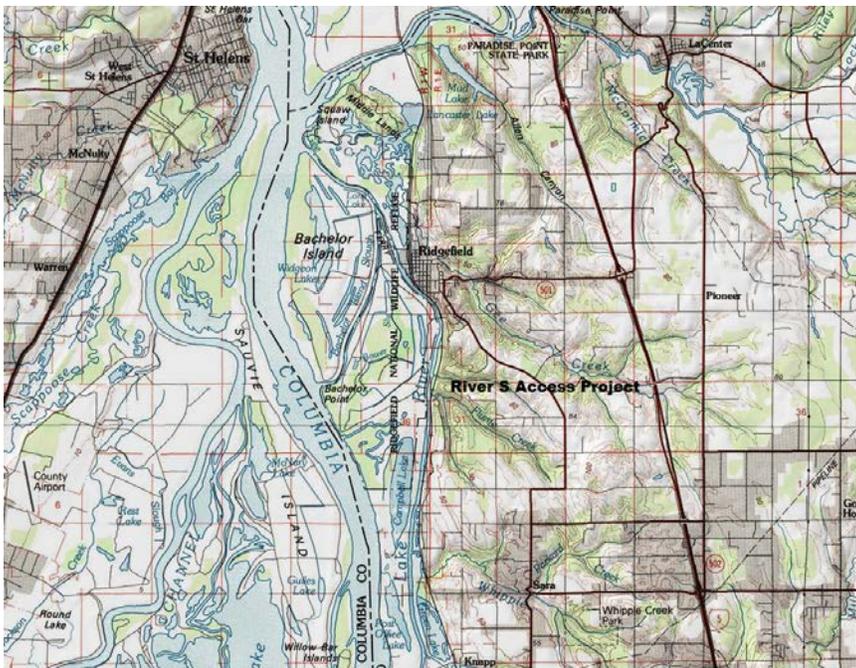


**PUBLIC NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY of
De minimis SECTION 4(f) DETERMINATION**
for
Refuge Access Improvements
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge
Clark County, Washington

The Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD) of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in partnership with the US Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), is proposing to improve access by replacing a deficient bridge with a new bridge over Lake River to provide access to the River S Unit of the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge. Additional improvements (roadway design, facilitating multimodal transportation uses) to the access point will also be considered in the proposed action. The project addresses identified safety and mobility issues of the current access conditions to the Wildlife Refuge River S Unit. Access by emergency, commercial, and private vehicles, is considered deficient based on the presence of a steep single lane gravel entrance road, an at-grade rail crossings with potential for inadequate emergency access, and a bridge nearing the end of its service life.

Improvements are needed to provide continued safe, convenient access for commercial, recreational, and maintenance traffic accessing the River S Unit of the Refuge. Proposed work includes replacing the existing, trestle-style River S Bridge with a new bridge immediately to the south of the existing bridge. The total bridge width will be 32 feet wide, and will include two 12-foot travel lanes plus a 2-foot wide pedestrian walkway and will be approximately 500 feet long to span both the US Coast Guard navigation channel of Lake River and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad tracks east of the bridge. Because Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is categorized under a 'wildlife and waterfowl refuge', the project is subject to Section 4(f). Because of the criteria set forth by Department of Transportation a *De Minimis* Section 4(f) evaluation will be prepared by FHWA.



Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended, allows approval of a transportation project that uses publicly owned land in a wildlife refuge if there is no feasible alternative and the project includes planning to minimize impacts. Projects with minimal impacts may be determined *de minimis* without analyzing alternatives.

The *de minimis* Section 4(f) determination is available for review <http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/wa/ridgefield-wildlife-refuge/> Comments may be directed to Steve Morrow at (360) 619-7811, by email to stephen.morrow@dot.gov, or in writing to the address below by September 26, 2014.

Federal Highway Administration
610 East Fifth Street
Vancouver, Washington 98661-3801