



March 25, 2015

Section 4(f) *de minimis*
Williams Creek (Shoup) Bridge
ID PFH 91(1)

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD), in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and Lemhi County, is proposing to replace the Williams Creek Road Bridge, locally known as Shoup Bridge, across the Salmon River. Shoup Bridge is located on Williams Creek Road approximately 5 miles south of Salmon, Idaho. This crossing provides the primary access to the central portion of Salmon-Challis National Forest, private property, and commercial mining operations on the west side of the Salmon River. The proposed action consists of replacing the existing single-lane bridge with a two-lane bridge, including road realignment on the western side of the bridge and limited road widening of the eastern bridge approach.

In order to maintain access across the Salmon River during construction, WFLHD will use a slide-in design that consists of construction of the replacement bridge in a temporary location upstream (south) while the existing bridge remains in use, then traffic would be detoured to the replacement bridge in its temporary location while the existing bridge is removed, and finally the new bridge would be slid into place after the existing bridge is removed.

SECTION 4(F)

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act (heretofore referred to as Section 4(f)), codified in federal law as 49 U.S.C. 303 and implemented at 23 CFR 774, requires that FHWA may not grant approval for a project if the project uses land of any public park, recreation area, significant wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or significant historic site unless (1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to the use of such land, and (2) any such program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to these resources.

A *de minimis* impact is one that will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities qualifying a property for protection under Section 4(f).

PURPOSE AND NEED

The proposed action is needed because the existing bridge structure is deteriorated and the single lane design impedes traffic flow. The existing bridge has a sufficiency rating of 58 out of 100 and is subject to flood waters and ice flows, which have left evident damage at the bridge

abutments and piers. To detour around the bridge requires travel in excess of 100 miles. The piers of the existing bridge present a safety risk for boats entering the Salmon River at the public boat launch immediately upstream of Shoup Bridge. The purpose of the proposed action is to restore bridge reliability by addressing functional obsolescence and structural condition risks while improving the hydraulic capacity, decreasing traffic congestion, and improving safety and the natural environment (e.g., habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species).

The new bridge would relieve traffic conflicts caused by the existing single-lane bridge; alleviate queuing for the bridge which sometimes back up onto US 93 and presents a safety issue; and accommodate heavy truck traffic from timber harvest, forest fire, and mining operations. It would improve safety by correcting the existing bridge width deficiency, re-aligning the roadway to reduce the S-curve at the western project limit, and removing piers in the water that pose a risk to boaters. The new bridge would also enhance access to USFS lands, improve pedestrian and bicycle safety over the bridge, reduce maintenance costs, and provide long-term benefits to threatened and endangered fish species present in the Salmon River.

DESCRIPTION OF SECTION 4(F) PROPERTY

The eastern extent of Williams Creek Road, including the eastern abutment of Shoup Bridge and eastern bridge approach, passes through the boundary of the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site, as shown in Exhibit 1 and later in Exhibit 3. The Shoup Bridge Recreation Site is administered by the BLM. The portion of the site on the north side of Williams Creek Road is unoccupied and not used for any specific active recreation purposes but provides an intact riparian habitat area. On the south side of Williams Creek Road, the site provides a developed campground with six sites that accommodate recreational vehicles and tents, a boat ramp on the Salmon River, a day use picnic and parking area, drinking water, and restrooms, as identified in Exhibit 3.

Exhibit 1. Shoup Bridge Recreation Site as viewed from Shoup Bridge looking East



Exhibit 2. Shoup Bridge Recreation Site Entrance on US 93



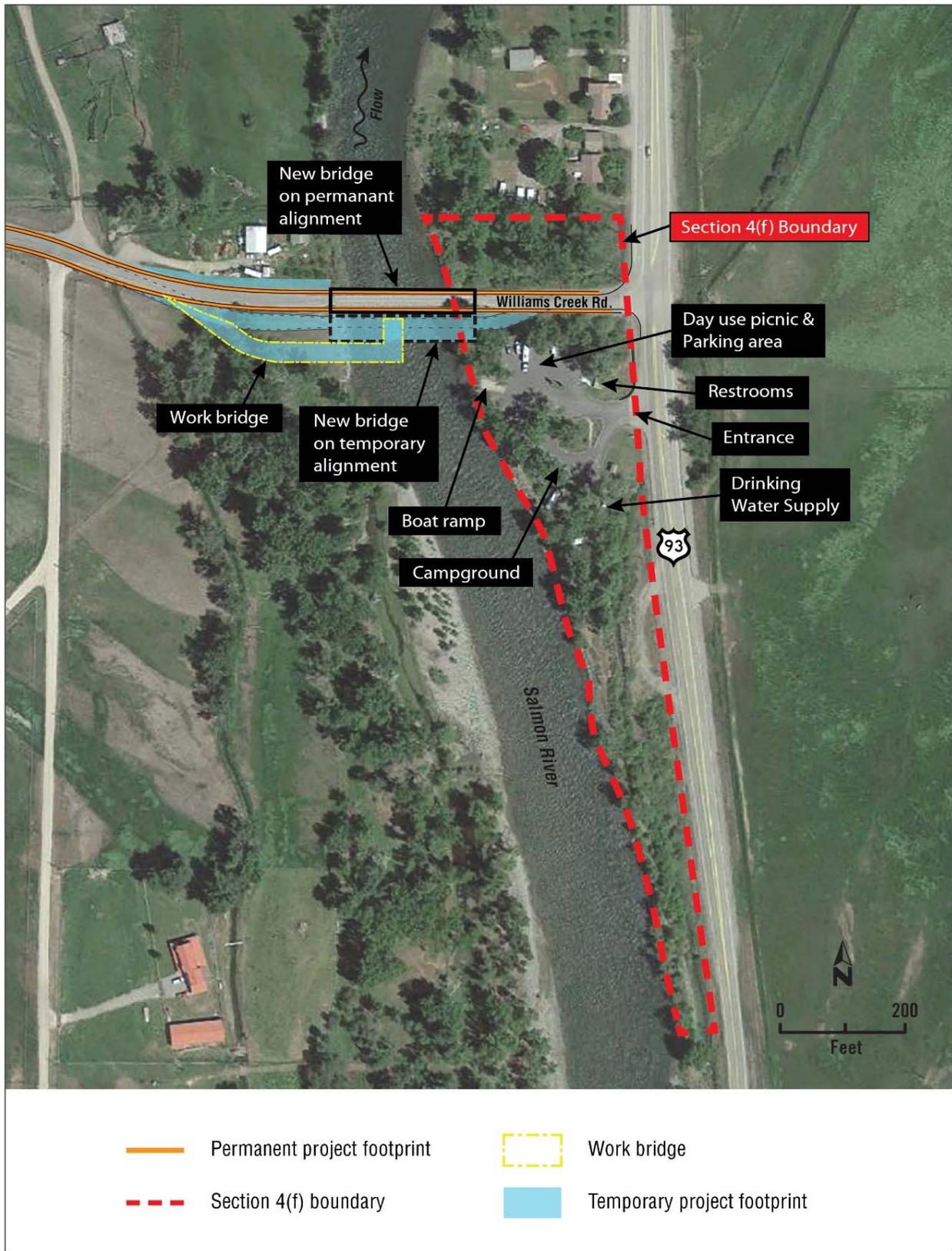
This publicly-owned site is open to the public year-round. Its primary use season is April through October when it serves as a popular launch site for rafters and anglers. Access to the site is provided directly off of US 93 approximately 170 feet south of the intersection of Williams Creek Road and US 93, as shown in Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3.

WFLHD has determined that the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site qualifies as a Section 4(f) property, and is therefore subject to the requirement of Section 4(f). There are no other parks, recreation areas, or wildlife and waterfowl refuges near the proposed action, nor are there any historic sites near the proposed action that are included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places; therefore, the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site is the only property that is subject to Section 4(f).

IMPACTS TO SECTION 4(F) RESOURCE

Exhibit 3 shows the relationship of the permanent project footprint to the existing features on the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site. This exhibit also illustrates the boundary of the temporary project footprint during construction, which include a work bridge up to and over a portion of the Salmon River and areas needed to maintain access across the Salmon River during demolition of the existing bridge.

Exhibit 3. Impacts to Shoup Bridge Recreation Site



Permanent impacts and benefits to the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site that would result from the proposed action include:

- Improved access and safety for recreational users of the site crossing the Salmon River, including motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, resulting from the widened bridge. The widened bridge would have two vehicle lanes, as compared with the single lane on the existing bridge, and shoulders to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Improved navigation for recreational and commercial river users (boaters/rafters) launching boats and rafts at the site's boat ramp. The new single span bridge design would remove the existing piers that present navigational dangers.
- Widened eastern bridge approach on the both sides of Williams Creek Road would permanently convert 3,200 square feet (0.07 acre) of the site from a vegetated open space area adjacent to the existing roadway and roadway embankment to new roadway and roadway embankment, also converting an existing pervious surface to impervious roadway.

Temporary impacts to the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site during construction would include:

- Noise, dust, changes in the visual landscape, and traffic impacts generated by construction equipment, potentially detracting from recreational users experience at the site.
- Closure of the campground due to nighttime work as required for the slide-in of the new bridge.
- Removal of approximately 16 trees near the south side of the eastern bridge abutment (as seen in Exhibit 1) to allow for construction of the new bridge and to accommodate the connection to the new bridge on the temporary alignment during demolition of the existing bridge.
- Temporary relocation of the overhead powerline that runs along the north side of Williams Creek Road.
- Traffic delays crossing Shoup Bridge resulting in additional vehicles idling near the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site, resulting in noise and air pollution as well as inconvenience for recreational users of the site attempting to cross Shoup Bridge.
- Navigational changes for river users, including those launching boats and rafts from the boat ramp at the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site, resulting from a reduced width of passable channel under Shoup Bridge when a work bridge and temporary supports are in place.
- Temporary river navigation and boat ramp delays and closures due to overhead risks when existing bridge components are removed and new bridge components are installed.

TEMPORARY OCCUPANCY

The proposed action would result in the temporary occupancy of approximately 2,475 square feet (0.06 acres) of open space on the south side of Williams Creek Road within the Shoup Bridge

Recreation Site that would be used to provide a connection to the new bridge on its temporary alignment, as shown in Exhibit 3. Under 23 CFR 774, temporary occupancy constitutes an exception to the requirements for Section 4(f) approval. Per 23 CFR 774.13(d), the following five criteria are considered in determining temporary occupancy:

- (1) Duration must be temporary, i.e., less than the time needed for construction of the project, and there should be no change in ownership of the land;
- (2) Scope of the work must be minor, i.e., both the nature and the magnitude of the changes to the Section 4(f) property are minimal;
- (3) There are no anticipated permanent adverse physical impacts, nor will there be interference with the protected activities, features, or attributes of the property, on either a temporary or permanent basis;
- (4) The land being used must be fully restored, i.e., the property must be returned to a condition which is at least as good as that which existed prior to the project; and
- (5) There must be documented agreement of the official(s) with jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) resource regarding the above conditions.

A total of approximately 2,475 square feet (0.06 acre) of land within the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site would be temporarily utilized to provide a connection to the new bridge on its temporary alignment, as shown within the temporary project footprint identified on Exhibit 3. This short-term use of this area qualifies as a temporary use and is exempt as a use under Section 4(f) for the following reasons:

- The duration of the occupancy would be temporary in nature. The land within the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site would be needed for construction for approximately 18 to 24 months. Once the existing bridge is removed, the new bridge can be slid over to its permanent alignment and the temporary connection can be removed. Restoration of the temporarily-occupied area would occur after the temporary roadway connection is removed.
- The scope of the work taking place on the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site would be minor. The connection to the detour bridge is needed to maintain access across the Salmon River during construction. These activities would be temporary in nature and the end result, a widened bridge, would benefit users of the Shoup Bridge Recreation Site.
- There are no anticipated permanent adverse physical impacts or interference with the protected activities, features, or attributes of the property. The trees that would be removed are cottonwood trees and would be replanted following construction. The site would generally remain open during construction so that visitors would have access to the boat ramp, campground, and other amenities on the site. Work hours would be limited so as to minimize interference with overnight camping activities. Limited closures of the boat ramp and campground may be needed for safety concerns and for short-term nighttime work as described below. Parking for the day use area and campground would not be affected.

- The land would be fully restored following construction, including replanting trees and other vegetation, repair of asphalt paving if necessary, and removal of all construction equipment and debris.
- FHWA will be seeking documented agreement from the official(s) with jurisdiction (BLM) as required by Criteria 5 above.

MEASURES TO MINIMIZE HARM

Measures to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property that have been incorporated into the design and construction plan for the proposed action include:

- The day use area and restrooms will remain open and accessible to the public during construction.
- Minimization of temporary closures of the Salmon River and the boat ramp to river users during the summer construction season (Memorial Day through Labor Day) due to overhead construction activities.
- Installation of a floating boom in the Salmon River to guide river users from the work bridges and to channel river users through the east half of the river.
- Limited work hours during the summer construction season to 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. except for a 48-hour period for nighttime work for the new bridge slide-in.
- Limit campground closure during the summer construction season to that period required for nighttime work for the new bridge slide-in.
- Provide advance notice of temporary campground closure on the BLM website if nighttime work is required for the new bridge slide-in.
- Minimization of land converted to right of way through utilization of the existing bridge alignment to minimize permanent project footprint.
- Avoidance of long-term closure that may result detours greater than 100 miles to cross the Salmon River by keeping the existing bridge open during construction of the new bridge and by using the new bridge on its temporary alignment during removal of the existing bridge.
- Community input incorporated into the design of the replacement bridge to provide a structure that is visually appealing and blends with the surrounding landscape.
- Revegetation of all staging areas and other disturbed areas.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

WFLHD coordinated with BLM, the Official with Jurisdiction, during the design process for the proposed action, including interagency coordination meetings with the BLM on May 17, 2012, November 13, 2014, and February 4, 2015. On March 27, 2014, the WFLHD notified the BLM of its intent to make a *de minimis* impact finding per 23 CFR 774.5(b)(2)(ii).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A public scoping meeting was held on August 12, 2014, in Salmon, Idaho, to introduce and provide an overview of the proposed action. Approximately 1,100 area residences and businesses received a postcard invitation; 41 individuals signed in at the meeting. A public project update meeting was held on February 4, 2015 to provide new information regarding the selected bridge type, size, and location as well as construction staging and detour bridge options, including the slide-in design. The same area residences and businesses were contacted by postcard invitation; 23 individuals signed in at the meeting.

The project website (<http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/id/shoup/>) provides an overview and maps of the proposed action, public meeting materials, contact information, and project updates.