

**UNITED STATES COAST GUARD FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) FOR  
THE BNSF SANDPOINT JUNCTION CONNECTOR PROJECT, LAKE PEND OREILLE AND  
SAND CREEK, SANDPOINT, IDAHO**

The Coast Guard proposes to issue permits authorizing the construction of new railroad bridges across Sand Creek and Lake Pend Oreille that will be constructed immediately adjacent to existing railroad bridges crossing the same waterbodies.

Summary of the Results of the Environmental Impact Evaluation: The Final Environmental Assessment for this project analyzed a full range of potential impacts and concluded that the proposed Action Alternative will result in short-term impacts to the human and natural environment during the three to five year long construction period.

Mitigation Commitments (Including Monitoring), if any, that will be Implemented to Reduce Otherwise Significant Impacts:

The following minimization measures have been established for this project to avoid/minimize potential impacts to water resources, water quality, and fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species:

1. Protection of existing vegetation: Specific limits of activities and disturbance areas will be clearly marked with high-visibility construction fencing.
2. Implementation of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service “reasonable and prudent” measures as described in the Biological Opinion will serve to protect endangered species.
3. All in-water work will comply with approved permit conditions for Lake Pend Oreille and Sand Creek.
4. Implementation of Section 401 Water Quality Certification Conditions 1 through 34 to ensure full compliance with Idaho water quality standards (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Final § 401 WQC, September 21, 2018).
5. Temporary in-water steel piles will be installed by vibratory driver to resistance for the permanent bridges and to refusal for the temporary bridges.
6. Where practicable, air bubble curtains will be employed to attenuate sound and turbidity curtains to both contain and settle sediments during impact driving of the 36-inch diameter piles at the bridge to be constructed across Lake Pend Oreille.
7. The impact hammer installing permanent in-water piles will employ dispersal strikes, thereby minimizing the potential for fish to congregate towards the area of construction when production pile driving is occurring.
8. A Temporary Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and associated Best Management Practices will prescribe measures to be taken to reduce the level of erosion from exposed soils and will be maintained throughout the duration of the Project.
9. Construction contractor will maintain prescribed Best Management Practices to prevent debris from entering waters of the United States.
10. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan will be implemented as a component of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

The following minimization measures have been established for this project to avoid/minimize potential impacts to wetlands:

1. The Project will result in a total of 1.54 acres of fill (0.28 acres of fill into wetlands adjacent to Sand Creek and 1.26 acres into nearshore areas along Sand Creek and Lake Pend Oreille) that will be mitigated through the purchase of credits at the Valencia Wetland Mitigation Bank. The Bank, which is located in Bonner County, Idaho, is a 291-acre property restored to a high-quality, for-profit wetland bank governed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

The following minimization measures have been established for this project to avoid/minimize potential impacts to archaeological and historic resources:

1. The Coast Guard initiated government-to-government Section 106 consultations with Native American Tribes and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office on January 25, 2018. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office concluded and a “no adverse effect” finding was issued for the Project. An Inadvertent Discovery Protocol will be developed prescribing measures to be taken in the event construction activities reveal the presence of otherwise undiscovered historic properties or cultural resources.

The following minimization measures have been established for this project to avoid/minimize the potential release of hazardous materials:

1. Implementation of Section 401 Water Quality Certification Conditions 35 through 42 related to the management of hazardous and/or deleterious materials (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Final § 401 WQC, September 21, 2018).
2. A Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure Plan will be implemented to ensure pollutants and products will be controlled and contained.
3. All construction equipment will be cleaned of accumulated grease, oil or mud and inspected daily to check for leaks (or any other associated problems) at an off-site location prior to transportation to the work site.
4. All equipment and machinery used in or over water shall be steam cleaned to remove accumulation of oils, grease and invasive species in an upland location or staging area utilizing appropriate wastewater controls and treatment prior to entering on or over a water of the state (Lake Pend Oreille or Sand Creek). Any wastewater or wash will not be allowed to enter a water of the state. Cleaning shall remove all life stages of aquatic invasive species.
5. Fully stocked petroleum containment spill kits will be placed at power equipment work sites and construction staging areas throughout all phases of construction.

This project has been thoroughly reviewed by the Coast Guard, and it has been determined by the undersigned that this project will have no significant effect on the human environment.

This finding of no significant impact is based on the attached Coast Guard-prepared environmental assessment which has been determined to adequately and accurately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project, and provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an environmental impact statement is not required.

I reviewed the FEA, which is the basis for this FONSI, and submitted my written comments to the Proponent.

<u>Aug 29, 2019</u>		<u>Bridge Mgmt. Specialist</u>	<u>Interim</u>
Date	James M. Moore	Title/Position	Provisional,
	Environmental Reviewer <sup>1</sup>		Interim, I, II, or III

I reviewed the FEA, which is the basis for this FONSI, and submitted my written comments to the Proponent.

<u>Aug 29, 2019</u>		<u>Chief, Permits/Policy Div.</u>	<u>Interim</u>
Date	Shelly H. Sugarman	Title/Position	Interim, II, or III
	Senior Environmental Professional <sup>1</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> Signature of the Environmental Reviewer/Senior Environmental Professional for the Bridge Administration Program may be that of the Preparer's.

In reaching my decision/recommendation on the Coast Guard's proposed action, I considered the information contained in this FEA/FONSI and considered and acknowledged the written comments submitted to me from the Environmental Reviewers. Based on the information in the FEA and this FONSI document, I agree that the proposed action as described above, and in the FEA, will have no significant impact on the environment.

Aug 29, 2019

Date

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Brian Dunn

Proponent

Chief, Coast Guard Bridge Program

Title/Position