

## RESPONSE TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions and comments were included on comment forms received during and after the U.S. 95 Thorncreek Road to Moscow open houses on January 18-19, 2006.

ITD asked the scientists and consultants who completed the relevant studies to answer the questions posed by the public. Following are the questions that were asked and the scientists' or consultants' responses. Some of the questions have been paraphrased.

### Design Standards

#### **Q: What grade is involved with each alignment and for what distance?**

A:

- ❖ Alternative **W-1** the maximum grade for this alternative will be 4.57% for an approximate distance of 6300'±.
- ❖ Alternative **W-2** the maximum grade for this alternative will be 4.704% for an approximate distance of 5500'±.
- ❖ Alternative **W-3** the maximum grades for this alternative will be 5.0% for an approximate distance of 2750'± and 4.95% for an approximate distance of 5500'±.
- ❖ Alternative **W-4** the maximum grade for this alternative will be 4.914% for an approximate distance of 5200'±.
- ❖ Alternative **C-1** the maximum grade for this alternative will be 5.0% for an approximate distance of 5700'± and 2000'±.
- ❖ Alternative **C-2** the maximum grade for this alternative will be 4.9% for an approximate distance of 5200'±.
- ❖ Alternative **C-3** the maximum grades for this alternative will be 5.0% for an approximate distance of 5700'± and 3000'± and 4.6% for an approximate distance of 2500'±.
- ❖ Alternative **E-1** the maximum grade for this alternative will be 5.0% for an approximate distance of 5000'±.
- ❖ Alternative **E-2** the maximum grades for this alternative will be 4.57% for an approximate distance of 2300'± and 5.0% for an approximate distance of 4800'±.
- ❖ Alternative **E-3** the maximum grades for this alternative will be 5.0% for an approximate distance of 2000'±, 4.5% for an approximate distance of 1500'± and 5% for an approximate distance of 4500'±.

#### **Q: Where will the alternate truck routes go?**

A: **There are no alternate truck routes proposed at this time**

#### **Q: What is the amount of cut and fill required for each alternative/alignment?**

A:

- ❖ Alternative **W-1** the approximate excavation is 6.8± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **W-2** the approximate excavation is 6.0± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **W-3** the approximate excavation is 6.7± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **W-4** the approximate excavation is 3.7± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **C-1** the approximate excavation is 2.3± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **C-2** the approximate excavation is 3.8± million cubic yards.

- ❖ Alternative **C-3** the approximate excavation is 2.3± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **E-1** the approximate excavation is 6.2± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **E-2** the approximate excavation is 3.7± million cubic yards.
- ❖ Alternative **E-3** the approximate excavation is 4.6± million cubic yards.

**Q: How many bridges and overpasses are there for each alternative/alignment?**

A:

- ❖ Alternative **W-1** will have three grade separations.
- ❖ Alternative **W-2** will have two grade separations.
- ❖ Alternative **W-3** will have three grade separations.
- ❖ Alternative **W-4** will have one grade separation.
- ❖ Alternative **C-1** will have 0 grade separations.
- ❖ Alternative **C-2** will have one grade separation.
- ❖ Alternative **C-3** will have one grade separation.
- ❖ Alternative **E-1** will have one grade separation.
- ❖ Alternative **E-2** will have one grade separation.
- ❖ Alternative **E-3** will have one grade separation.

**Q: Will ITD consider altering alignments slightly to avoid environmental issues like Palouse Prairie? I don't want eastern alignments eliminated if issues can be avoid by rerouting the road.**

A: ITD will consider this during the final design phase of this project.

**Q: Is ITD considering the new route's future attachment to a Moscow ring road?**

A: ITD does not have an approved alignment for the ring road at this time from the city. The ring road may have to access U.S. 95 at a later date

**Q: Will there be bike paths on the highway?**

A: 8-foot shoulders will allow bike traffic.

**Q: Will there be Park and Ride lots?**

A: None are being proposed for this project.

**Q: Will ITD plant pine trees along route to replace those from Lewiston to Genesee?**

A: ITD is very concerned about trees along the right-of-way since they grow up and create shade and ice, which causes safety problems.

**Q: Under the Moscow Comprehensive Plan, a context-sensitive design would call for a route that minimizes the increased visual impacts and noise, and also reduced aesthetics and quality of life. Is ITD following the comp plan?**

A: ITD will address this during the project development phase of the project.

**Q: Instead of a four-lane divided highway, has ITD considered a two-lane undivided highway with passing and turn lanes?**

A: This design would not meet the purpose and need statement.

**Q: If central alignment is chosen, will ITD design a five-lane section at Reisenauer/Davis properties, with center turn lane for access to homes?**

A: ITD will consider this during the final design phase of the project.

**Q: Can you realign the routes to miss Hidden Village?**

A: The alignments do not impact Hidden Village.

**Q: What do the costs in the matrix include?**

A: The cost in the matrix include all roadway and structure costs, but do not including the right-of-way costs.

## **Safety**

**Q: The safety analysis is flawed and invalid (detailed calculation provided)**

A: Since all proposed alignments will be designed and constructed to Federal Highway Administration standards as adopted by the Idaho Transportation Department, the safety features on all the alignments will be similar. Identifiable differences in the alignments that could affect the safety of users are the million vehicle miles traveled (length of the route times the average annual daily traffic count) and the level of access control (the higher the number of access points to the highway the higher the number of traffic flow conflict points, therefore higher risk to the motorist).

**Q: This analysis simply uses average accident per mile of roadway and estimates numbers of accidents based on route distance. Did ITD take into account the differences in moisture and temperature in the safety analysis?**

A: The weather is unpredictable; therefore trying to predict potential crashes that may result from future weather conditions is not possible. The ITD has roadway maintenance staff and equipment that respond to deteriorating road surface conditions to maintain the best practical driving surface for the traveling public.

**Q: Safe driving conditions will vary considerably depending on the route selected for realignment. It appears the Alt. E routes are significantly less safe than other alternatives. Is this true?**

A: An analysis was completed based on the two factors that vary between the proposed alignments – the length of the alignment (longer routes mean more exposure) and the level of access control (more access points, approaches / driveways, the more traffic flow conflict points, therefore more risk to the motorist).

**Q: It appears that C1 has lower accident rate than calculated.**

A: A check of C1 calculations reveals no changes are necessary.

**Q: ITD needs to consider the safety of carpoolers getting picked up along one of the new alignments.**

A: There are no carpool park-and-ride lots identified in the project concept. If this becomes a project requirement, appropriate access points can be identified and designed into the project.

**Q: Can ITD recalculate the safety analysis to include weather-related accidents and wildlife/vehicle collisions?**

A: Weather, animal travel paths and driver ability are all unpredictable factors that cannot be accounted for in the prediction of future crash statistics.

**Environmental**  
**Climate**

*Response to all comments received on the Climate Study can be viewed in the Response to Public Comments Climate Report.*

**Community Profile and Induced Development**

**Q: Why didn't ITD take into consideration an alternate route, detour, bypass, ring road around Moscow?**

A: ITD conducted an Alternate Route study for Moscow. An Origin Destination (OD) study was completed which identified most S.H. 8 and U.S. 95 user destinations as the city of Moscow. The finding of the study was that an alternate route project is not warranted any time within the next 20 years.

The Ring Road is a concept developed by the city of Moscow and the Moscow Transportation Commission. At this time the city is not planning or developing the project. All alignments being developed by ITD for the Thorncreek Road to Moscow project will be able to tie into a future Ring Road with a connector.

**Q: Why didn't ITD take potential economic and land use impacts into consideration?**

A: The Induced Development Analysis looked at potential changes in land use and property values. The purpose of the Induced Development Analysis report is to identify and analyze the indirect impacts of the proposed alignment alternatives on land use, and future residential and commercial development, through the use of the Delphi process. The overall objective of this report is to answer the question: How would the U.S. 95 Thorncreek to Moscow project affect the location, pattern, and pace of residential, commercial, and industrial development in the area?

The Delphi process considered those economic and land use impacts for which reasonable assumptions could be made. The Delphi panelists were asked to consider changes in land use, likely development along county roads, need for revision of existing plans, changes in property values, and regional trade, among other things.

The Delphi panelists were a collection of experts and professionals gathered to provide feedback for likely development scenarios (not to select an alternative for U.S. 95) relative to the proposed transportation project. A well accepted and respected research technique, the Delphi process (relative to roadway projects) typically includes land use and transportation planners, developers, agency officials, and business leaders who have informed perspectives on likely development trends and influences. The purpose of the induced development portion of the report, as measured in part by the Delphi process, is not to establish a value statement. It is a means to

assess what might happen as a result of a certain action; it is not a declaration of whether an outcome is good or bad.

**Q: Why didn't ITD consider how the bus system will be affected?**

A: The Environmental Justice Report considered that transit service will continue to be provided along the existing alignment independently of the alternative selected. Since the report is charged with identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations, it acknowledges the importance of alternative modes.

The study of the transit system itself would be more appropriately discussed in a Community Impact Assessment Report. It is well understood and recognized that the perception of the public regarding impacts and their identified issues must be reviewed and analyzed. Moreover, the EIS is a continually evolving process which is incumbent upon the participation of the public to identify reasonable impacts not previously identified earlier in the process, and there might be the need to look at possible impacts (such as on mass transit) not previously identified as the process moves forward.

**Q: Why didn't the socio-economic evaluation criteria consider any impacts to Moscow, social and psychological aspects, visual and land use impacts in terms of aesthetics, compatibility with existing plans, use of public services and facilities (such as schools, recreation facilities, places of worship, and natural areas of special significance to the community)?**

A: The purpose of the Community Profile is to analyze demographic trends from the general (Latah County) to the specific (project area) to provide indicators for use in the development of an impact assessment within the environmental justice analysis, and also inform the induced development analysis given current and forecast trends in land use. This report has been approached in that manner by looking at the whole (Latah County) and focusing in on the part (the project area) in order to determine the general characteristics of the community as they may relate to the corridor extending from Thorncreek to milepost 344 south of Palouse River Drive. The Community Profile section assesses community trends and conditions - looking at population, land use, the economic base, employment and housing characteristics and helps characterize the affected human environment.

The Induced Development analysis looks at how the project would affect the location, pattern and pace of residential, commercial, and industrial development in the area. It assesses land use impacts and compatibility with the city of Moscow's existing plans.

It is not unreasonable to state that a project may have impacts on people located away from the project area, and in fact this concept is recognized in the Community Impact Assessment guide (FHWA). Again, however, the community profile is just that - a profile - to be used in the assessment and formulation of conclusions in other analysis to be performed. Included in this profile was a listing of relevant goals and objectives gleaned from the various local planning documents (comprehensive plans, ordinances). As far as the effects on public facilities and services (schools, places of worship), these topics would be more appropriately analyzed in a Community Impact Assessment.

**Q: Can ITD provide more information about increased development?**

A: The long term or indirect effects on future development are difficult to predict, and to propose or “paint a picture” of what the precise development landscape will be is faulty and unjustifiable. Of course, it may be surmised that direct or short-term impacts of a project can be predicted to happen sooner, closer, and with more certainty to existing or pending development than upon development that “may” occur. Development of any type is guided by many intervening factors, including market conditions, comprehensive plans, zoning, and ordinances. Moreover, it is the strength of willingness to change or comply with established plans that allows development to happen. That is, business people and decision makers allow for development to occur. A transportation project is merely an element within that process. With that being said, it is inherent that an analysis must identify all of the indirect effects that are known, and make a good faith effort to explain the effects that are not known but are ‘reasonably foreseeable.’

As one may gather, indirect impacts are not immediately tangible, and as such, neither are the characteristics used to measure said impacts. The Federal Highway Administration expresses in its Environmental Guidebook that: “Potential changes in land use, development, or other reasonably foreseeable actions are not easy to predict. Estimates may be arrived at with surveys, discussions with appropriate local entities, the examination of trends, and the use of sophisticated computer models or other appropriate methodology, such as the Delphi process.”

The Delphi method was used in this analysis as it relies on the opinions of a panel of experts to provide their assessment of likely future development outcomes. In no way were the panelists asked to select a specific outcome but to provide their opinions (based on experience and knowledge) for likely development scenarios based on each of the roadway alignments presented. A consensus as to whether an increase (or decrease) in development will occur is not to say the process was a failure, but rather may be an indication that there are a wide range of foreseeable impacts, that too many variables remain to be identified, or that there are still many defensible but differing expert opinions. Again, decision makers and business leaders will employ many variables in determining where and when development will occur. As noted in the Induced Development report, minimal development is expected within the areas in and around any of the alternatives (except for the area within one-mile south of the Moscow city limits) due to limited access to the highway. Further, most of the respondents felt that development is less likely to occur the farther it is from the urbanized area and that the type of access will control the type of development. That is to say, the remainder of the corridor will see less development potential than the area one mile south of the Moscow city limits.

**Q: Are the increased property values for business or residents or both?**

A: Panelists in the Delphi Process felt that property values (either residential or commercial) are not anticipated to significantly decrease (more than 20 percent) or hardly even decrease at all in the area south of Moscow and the remainder of the corridor due to the construction of any of the alternatives. Moreover, properties immediately south of Moscow are expected to increase in value while the remainder of the corridor will experience no change or only a slight increase in property values.

**Q: Why did ITD use the Delphi Process? It is not appropriate for this area – community is too small, too biased.**

A: The Delphi process relies on the opinions of a panel of experts to deal systematically with a complex problem or task to provide their assessment of likely future outcomes by responding to several rounds of questions (the size of an area is not relative in this regard). In no way are the panelists asked to select an outcome (alternative alignment), only to provide their opinions (based on experience and knowledge) for likely development scenarios based on each of the alternatives presented. Further, the panelists may never reach a consensus on any outcome, which is not to say the process was a failure, but rather may be an indication that there are a wide range of foreseeable impacts, that too many variables remain to be identified, or that there are still many defensible but differing expert opinions. The information and survey results gathered from the panelists are then provided to the decision makers (in this case ITD) who will take the results into account when selecting an alternative.

The analysis of induced development is not predicated on the need to make a selection of an alternative in the hopes that development will (or will not) occur. Rather it is a measure of the perceived and foreseeable future impacts on existing land uses and the community desires (comprehensive plans, zoning) resulting from any one alternative being constructed.

**Q: Why didn't the Delphi Process include environmentalists?**

A: The Delphi panelists were a collection of experts and professionals gathered to provide feedback for likely development scenarios relative to the proposed transportation project – not to select an alternative for U.S. 95.. The Delphi process, relative to roadway projects, typically includes land use and transportation planners, developers, agency officials, and business leaders who have informed perspectives on likely development trends and influences. This is not to discount the role of environmental groups, and these would have been extremely important if any value judgment would have been sought regarding the type of growth. The purpose of the induced development portion of the report, as measured in part by the Delphi process, is not to establish a value statement. It is a means to assess what might happen as a result of a certain action; it is not a declaration of whether an outcome is good or bad. The people serving on the panel are representative of the agencies/jurisdictions/businesses that are knowledgeable about development, who create opportunities or make development happen, and who allow development to happen. Further, the panelists selected for the Delphi process have an understanding of the theory of urban development, and/or empirical knowledge of transportation/land use relationships, and/or the detailed understanding of local conditions. While environmental concerns are definitely associated with development, those concerns are more appropriately addressed and mitigated when (and if) a specific development plan is presented.

## **Conservation Data Center Plant Survey**

**Q: Was the plant inventory was biased towards Idaho? Was there a conflict of interest with the scientist?**

A: Near the study area, in Washington, is a promontory called Bald Butte, which is known to have remnant grassland and other communities. Any of the indirect effects discussed in the report apply to Washington remnants as well as those on Paradise Ridge. However, indirect effects are very speculative. They will depend on proximity, in addition to many other

factors. The distance of any Washington site from the nearest route is large enough that weed invasion would be the only foreseeable threat.

Remnants outside the study area, including those in Washington, were not surveyed. It is possible there are additional species there, including Spalding's catchfly. Some plant survey and community characterization work has been done in grassland communities on Bald Butte and it might have been worthwhile to get some indication of the thoroughness of these surveys, and to obtain data on known rare plant locations. However, any rare plant populations occurring there would only be considered subject to undetermined indirect effects as with Paradise Ridge remnants and rare plants.

The Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG)/Conservation Data Center (CDC) performed this survey for the Idaho Transportation Department. As a state agency, the IDFG has no bias associated with its role in this project.

**Q: Are unique plant populations going to be protected?**

A: It is true that rare plant conservation is traditionally based on populations. This study documented both rare plant populations and Palouse remnants. The main area where target species occur outside of remnants is along the western side of Paradise Ridge where there are significant areas of historically uncultivated ground. In this area, Palouse goldenweed, Palouse thistle, and broad-fruit mariposa lily occur in native vegetation that has been degraded to variable extent by introduced pasture grasses. These populations have low probability of survival over the long-term (say 50-100 years). This opinion is based on an observed association of Palouse goldenweed with relatively undisturbed grassland. However, a direct highway impact would represent an immediate, irreversible loss of a portion of the population or even an entire subpopulation (subpopulations are generally < 1/4 acre in extent).

ITD has the data necessary to consider rare plant populations, including those outside of remnants. However, the scientist who conducted this study (Juanita Lichthardt) said she does not consider these of equal conservation value to those populations within remnants.

**Q: Isn't proximity to sites as important as crossing a site in terms of pollution effects and weed dispersal?**

A: There is only one way to deal objectively with the question of proximity to the disturbance, and that is to do a GIS analysis wherein each remnant is weighted with regard to its distance from a given route. This was not within the scope of Idaho Fish and Game's initial responsibility for the project. Also, a linear relationship between distance and impact would not be appropriate. Rather, it is expected that the potential for adverse effects would drop sharply with distance from the disturbance. For example, weed propagules coming from the disturbance probably decrease logarithmically with distance, and changes in subsurface drainage may be significant near the roadway and decrease to none where there is an intervening drainage way.

In order to be as objective as possible, ITD's matrix analysis only counted direct hits on remnant communities. This is consistent with the way other factors in the analysis were treated.

Physically intercepting a remnant would have severe effects. Clearly, disturbance is not limited to the right-of-way, but it seems that the further you go from the disturbance, the more nebulous and unpredictable the effects become. Off-site effects are addressed on page 11 of the report:

“Direct effects will occur within the right-of-way (ROW) during construction, and could also occur following construction on areas adjoining the ROW. Occasionally, contractors lease land directly from adjoining landowners to be used during the construction process, causing direct effects outside the ROW. Post-construction impacts might include sedimentation from fill areas, erosion due to interrupted surface drainage, or interruption of subsurface drainage patterns and water balance.”

The distance at which these factors operate probably depends to a large extent on topography. Topography affects the amount of cut or fill, the degree of construction disturbance (e.g., the potential need for equipment tracking outside the ROW), and the potential for slope or seeding failures, which allow weed establishment. Cut and fill slopes represent the most likely cause for indirect disturbance of remnants at short distances away.

**Q: The matrix indicates that no sites of impacts of plants that are on the eastern corridors would be affected. This is not consistent with the results reported in the Conservation Data Center Plant Survey report, which states on p. 15 that all the Alt. E routes intercept or adjoin areas of native plant communities, that these areas are suitable habitat for silene species, and that highways are the main vector for weeds – the key threat to these habitats. Can ITD clarify?**

A: The matrix indicated that E1 and E3 would each intercept two remnants. This comment refers to Table 4, p. 15 which is intended to show that E1 intercepts two remnants of value 2 (scale goes from 1—most valuable to 4—least valuable), E2 comes very close to a value 2 remnant without physically touching it, and E3 intercepts two remnants, one of value 2 and one of value 4. In order to be objective and consistent with the other studies, the matrix reflects only actual “hits.”

**Q: The matrix didn’t provide adequate information about the impacts on plants – how can I get this information?**

A: The report will help to interpret the relative value of the rare plant populations and remnants and the potential for direct and indirect impacts; it will augment the matrix. However, the indirect impacts from weeds are somewhat speculative. An objective approach is warranted, but should not stand alone.

**Q: What is the distance of alternatives from plant sites?**

A: Once alignments have been narrowed, the ITD will be able to provide distance from all remaining alignments to any environmentally sensitive area.

**Q: Were the western routes sampled extensively?**

A: Sampling was based on identification of unplowed areas of ¼ acre or larger. These were rare on the western portion of the study area.

From the report: “Patches of vegetation greater than 0.1 ha (0.25 ac) in size and not previously cultivated or seeded, were targeted for survey. Smaller areas were examined if encountered *en route*. Survey sites were identified by surveying from roads and promontories, and from a ... orthophoto of the project area.”

The scale of the orthophoto was mistakenly identified as 1:75 when it was actually closer to 1:10,000.

**Q: It appears the matrix misrepresents highly ranked remnants (as stated in plant report).**

**A:** This comment might be saying that the matrix doesn't consider remnant value. The intent was that value be considered when weighing one alternative against another. Therefore strictly from a plant conservation standpoint E1 is preferable to E3.

**Q: Can ITD include the possibility of invasive weeds in eastern alignments?**

**A:** Proximity to a road corridor and to soil disturbance is definitely a weed issue for the remnant that is almost hit by E2. However the effect of the eastern alignments on the value 1 remnant on Paradise Ridge is far more speculative. Again, it is difficult to specify a critical distance because of the number of factors involved.

## **Environmental Justice**

**Q: The Environmental Justice analysis and report are faulty in providing no conclusive evidence about “disproportionate impacts on minorities and lower-income populations.” Won't Hidden Village and Benson Park areas be affected by eastern alignments?**

**A:** Yes, Hidden Village and Benson Park areas will be affected by eastern alignments. Will these impacts be disproportionately high compared to impacts along the rest of the corridor? No.

The perpetual question is how one determines if a project or proposal is going to have “disproportionately high and adverse effects” on a low-income population or minority population. Some people wrongly suggest that if minority or low-income populations are small (“statistically insignificant”), this means there is no environmental justice consideration. Environmental Justice determinations are made based on effects, not population size. What is needed is to show the comparative effects on these populations in relation to either non-minority or higher income populations (different population groups), as appropriate. If such effects are predominantly borne by a minority population or low-income population, or if those populations would suffer greater or more severe impacts than others, then the effects are disproportionate.

To emphasize the point, this is not about the altogether effort to avoid affecting low income and minorities (some members of these populations would be affected in almost every project). Rather, it is important to ensure that the effects of a proposed action are not disproportionate upon these people and that the necessary measures and actions are taken to avoid, minimize or mitigate those effects. This is what is found in the report and is exactly the conclusion drawn from said findings.

As noted in the report, Figure 14 shows that there would be impacts to the Hidden Village and Benson developments from the E alignments with regard to right-of-way acquisition, home relocation, and visual amenities. Because this is only a planning stage, final plan designs would

determine the right-of-way and structural needs to assess the exact extent of the impacts that may occur. This is described further in the report under the headings of “Impact Assessment” and “Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures”.

**Q: Should “No disproportionately high impact” for Eastern routes should be changed to “no effect”? 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.**

A: Hidden Village and Benson Park areas will be affected by Eastern alignments. These impacts will not be disproportionately high compared to impacts along the rest of the corridor

As noted in the report, Figure 14 shows that there would be impacts to the Hidden Village and Benson developments from the E alignments with regard to right-of-way acquisition, home relocation, and visual amenities.

**Q: Why didn’t this study look at cumulative effects?**

A: By definition, *indirect* (or cumulative) land use impacts are the long-term and widespread changes to the development patterns and comprehensive plans that are *induced* by the transportation improvement. As noted in the Federal Highway Administration, Environmental Guidebook, “The Environmental Impact Statement must identify all of the indirect effects that are known, and make a good faith effort to explain the effects that are not known but are ‘reasonably foreseeable’ ”.

Indirect impacts may not be caused directly by the project, but by intervening factors that are affected by the project. A good example of a direct impact of a highway project on land use would be the acquisition of land for right-of-way. The land use change (for example, from residential to transportation right-of-way) (a) happens at the time of the project (the project cannot be started without the land use change), (b) is close to the project (it is within the right-of-way), (c) is certain, and (d) is caused directly by the highway project. As an example of an indirect impact, consider the assertion that a highway project that improves travel time to a central city will eventually cause a surrounding county to re-zone undeveloped land for residential development near, but not adjacent to, the project. The causal link is much more vague than the prior example since the purported impact (a) is not expected for many years, (b) is distant from the improvement, (c) is uncertain (it may happen, or not), and (d) is the result of intervening forces (the highway project affects travel time, which affects land value, which may encourage property owners and developers to petition for zone changes, which would allow more residential development in outlying areas). The time, space, probability and causality characteristics are what define an indirect impact.

These are the type of effect covered in the Induced Development Report

**Q: Why weren’t residential impacts evaluated for C3 or C1?**

A: As noted in the Environmental Justice report and as shown in Figure 14, there would be impacts to residential units from both the C and E alignments with regard to right-of-way acquisition, home relocation, and visual amenities. Because this is only a planning stage, final plan designs would determine the right-of-way and structural needs to assess the exact extent of

the impacts that may occur. This is described further in the report under the headings of “Impact Assessment” and “Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation Measures”.

## **Floodplain**

**Q: I don't think the floodplain mapping for 100-year flood zones is correct for north of Jacksha Road at the U.S. 95 intersection.**

A: The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was initiated to reduce future and recurring damages due to flooding. The program makes subsidized flood insurance available to property owners at reasonable rates. A condition of participation in this program is that each community must pass and enforce ordinances to control the development within the 100-year flood plains. Latah County administers the program throughout the project limits. The 100-year flood plain configurations for this project were taken from the National Flood Insurance Maps on file at the Latah County Courthouse. Information received in March 2005 and again in April 2006 indicates that panel 330 and 340 dated August 15, 1980, of the NFIP Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Latah County dated February 1980 and revised in September 1983 are the documents currently used to administer the program. These were the maps used to project the flood plain images for the project mapping.

With the exception of the designated floodway adjacent to the South Fork of the Palouse River, all floodplains were shown on the map were designated as ZONE A. This designation is explained on the FIRM map as “Areas of 100-year flood; base flood elevations and flood hazard factors not determined.” This is further explained in the Latah County FIS “for streams studied by approximate methods, the 100-year flood boundaries were delineated using aerial photomosaics with a stereoscope”. In other words these delineations are only an approximation of its actual position.

The ITD utilized the FIRM mapping panels as noted above and adjusted the scale to fit the project mapping. It was then projected upon this mapping as accurately as possible. Again, it must be stated that these projections are only an approximation of the actual 100-flood elevation.

ITD requires that in floodplains shown on FIRM maps which have no determined base flood elevation (such as those in the ZONE A designation used for this mapping,) an analysis utilizing annual precipitation rates, terrain data, surface types, etc. be performed to establish the base flood elevation. Any fills or structures involved with the project are required to be designed in a manner that will result in no more than a one-foot rise in the base flood elevation.

The 100-year flood plain areas shown on the project mapping are intended to alert the designer that they may be encroaching upon a floodplain and could be required to do additional studies to comply with local ordinances and ITD's own floodplain compliance requirements.

## **Historic**

**Q: We live along the central alignments and would like our historic properties to be re-evaluated by an independent appraiser if a central alignment moves forward. Is that possible?**

A: The determinations for historic properties/structures on the project were made by cultural and historic resource professionals. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has not yet

reviewed the finding. It is anticipated that the SHPO will agree with the findings of the report, however, they may find additional properties to be historic or determine the structures identified in the report as historic are not.

**Q: It seems like the narrowest interpretation of “historic value” was applied to properties. Is that true?**

A: Values assessed under this study are defined by the National Historic Preservation Act. Historic properties include “. . . any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places” (16 USC470w(5)).

**Q: Where are the historic sites in the project area?**

A: Properties identified as historic were displayed at the public meeting and are also available on the project website in the Historic Structures report.

## **Noise**

**Q: Will noise be a factor for non-motorized recreation on Paradise Ridge? It seems like the closer the route is to the ridge, the greater the negative impact.**

A: A noise report will be prepared for this project. The report will document anticipated impacts of all alignments carried forward in the EIS.

**Q: Why weren’t noise boundaries extended beyond the study area to include south aspect slopes within the southern Moscow city limits.**

A: A detailed noise study with additional boundaries will be completed and available for review as part of the Draft EIS.

**Q: Why isn’t there a wider study area for noise – 3,000 feet from centerline, instead of 300 feet?**

A: 300 feet was not the study area for the noise report but rather the area used to identify where potential noise receptors exist adjunct to all proposed alignments. A detailed noise report will also be prepared for this project.

**Q: Where were the noise sensors placed?**

A: Noise sensors have not been placed for this project. During preparation of the noise report a noise sensor will be used, but this task has not been completed yet.

**Q: Why does the noise analysis only account for built structures close to the routes and not for ambient noise?**

A: A noise report has not been prepared yet. The noise display at the public meetings were only a display of receptors that occur within the project area. Those locations were used as a coarse screen to identify how many receptors are adjacent to each alignment.

**Q: Why doesn’t the noise study account for new structures and topography?**

A: A noise report has not been prepared yet. When complete the report will account for topography.

**Q: What about noise impacts on the UI Arboretum?**

A: When complete, the noise study will address potential noise impacts to the U of I Arboretum.

## **Prime Farmland**

**Q: It appears the prime farmland that is reported to be impacted is incorrect. Is this the case?**

A: The analysis is based on the Latah County Soil Survey and is available, free of charge from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), for anyone who wishes to review the information contained in that document. This document is considered to be a fairly accurate representation of the soils located in this area. The fieldwork for this study was not intended to check the accuracy of the mapping, but to make the analysis. If someone disagrees with the information in this document they need to contact NRCS.

Prime farmland is a technical term applied to soil map units that meet **specific** soil properties. There are 9 map units (3, 15, 26, 27, 28, 29, 35, 50 and 53) that qualify as “Prime.” The analysis shows the western routes contain 49.4 to 61.4 acres of prime farmland. Calculating the number of acres to be converted for each of the alternatives, it shows the western routes to contain between 20 and 25.6 percent prime farmland. The eastern routes contain between 43.9 and 59.7 acres of prime farmland. Considering these routes are shorter it is not surprising that the eastern routes have a **higher** percentage of prime farmland, 20.5 to 30.1 percent, in the area to be converted. The eastern routes do go through some areas that are not farmed, referred to as scrubland. However, the western routes also go through several areas that are in CRP or were never farmed. The number of acres in CRP was not considered in the calculations as this is a subjective value and varies according to the landowner’s desire to participation in the program. The reason for delineating the existing CRP contracts was to reference land use and not as an indication of soil productivity. The fact that land is enrolled in CRP has little to do with the productive capability of the soil. I checked to see how much prime farmland was included in the CRP program within the core area and found 154 acres; a large part of which was within the western corridor.

**Q: Farmland along the route is variable, some is more productive than other. Did this study take yield, productivity and soil quality into account?**

A: The boundary of each of the alternatives was set by a cut and fill outline as none of the alternatives were engineered to determine the exact right-of-way. Each alternative was analyzed over the entire length of the route even though many alternatives overlap other routes. There is variation in productivity along each route but in order to compare the routes, you have to consider the entire route as a whole. It is not important how much variation is within the route but overall how does it compare with the other routes.

The IR is a relative value that takes into account the productive capability of the soil and addresses the impact a land use change would have on agriculture in the area. It not only considers prime farmland but all soils (statewide important) that are capable of producing a crop. The number of acres in the area to be converted is multiplied by a value assigned to each map unit, based on its productive capability. When all the values are added and divided by the total number of acres in the route, you get a relative value for the alternative. This is the Land Evaluation (LE) part of the IR. The last part of the calculation is the Site Assessment (SA) and

involves non-soil related criteria. Points are assigned to 10 different items that may impact agriculture in the area. Included in that assessment is the creation of small un-farmable units and **the number of times an alternative splits a farming operation.** (# 6. Attachment to the SCS-CPA-106 Form) The LE and SA values are added and the resulting score is used to compare one alternative with another.

**Q: Why wasn't a value placed on disruptions of farms and other business operations?  
Splitting farmland costs farmers more for production.**

A: Included in the assessment is the impact the proposed highway alternative would have by the creation of small un-farmable units and **the number of times an alternative splits a farming operation.** (# 6. Attachment to the SCS-CPA-106 Form)

The following text was clipped from the report:

**How much of the remaining land on the farm will become non-farmable if this site is selected?**

C1 This alternative follows the existing highway. The right-of-way will be expanded to accommodate a four-lane highway, but no small parcels will be created nor will any farming operations be split. A score of 0 was given to this criterion.

C2 This alternative produces 1 small parcel less than 20 acres in size for a total of 11.8 acres and splits 4 farming operations. A score of 12 was given to this criterion.

C3 This alternative produces 2 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 20.9 acres and splits 4 farming operations. A score of 13 was given to this criterion.

E1 This alternative produces 5 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 19.1 acres and splits 4 farming operations. A score of 14 was given to this criterion.

E2 This alternative produces 5 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 22.9 acres and splits 6 farming operations. A score of 17 was given to this criterion.

E3 This alternative produces 5 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 23.9 acres and splits 6 farming operations. A score of 17 was given to this criterion.

W1 This alternative produces 8 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 42.8 acres and splits 9 farming operations. A score of 25 was given to this criterion.

W2 This alternative produces 5 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 31.7 acres and splits 6 farming operations. A score of 20 was given to this criterion.

W3 This alternative produces 8 small parcels less than 20 acres in size for a total of 46.9 acres and splits 8 farming operations. A score of 25 was given to this criterion.

W4 This alternative produces no small parcels less than 20 acres in size; however, it splits 5 farming operations. A score of 10 was given to this criterion.

**Q: Why didn't the prime farmland impact recognize that bottomlands are more productive than highlands and that western routes affect better quality of land?**

A: The designation of prime farmland is based on physical and chemical properties of a soil map unit, not on its position on the landscape. Not all bottomlands are prime. Some bottomlands have a high water table that may cause seasonal soil wetness. In wet years this can damage a crop and make it less productive. Soils in upland positions can be prime if they meet all the physical and chemical properties required for that designation.

The western routes (except for W4) were recognized as the alternatives that would be most affected by a new highway. The western alignments were followed by the eastern alignments and finally the central alignments. The W4 alignment is more like the other central alignments as it mostly follows the existing highway before splits off to go around Clyde Hill.

## **Ungulates**

**Q: What will be the effect on wildlife crossing the roadway if concrete median dividers are used?**

A: While there are no quantifiable data regarding the effects of concrete dividers and "jersey" barriers on wildlife, there is no doubt they can have a direct impact on individuals or family groups of many wildlife species attempting to cross roads where they occur. The greatest concern for deer, elk, and moose is with recently-born young. Concrete barriers can indeed become a "barrier," preventing the young from successfully crossing the road and risking a collision with oncoming vehicles. Even adults appear to often shy away from such dividers/barriers. These dividers/barriers can be a bigger problem for the young of smaller animals if they are too big to pass through the small opening in each section of concrete barrier. Concrete dividers and concrete (jersey) barriers should be discouraged.

**Q: Why wasn't the cost of wildlife mitigation considered?**

A: Mitigation items will be considered when the alternatives under consideration have been narrowed for EIS preparation.

**Q: Can there be more wildlife underpasses?**

A: Mitigation items will be considered when the alternatives under consideration have been narrowed for EIS preparation.

**Q: What is the basis for assessing impacts on ungulate populations for the eastern routes?**

A: There is no simple response to this comment because deer occur throughout the project area. If we assume proximity to security cover (timbered areas and shrubfields) is the determining factor for the presence of deer on the highway, then the east routes (E1-E3), followed by the western-most routes, would likely have greater deer presence than central routes. However, because deer forage, rest, and move throughout the project area, there is no evidence that proximity to vegetative cover, alone, will result in more deer on the highway. Mitigation actions for the east-west movement of deer would likely be more successful in the eastern routes because of existing landscape features.

**Q: I think the study underestimates movement of ungulates in the mid and near north sections of Paradise Ridge. Is this true?**

A: There are no empirical data on the distribution of ungulates that allow an estimate of ungulate movements within the project area. If we take into account the proximity of suitable natural habitat (excluding fields where ungulates forage), then greater movement would be expected to the northeast, east, and southeast of Paradise Ridge where larger tracts of timber and other security cover exist. If proximity to habitat was the driving force for ungulate movement, the tracts of suitable habitat just inside the Washington border would be closest to the southwest end of Paradise Ridge. Deer and elk, unlike moose, are attracted to agricultural crops, and the distribution of these crops probably influences their movement patterns. Consequently, predicting the movement of these animals from year-to-year is difficult.

**Q: Is it true that wildlife movement increases with proximity to the forested areas and that mitigation and accidents are greatest with routes in proximity to forest?**

A: It is generally agreed that both wildlife movement frequency and volume increase adjacent to forested areas. Variables affecting such movement include the level of human development and activities associated with these forested areas and the distribution and proximity to attractive foraging areas. Further, these factors have varying influences on the different species of wildlife, including, deer, elk, and moose. Such areas are the most desirable for developing wildlife crossings.

**Q: The matrix shows there are no populations of ungulate wildlife affected by the eastern corridors, yet the wildlife consultant notes in his report (pp. 16, 17, 20) that cumulative effects are not a factor on the western routes and that collective impacts diminish from the east to the west. However, at the Jan. 2006 public meeting he admitted that the size of this population in terms of number of animals is unknown; and likely impacts on specific numbers also are unknown. An unknown number of animals divided by an unknown number of animals can only provide an unknown proportion – thus, stating that the eastern routes will have “no population effect” in the matrix has no basis in any reliable or valid data.**

A: Most people incorrectly equate the loss of individual animals as negatively impacting a population. While such losses, especially when combined with other mortality factors (cumulative effects) may impact a population, in most cases that is not true. For example, regulated hunting of deer, elk, and moose would not be allowed if the harvest resulted in population declines below an acceptable level. Therefore, while individual ungulate mortalities are of concern, the objective was to examine highway construction alternatives based on how the

different routes might affect the population of each species. Based on the history of ungulates in the area, current knowledge, and the best judgment of Dr. Wayne Melquist (the scientist who conduct the ungulate studies), it could not be concluded that construction would negatively impact the populations. Deer, elk, and moose populations have increased in size in the Palouse area over the past 30 years. Although the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) does not collect population data in Game Management Unit 8, so population estimates are unavailable, hunting is allowed for all three species in the Unit. There are general hunting seasons for deer and elk and controlled hunts for both elk (150 antlerless tags) and moose (8 tags) in areas of Unit 8 that include the project area. This level of harvest opportunity would suggest the populations of each species are healthy. Ungulate highway mortality data are also limited and subjective. According to the local Conservation Officer, no moose or elk have been reported killed on the highway within the project area, although several deer are killed each year. Agricultural crops within the project area are the primarily attractants to deer and elk; there is little to attract moose. Even though we don't know the size of local deer, elk, and moose populations, due to the lack of suitable natural habitat within the project area, it is not expected that animals would be attracted to the project area in numbers that would jeopardize the populations, regardless of existing population densities. Finally, because the project area is not a corridor for travel between key habitats for these species, there is little concern it would be a population "sink." In summary, based on what is known about each species, the scientist is comfortable with his assumptions and conclusions.

**Q: Could you please clarify the direct and indirect effects of routes on ungulates?**

A: Without collecting population and movement data on these ungulates in the project area, it is difficult to make detailed comments on the direct and indirect effects of the different routes on each species. Lacking empirical data, Melquist had to rely on studies conducted elsewhere and on his own knowledge of deer, elk, and moose ecology to assess the effects of highway construction. Nonetheless, Melquist believes the direct and indirect effects of each route, especially the eastern corridor, are as specific as can be expected without actually going out and collecting field data. For the interested reader, he recommends *ROAD ECOLOGY Science and Solutions* by R. T. T. Forman et al. 2003, Island Press, Washington, D.C. 481 pages.

Discussion of the direct and indirect effects of a four-lane highway (pages 15-17) focused primarily on the eastern corridor (E1-E3), as the potential for impacting ungulates appeared greatest in this area (see Table 1 of the report). For each species, increased risks to motorists and animals were identified, however, Melquist is not prepared to make a subjective statement that construction in the eastern corridor would be "much less safe" than the other routes without suitable wildlife crossings. Because that may very well be a safe assumption, Melquist indicated for each species that both motorists and animals would be at risk without suitable wildlife crossings (underpasses). This information is included in the text and Table 1.

**Q: Why aren't vehicle-ungulate collisions included in the study?**

A: The amount of suitable "native" habitat for ungulates that may be impacted within the project area is insignificant and located in the eastern corridor (see Figure 1 of the report). This is especially true when you take into account the amount of habitat available to all three ungulate species to the east and north (see Figure 2 of the report). Deer can be found throughout the project area and both deer and elk take advantage of agricultural crops, resulting in depredation

problems for farmers, especially in the barred area of Figure 1 in the western corridor. While there are no supporting field data, from a population standpoint, highway construction with associated mitigation should not be detrimental to any of the three species.

Neither the ITD nor the Idaho Department of Fish and Game maintain road-kill data within the project area. The best available information comes from the local conservation officer. However, this information is incomplete and anecdotal. Deer are the most common ungulate killed on existing U.S. 95 in the project area; no records exist of either elk or moose being killed through collisions with vehicles in the project area. Without collecting data on habitat use and movements of these species, there is no basis for speculating on future mortality levels.

## **Visual Analysis**

**Q: The visual analysis is flawed and invalid (detailed calculation provided).**

A: The visual analysis is a macro scale analysis. It was performed during the preliminary planning phase of the design process and utilized the best information available to the consultant. Results of the visual analysis are presented to quantify potential visual impacts for thousands of viewpoints found in the study area. Final cut and fills, truck escape ramps, new intersection alignments, bridges, etc. need to be evaluated and further designed based on local conditions, opportunities and constraints.

However, in addition to the Visual Analysis, a series of 3D animations and real-time tools were developed. These tools, presented at the January 2006 public open houses were used to engage and educate the public on visual resources. The public was encouraged to view any of the routes from anywhere within the planning area, specifically where viewers might have concern for visual change. Once the public had the opportunity to view each of the alternatives, they were encouraged to provide public comment. Again, final cut and fills, truck escape ramps, new intersection alignments, bridges, etc. need to be evaluated and further designed based on local conditions, opportunities and constraints.

**Q: The visual analysis appears biased towards people living in the rural areas, where viewpoints are more evenly distributed – in effect, the views of these relatively few residences are weighed more by hundreds of orders of magnitude than those of the many residences of the ridges to the north overlooking the project area.**

A: The visual analysis considers all sensitive viewpoints, both rural and urban. Project visibility, the first component in the visibility analysis was performed to identify those areas visible, and how many times a landscape is seen cumulatively by sensitive viewpoints. The results of this information were carried forward and used in the overall visual analysis, which combines project visibility, landscape character and distance thresholds. Most high impacts result where more than 10 viewpoints could see a proposed route. For example near the city of Moscow (urban), and Eid Road (rural).

It is important to remember that visual impact is not simply a function of how many times a proposed alternative is seen. Landscape character and distance both play a key role in the visual assessment.

**Q: Why weren't the visual analysis boundaries extended beyond the study area to include south aspect slopes within the southern Moscow city limits? The displays contained enough information to show the negative effect the highway will have on 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.**

A: Visual Genesis utilized the best information available to develop the visual analysis, including aerial photography, GIS data, GPS Data and 3D Models. During the development of the visual analysis, study personnel looked at visual resources up to six miles away from the proposed alternatives. Visual impacts diminish beyond 3 miles. Due to distance thresholds, and terrain screening, the results of the visual analysis would remain the same.

The 3D Model was used during the January 2006 meeting for individuals with questions or concerns about visual resources beyond the boundaries of the Visual Analysis study area.

**Q: I am concerned that E2 will be seen by hundreds of households in Moscow. Is this correct?**

A: Yes. Portions of E2 will be seen by hundreds of households. Likewise, portions of the central and western alternatives will be seen by many residences. This is especially true near the city of Moscow towards the northern portion of the project.

**Q: Why weren't the "flyovers" at the open house north-south so effects could be seen from Moscow?**

A: Open house participants had an opportunity to see any visual perspective desired. Visuals were developed south to north because that's the direction the state milepost system runs.

## **Wetlands**

**Q: Why weren't wetlands studies conducted in late spring? Wetland impacts are being ignored.**

A: Field methods of this project followed those outlined in the Wetlands Delineation Manual (COE 1987) for a "routine" wetland determination. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recognizes the use of the COE 1987 manual for delineation of wetlands. The manual (COE 1987) provides technical criteria, field indicators, and recommended procedures to be followed in determining a jurisdictional wetland, as well as in determining the location of wetland boundaries.

The manual (COE 1987) defines wetlands as, "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."

The individual determining presence of a wetland is asked to examine the collected and summarized data, and determine whether the hydrology of the project area is adequately characterized. For a routine determination, there must be documented evidence of frequent inundation or soil saturation during the growing season. Areas with evident characteristics of wetland hydrology are those where the presence of water has an overriding influence on characteristics of vegetation and soils due to anaerobic and reducing conditions, respectively.

Indicators of wetland hydrology, regardless of the time of year the determination is performed, may include drainage patterns, drift lines, sediment deposition, watermarks, stream gage data and flood predictions, historic records, visual observations of saturated soils, and visual observations of inundation. Any of these indicators may be evidence of wetland hydrologic characteristics.

## **Evaluation Process**

**Q: Why did ITD select one route from each corridor? Two or more alignments from the same corridor may rate higher than one from another corridor.**

A: Based on the environmental review process and public input, ITD felt that keeping one alignment per corridor under consideration preserved the widest range of alternatives for consideration.

**Q: Environmental studies are not clear in documenting how the report results are consistent with the ratings/values/levels specified in the Alignment Evaluation Matrix.**

A: Results displayed on the Alignment Evaluation Matrix are a summary of the direct impacts associated with the alignments. In most cases, the consultants who prepared the reports also identified or approved the summary that occurred on the matrix.

**Q: Why weren't matrix weighted? Weighting criteria equally seems wrong.**

A: Based on discussions with resource agencies and review of the environmental reports, it was determined that weighting matrix criteria was not necessary. There is no uniform way of weighting environmental criteria.

**Q: Why weren't the studies integrated better to show cumulative effects, for example the effect noise has on breeding habitats of species?**

A: Since there are numerous studies associated with this project, the consultants preparing them had to utilize the best available information at the time to complete the indirect and cumulative effects portions of their documents. Additional indirect and cumulative effects analysis will complete during preparation of the draft EIS.

**Q: Why didn't the studies follow same reporting format?**

A: Many of the studies do not have defined formats. ITD relied on the expertise of the professionals involved to identify report content and format.

Q: Matrix totals show that eastern routes shouldn't be considered because of high impacts to wildlife, plants; more fog, wind, snow and ice. Why is E2 being recommended to carry forward?

A: All the alignments have different findings and score higher and lower than others when viewing individual matrix criteria. It is the goal of ITD to advance one alignment in each corridor to maintain a diversity of alignment options.

## **Other environmental issues**

**Q: Why didn't ITD take weed propagation in endangered habitat into consideration?**

A: Noxious weeds are considered on pages 10, 11 & 12 of the Rare Plant Survey.

**Q: Why didn't studies consider indirect impacts such as pollution, development, spread of weeds, effects of noise and light, and air quality?**

A: Many studies did take indirect impacts into account. Additional indirect effects will occur during preparation of the EIS.

**Q: Why didn't ITD show specific mitigation measures?**

A: Specific mitigation measures will be developed and documented during preparation of the EIS.

**Q: Why hasn't ITD documented the practical, pragmatic implications of the various alternatives' impacts, especially in terms of the cumulative effects?**

A: Cumulative effects will be considered and documented in greater detail during preparation of the EIS.

**Q: The level of data collected not adequate for this stage of public presentation, and will cause problems for ITD without greater follow up. How will ITD address this?**

A: All of the studies contain the highest level of detail possible at the time. Phase II studies will continue to refine detail for several matrix criteria.

**Q: Is ITD aware that environmental issues on the western alignments include 80- to 100-year-old trees, and historic sites?**

A: Cultural and historic documentation will include all required criteria for assessment of historic resources.

**Q: How is ITD going to address the effects on Palouse Giant Earthworm?**

A: ITD will address response to this issued with the Idaho Department of Fish & Game and/or the Conservation Data Center.

**Q: The project area is in the 1855 treaty area, was any ethnobotany done?**

A: A cultural resource investigation will be prepared and will include consideration of Native American sites if present in the project area.

**Q: Were native people consulted about cultural resources?**

A: Yes, ITD discusses this project with the Nez Perce Tribe Executive Committee on a quarterly basis.

**Q: Why weren't large potential economic and land use impacts addressed in studies?**

A: Additional documentation will occur during preparation of the EIS.

**Q: Will the cuts and fills threaten hydrological aspects of Paradise Ridge?**

A: Drainage will be accounted for during the design phase of any alignment selected.

**Q: Do all eastern routes cut through "Access Yes" area enjoyed by hunters?**

A: Yes, all eastern routes will affect existing "Access Yes" areas.

**Q: Where are the hazardous materials sites?**

A: Potential hazardous materials sites are shown in the Hazardous Materials study and were displayed at the January public meetings.