Washington impacts weren’t considered so “ridge species” got artificially overemphasized in the Palouse.
ES4	Studies appear complete.
ES5	Environmental impact not that great. Should proceed with changes E2. Okay!
ES6	Very well done.
ES7	There is going to be an impact no matter where the road is. Do not make it the only criteria.
ES8	ITD has done a very commendable job, as I see it, attempting to garner public involvement and input. Some folks/residences will be adversely affected (in short term), but we must stay on task and make the best, most cost effective and practical choice for the overall benefit of society/community.
ES9	I find it “interesting” that you use someone who lives on the ridge of impact for the impact. Conflict of interest maybe? If you could mover over and consider ground in Washington, why not use woods estate 1,100 acres of Ridge and many acres of native ground for mitigation.
ES10	Good thorough job. It helped me frame my choice of routes. Please use plan E1 to complete route to Moscow. Thank you.
ES11	The east route will have more deer in the highway.
ES12	Decision criteria should include the proximity of the new highway to remnant prairie, not just whether or not the alignment passes directly though a sensitive plant area.
ES13	In my opinion ITD has done a very good job on this subject.
ES14	I’m please to see the most environmentally sensitive areas are primarily east of the project. However, wetland impacts are being ignored or claims are made that they can be mitigated—and yet they are intact now and E2 would affect too many sites too!
ES15	I appreciated all the studies—especially impact on environment and farmland/private land ownership.
ES16	Very complete
ES17	Adequate
ES18	Human lives vs. plant life; really this is an easy answer.
ES19	Excellent work so far, as best as I can tell. Thanks!
ES20	Thank you so much for asking for our input on this project. The studies look like they have been very thorough and I appreciate that even animals, residents and geology have been considered. I’m sorry that this had to come from a lawsuit and I hope that such thorough work will become the norm rather than an exception for our state. This is a truly wonderful process and I’m honored to be involved.
ES21	Very thorough but seems like way too much considering the project at hand. The only thing-endangered area few people’s views the public has to pay for. NIMBY is still going strong, especially if you can afford a good legal team
ES22	E3 is probably the best route overall.
ES23	Environmental studies should consider indirect impact, such as pollution, development, spread of weed seeds, effect of noise and lights, etc. Unique plant population should be considered and protected.
ES24	Wetland studies should be conducted in late spring when water levels are high and invertebrates, fishes, and breeding amphibians can be observed. From my discussion at this meeting, evaluations/observations were conducted after harvest when water levels were low. Impacts that the widening will have on our waterways, wetlands, dependent plant and animal species should be well explored before construction takes place.
ES25	They appear to be very thorough, costly and comprehensive. However no mention or study of the altitude and the ability to dissipate exhaust from vehicles (*valley vs. higher plain) was considered. Microclimates do make a difference. W` when measured after black top is applied will have a highly different climate character than when studied in the wild state. The animals will move away from the noise of any and all highways.
ES26	I appreciate the information about the effects of each option on the ungulates and sensitive flora. I think these should be major considerations and not just given lip service. I go to Paradise Ridge frequently and the quality of this experience is a major piece of the overall quality of life in Moscow for me. Keep the noise and visual pollution away!

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ES27	The quality seems good. There seems to be a disconnect between your recommendation of E2 and its potential effect on conservation data center species.
ES28	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) They appear adequate—clearly show increased impact to wildlife, wetlands, etc. by the entire eastern alternative. 2) Eastern routes would also be a lot noisier to residents of Moscow too 3) Eastern routes would have increased risk of wildlife/car related hazards 4) Central routes appear to have lowest environmental impact
ES29	Environmental studies usually under estimate negative impact. I worry about the impact on Paradise Ridge of the eastern routes, especially of E2.
ES30	Thanks for doing this. Please make sure there is bicycle access—wide shoulders for bicycles. Extend bike lanes south from Moscow as far as possible to Genesee would be good.
ES31	The studies seem to present the portent issues. I did not see specifics on mitigation methods for various problems.
ES32	There should be weather studies done for the central routes as well as for the east and west. It is hard to make comparisons when there are no data from of the regions.
ES33	Not Necessary
ES34	I consider farmland our most important material resource in this area, The Palouse. All of the west routes have far too much impact because of their location and increased distance. C3 is a logical choice because of the short distance actually impacted. All of the E routes are practical because they are the most direct, with E2 being on marginal ground.
ES35	Thank you for the opportunity to see the input that has gone into this study and for the opportunity to have a voice in the consideration.
ES36	Wind was not actually measured on sight. There are 80+ mile an hour winds that I have measured for the past 6 years on E2. C2 was not even considered. Trucks will have big trouble on E2.
ES37	I believe that the studies have been well executed and very informational. It is too bad that we can't just take the factors of safety, cost, convenience to make a good decision based on common sense. Now we have to do environmental this and that, seems like bugs and weeds carry more weight on the decision than safety and economics.
ES38	These should have been completed without a court battle. Well done.
ES39	Did not take into consideration weed propagation into endangered habitat (palouse prairie unplowed) on Eastern and Central routes.
ES40	My biggest concern is in regards to the concrete dividers between the double lanes. I would like to see these re-designed if these will be utilized in the project. I would be happy to offer suggestion—please contact me. Through the years I've seen small creatures be killed by vehicles simply because these concrete dividers serve as an impossible barrier!
ES41	I fell that the initial studies that ere done were enough to go ahead with the project. I felt that on East route I thank it was 10A should have been chosen at that date. I now feel that a lot of time, effort and my tax dollars have gone to waste. I think that you did an excellent job then and I feel that you did a great job on every study up to this point.
ES42	Good to see ungulate studies were done. That's one I comment hear over a lot of others—going east with cause more deer/elk and car accidents. Glad issue was addressed. Truck/alternative route to west to take big truck traffic and commuters out of downtown needs to be considered.
ES43	Environmental studies are avenues for expensive time delays and cost run ups, brought on by individuals with self-interest in mind. This exercise in Moscow is a prime example. How much did the taxpayer have to pay for the whim of the few.
ES44	I appreciate the thoroughness of these studies. All studies indicate that the eastern routes are detrimental to our environment, our species habitats and our safety.
ES45	I am very thankful for these studies and to a large extent influenced my decision. I would not have and did not support this project without these studies.
ES46	W4 seems to affect the most wetlands and tributaries of west corridor. It also has 5 sites as opposed to 3 of potentially hazardous materials. C3 has 11 potentially hazardous sites as opposed to five in central corridor. I'm impressed with the number and depth of the environmental studies conducted.
ES47	Weather data is prospective and nicely designed but unfortunately is based on 2 of the mildest winters the Palouse has ever seen. The data's complete representation of the area over years is uncertain. There is no question wildlife habitat will be affected. Some species are struggling or unknown. This may seem like small pieces of the habitat pie but taken in concert with surrounding area changes—there is very little remaining that is unaltered in someway.
ES48	I am very impressed with the public outreach provided. The digital modeling of the road alignment alternatives made it very east to visualize. Having the consultant who prepared the various environmental studies available for questions was also quite beneficial. Well done.

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ES49	According to the farmer I have talked to, most feel that the prime farmland that is reported to be impacted is incorrect. The eastern routes hit a lot of scrubland vs. the western routes, which are mostly prime farmland yet, the number (IR ratings) are fairly close. I would suggest visiting with companies like McGregor's or Wilber-Ellis who service these lands to get an unbiased opinion about prime land those who own the land aren't the ones to ask.
ES50	While I wasn't able to observe all of the studies, the ones that I saw were good and seemed thorough. I look forward to viewing this info online.
ES51	Eastern approaches encroach on prime pheasant partridge habitat. Would prefer highway to be as close to existing road as possible
ES52	Looks like everything was covered very well in all areas.
ES53	These studies seems to confirm the wisdom of the easterly routes—and E2 appears to have the best impact upon the environment. I am impressed with the quality of the studies done.
ES54	The environmental impacts of this project are of prime importance to me. It seems to ____ the western alternatives have much less impact on the environment because they are in areas of less topography (altitude change) and therefore would cause less long-term impact. There seemed to be less impact on ____plant habitat to those routes. My personal choice would be W4 primarily because it ____ of existing US 95 than the others.
ES55	Did not study enough to have a definitive opinion—strong—on the west or central. Feel E1 is the best of the eastern options.
ES56	I don't have any.
ES57	Didn't have time to look at this.
ES58	Thank you for all the good work. It seems to me that W4 or C3 would fix most of the worst problems, which conserving our resources. I could live with either. Generally don't like any of the E plans. Thank you again.
ES59	Very thorough
The comments below were received by mail.	
ES60	I am concerned that the climate study was done during a period of abnormal warmth. I see Paradise Ridge daily—it is frequently covered in clouds, including the areas in which E-1 to E-3 are located. I think the fog data was skewed by a warmer-than-normal year and that these roads will be much more dangerous than anticipated.
ES61	The climate analysis is not convincing, of the ten different alternatives, there are only two values for fog (49 & 69 hours) and two values for road ice (128 or 158 hours). This would indicate that there was not sufficient data to do a site-specific analysis sufficient to compare the different alternatives. Thus, no conclusions can be drawn. This is what any peer reviewer of this data would conclude. (1) Thus we must fall back on anecdotal evidence. I walk my dog every morning on the Paradise Creek path with a clear view of Moscow Mountain. In the winter, at least 30-50 mornings it is not frozen on Paradise Creek path, but one can see the fresh snow line on Moscow Mountain, where the previous nights rain/dew in the valley was snow/frost at the higher elevations part way up Moscow Mtn. This snow line is commonly close to the base of the mountain, approximately 2600-3000 feet in elevation. (2) I have often driven my car over Moscow Mtn on steakhouse grade in the winter and often have noticed that although the road is wet at the bottom of the grade, it becomes frozen (& slippery) at some point up the grade I assume this point corresponds roughly to the snow line in the #1 above. The above two observations are common knowledge in Moscow; countless others I know have made the same observations. Extrapolating these observations to the other geographical <u>protrubence</u> Thorn Area, Paradise Ridge, one would conclude that the Eastern routes (which are highest) would have a certain number of mornings on which they would be frozen, but the lower (C & W) routes would just be wet. (IT COMMONLY RAINS AT THE LOWER VALLEY ELEVATIONS WHEN IT SNOWS UP HIGHER—THIS IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE, BUT THIS IS NOT REFLECTED IN THE CLIMATE ANALYSIS!)
ES62	Very thoroughly and well done! Let's get this highway completed ASAP!
ES63	It appears your studies suggest that the eastern routes have more environmental impact on wildlife and native vegetation. The eastern will have more fog and snow. Use the existing road. Why have two areas disrupted.
ES64	No comment.
ES65	Felt they were thorough and professionally executed. Well presented.
ES66	It seems that the studies cover all the important factors but some data cannot be accurately gathered in such a short time period. There are possible effects from this roadway that we may not realize until its completion. I will always be in favor of less roadways.

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ES67	Paradise Ridge has conservation protection. It is windier, foggier, and has more snowfall than other surrounding areas. The 4-lanes divided for the 7-mile stretch are unnecessary. Maintain farmland, disturb the least businesses, and protect plant and wildlife species. C1 seems least invasive. Carry forward. Focus on signage as increasing safety in dangerous areas with decreased speed limits.
ES68	It shouldn't have taken a lawsuit to force ITD to do the right thing. Too bad ITD didn't do the right thing from the start. Now, the trick is to use the data wisely and not try to manipulate the results in order to do what you want. If the data (& common sense) indicate an answer ITD doesn't want to hear, don't discount it. Use it and find the best solution.
ES69	I think some of them are flawed—don't agree with the weather station—should have been more north.
ES70	I think that you did a good job with the studies and appreciate that you made them (and the people that did them) available for comment. This goes for the monthly breakfasts as well. I especially appreciate that you put the reports on a CD and made that available to the public. Good luck and I hope you make the right decision.
ES71	All environmental appears to be mitagatable on all routes, No environmental preference then. Plant expert lives on Paradise Ridge—major conflict of interest—highly question her results. You should have chosen someone else for this study.
ES72	Weather conditions for the eastern routes would be more valid if the measurements were taken at points on the proposed routes—i.e. walk out into fields to do measurements.
ES73	I can't imagine what else you could have studied. Your environmental assessment seems very thorough to me.
ES74	“Good” level of public outreach! Level of data collection not adequate for this stage of public presentation. Will cause problems for ITD without greater follow up. Challenges that can arise in final routing pick may not easily be defended/supported due to early report delivery requirements...recommend higher degree of accuracy for this community.
ES75	Thank you for doing these valuable studies and for hiring local experts to conduct them especially Juanita Lickthardt and Shelly Gilmore. These studies should have been done initially.
ES76	
ES77	Idaho Transportation Dept. has done a thorough job of studying the various alignments and I offer my thanks for all this work. I see a combination of routes W4 and C3 as a good one, beginning with W4 and then switching, to avoid the aesthetic negative impact of the western route, but also displace fewer home and businesses.
ES78	It is difficult for me to assess the environmental aspects of the project as I don't have the background (or time) to evaluate them. I do appreciate your efforts (ITD). I do have a suggestion for the alternative routes. How about W4 to where W2, W3 and W4 intersect, when switch to the W2 route. This would seem to me to cost a lot less, and be less controversial. Please take a look at it.
ES79	I didn't have time to look at the displays, so I took a CD. The studies looked fairly complete, although one “folder” seemed to be empty. Thank you for your effort.
ES80	The environmental studies were presented in such a summary fashion, that it is hard to judge their overall worth. However, they did help me to evaluate the alternatives. I think the analysis of effects on future development were pretty skimpy.
ES81	I did not have the time to spend talking with the individuals about the environmental studies. So I do not know much about their methods or focus within each study. However I would like to have been presented with more thorough info regarding economic impact regarding increased development AKA SPRAWL—that, to me, could be quite negative.
ES82	<p>Climate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One year's data is almost meaningless on the Palouse and the 1-year of the study was an extreme year for temperature and snowfall. 2. The inversion mentioned is not typical in winter, ONLY in summer. This winter's snow pattern is more typical with snow as you go up in elevation and bare ground at the lower elevations. This is classic case of vertical difference. <p>Sensitive Plant Sites: Proximity to sites is as important as crossing a site in terms of pollution effects and weed dispersal.</p> <p>Wildlife:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The study underestimates movement of ungulates in the mid and near north sections of Paradise Ridge. 2. Wildlife movement increases with proximity to the forested areas. Therefore, mitigation and accidents is greatest with routes in proximity to forest. 3. Noise will be a negative factor for non-motorized recreation on Paradise Ridge. The closer the route to the ridge, the greater the negative impact.

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ES83	The climate study is not valid! One year is not an appropriate length of time for such a study. In addition the year of the study was the warmest and most atypical in the 27 years we have lived here. To further this anomaly, the inversion, which occurred last winter, caused opposite data regarding temperatures. In winter, temperatures are lower as you rise in elevation. We saw this demonstrated this week with the snow. The summertime inversion is normal, but an inversion like experienced in winter 2005 is not normal! However, the data stating the Western routes were colder in winter caused a faulty conclusion that all sites were equal regarding climatic conditions and no alignment should be eliminated because of microclimate severity.
ES84	I have enjoyed the various experts that I've listened to at various Tuesday morning meetings and have learned a lot about the various aspects of this environment (wetlands, prime farmlands, ungulate habitats and climatic conditions).
ES85	A much better job than that first boondoggle of a proposal! Thanks for listening. I hope you do a better job of landscaping that you did with that pathetic planting along S. Main Street!
ES86	Providing the environmental reports on a CD is a capital idea! It made the "visual impact" report quite meaningful. Climate and precipitation data were limited but useful more the less. My choices of combination routes (W2 & C3) are my best attempt to trade off among the impacts and potentialities. This was an excellent attempt to inform and arouse public interest. Congratulations to ITD for a job well done.
ES87	I think you have made more than enough studies on environmental issues.
ES88	ITD has done an excellent job of presenting all kinds of information from various experts at the Tuesday morning meetings.
ES89	<p>Environmental studies have been expansive in some areas. However, other areas seem to have been given less time. With so much to study I can see where the more vocal you are the more attention is paid to your area. The eastern routes have been shown to be close to some areas like, "Palouse Prairie, Steven's Springs and a pond where deer would water. It seems that by altering the alignment a bit those issues could be addressed without "throwing the baby out with the bathwater." There are environmental concerns on all routes and I don't feel that heavily screamed about should outweigh the quieter ones. The western routes heavily impacts extremely rich farmland. Please look at actual crop yields, Canada geese nesting (they are here now), a stream that has run and fed very old trees (many on our property) especially the willow trees since before white men even came to this area. We have come up with a photograph of the "White mans Sign" that I referred to earlier in this process. I will send you a photocopy soon, as I only have the original at this time. The sign was about 10-12 feet wide and 10 feet high. It read "Gem State—the coming of the first white man to the site of Moscow"</p> <p>On June 20, 1855, Isaac Changals Sternum, first governor of Washington Territory and superintendent of Indian Affairs, passed newer this point with a ____ of 21 men. He quotes: "And here I was astonished not simply at the luxuriance of the grass but the richness of the soil."</p> <p>The same trees that start there today are in the picture and judging from the women's clothes in the picture it was taken in the 40s or 50s. The willow trees have been there at least 80-100 years! We saw a photograph but do not have a copy yet, of one of the Deestens' parents (Bud is in his 80s) with a model T and the trees are in the background. The western route would take these out and disturb the creek, which has run since before the white man came.</p>
ES90	"No disproportionately high impact" entry in "Environmental Justice" row for Eastern routes should be change to "no effect" (or all routes s/b marked "no disproportionately high speed"). If there is no difference worth weighting among the various routes, don't give the impression that there is a difference by assigning a different wording on the matrix.
ES91	The prime farmland impact rating is misleading. It does not take into account the variability of the land productivity along the route. So, for example the summation for routes may be similar but the western routes and, to a lesser degree, the central routes have greater variation (really productive ground to extremely marginal ground) where as the eastern routes have less variability. The western and central routes cut through the best and most productive ground in Snow Valley and the corridor. The ground on the eastern routes tends to be more erodeable and less productive. That's why a lot of it is in CRP and needs a permanent ground cover. Also the rating does not appear to take into account the affect that splitting production unit has on the cost of production for farmers (additional moves cost time and money). The rating does take into account _____ which leaves small un-farmable units, but that is a different cost to the farmers/landowners.

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ES92	Unfortunately you were forced into this extremely comprehensive plan and at what cost? But, you did a beautiful job; you left no stone unturned, accumulated a wealth of info in a short time and hopefully satisfied the naysayer before they cost us any more money! I can't think of anything else you could have studies—beautiful job and kudos to all involved!! Great presentation, very informative, and I would think this would lead to the best decision. Thank you for everyone's hard work.
ES93	<p>The studies generally claim “no effect” for most target species, typically because species are not seen within the study area. Eastern routes E1, E2, E3 will destroy the last hope of re-establishment of species within the study area.</p> <p>Noise and visual analysis boundaries should have extended beyond the study area to include south aspect slopes within the southern Moscow city limits. The visual-genesis interactive displays database contained enough information, fortunately, that one could see what a disaster the highway will be those who might seek solace at the UI Arboretum, elks Cemetery, or other parks. Enjoyment of other venues such as UI golf course or the new Clyde Park and potential ball field will also be impacted.</p> <p>The weather study is interesting but far too little to late. If these systems had been installed in 1999 or 2000 when critics suggested same, you might have a data set to work with. All you have now is proof that our weather for the last year or so has greatly departed from normal.</p>