



**Determination of Non-significance
and Adoption of Existing Environmental Document**
Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects – Tasks 5 and 6
April 21, 2015

Description of Current Proposal: The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is improving passenger rail service by implementing the state's Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor Improvement Program. To fund this program, WSDOT applied and was selected for grant funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program. FRA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to assess project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

As part of the program, WSDOT plans to construct the Task 5 and Task 6 infrastructure improvement projects between Kelso and Kalama, Washington. The Task 5 project would include:

- Construction of approximately 4.1 miles of a third main line track to the east of the existing BNSF-Railway double-track main line in Kalama, Washington.
- Installation of higher speed turnouts and modification of signal control points.
- Construction of crash walls under a roadway overpass at Oak Street and existing pedestrian overpass.
- Construction of three retaining walls and extension of seven stormwater culverts.
- Replacement of the culvert at Unnamed Tributary 3 with a fish passable culvert.

The Task 6 project would include:

- Construction of approximately 3.7 miles of a third main line track in Kelso, Washington.
- Upgrade of existing main line track, removal of two existing turnouts, installation of seventeen new turnouts, and installation of four new crossovers.
- Construction of a new single-track bridge over the Coweeman River.
- Replacement of concrete box structure with a widened rail bridge over South Pacific Avenue.

The EA evaluates the Build Alternative, consisting of implementing the elements of the Task 5 and Task 6 projects, and a No Build Alternative. These alternatives are described in greater detail in Section 3.0 of the EA. A detailed discussion of the effects of the No Build and Build Alternatives is in Section 4.0 of the EA. These effects would be reduced or avoided by implementing the mitigation, minimization measures, and best management practices described in detail in Section 5.0 and Appendix M of the EA, as further described in the FONSI. The following summarizes the mitigation measures proposed for the Task 5 and Task 6 projects:

- **Task 5 Wetlands Mitigation.** 3.6 acres of wetlands permanently affected by the Task 5 project would require wetland mitigation to offset unavoidable wetland losses, through the preservation, creation, rehabilitation, or enhancement of wetlands within the watershed. WSDOT will purchase, or have purchased, not less than 3.6 acres of mitigation credits at the Columbia River Wetland Mitigation Bank.
- **Task 5 Floodplains Mitigation.** The placement of fill in Wetland B for the new third main line track within the Task 5 project area would reduce stormwater conveyance capacity that could result in flooding. To maintain the current stormwater conveyance capacity, Wetland B would be expanded to offset the placement of the fill material.
- **Task 6 Wetlands Mitigation.** 6.8 acres of wetlands permanently affected by the Task 6 project would be mitigated through a combination of the purchase of wetland mitigation bank credits at the Coweeman River Wetland Mitigation Bank (CRWMB), and fee acquisition of wetland properties for permanent preservation. WSDOT will purchase, or have purchased, not less than 6.8 areas of mitigation credits (or another amount required by subsequent USACE Section 404 permitting) from the CRWMB.
- **Task 6 Threatened and Endangered Species Impact Offsets.** In order to offset the effects to threatened and endangered fish habitat, approximately 0.5 acre of Wetland H would be restored, two existing, narrow culverts would be replaced with a larger, wider culvert at MP 100.29, an existing, narrow culvert under the Owl Creek Sand and Gravel Company access road at MP 101.60 would be replaced, and an upland berm at MP 101.05 would be removed. In addition, wetland preservation, described above, would target riverine habitat, similar to that which is being impacted by third rail construction.

The minimization measures and best management practices listed in Appendix M of the EA are practices, techniques, methods, processes, and activities commonly accepted and used throughout the construction and railroad industries that would be implemented to comply with applicable permits and other regulatory requirements, such as the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Construction Stormwater General Permit, and that provide an effective and practicable means of preventing or minimizing the environmental effects of an action.

The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) further details the environmental commitments, minimization measures, and BMPs that have been identified as the practicable means to avoid or minimize effects from implementation of Task 5 and Task 6 projects. These measures are listed in Appendix B of the FONSI and would be adopted during implementation of the projects.

Proponent: Washington State Department of Transportation

Location of Current Proposal: The proposed project is located within Cowlitz County along the existing rail line between Kelso and Kalama, WA.

Title of Document Being Adopted: Kelso Martin's Bluff Improvement Projects – Tasks 5 and 6 Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Date Adopted Document was Prepared: August 2014 and March 2015

Description of Document Being Adopted: The EA and FONSI present the purpose of and need for the project and discuss the projected environmental impacts of the Build and No Build Alternatives. Impacts are analyzed as short and long-term effects of the alternatives on people and the environment. The EA conveys project information to the public and project decision-makers so that a well informed decision can be made regarding the proposed project. The EA and FONSI were prepared in accordance with NEPA and FRA's implementing regulations.

The document is available at: The EA can be found online at the project web site at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/rail/kelsolongviewict/>. The document can be read at the following location from 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday at WSDOT's Headquarters Building, WSDOT Rail Division, 310 Maple Park Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501. To request a copy of the EA, contact the WSDOT Rail Division at 360-705-7900 or email rail@wsdot.wa.gov.

Public and Agency Review: The scope of the environmental review was determined by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and WSDOT after considering input from the public and agencies. Section 6.0 of the EA summarizes the public outreach as well as local government and tribal consultation efforts conducted for the project. Coordination efforts included input from technical staff, public meetings and direct agency interaction.

The EA was issued by FRA and WSDOT for public review on August 28, 2014 for a period of 30 calendar days. During the comment period, the public was invited to provide input through various methods, such as a written comment form, email, mail, and at a public meeting held in Kelso. WSDOT and FRA explained that both agencies would review and respond to all comments received during the 30-day comment period. The joint agency response to comments received is contained in the environmental decision document issued by FRA.

Determination of Non-Significance: WSDOT is relying on the NEPA documentation and concurs with the findings contained in FRA's decision document. The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment, as described in FRA's decision document. An environmental impact statement is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c) because the construction and operation of the project will not significantly harm the environment. The EA shows that the proposed projects would help facilitate two additional Amtrak *Cascades* service roundtrips between Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington with improved reliability and travel time. WSDOT and FRA considered the project's effects on low-income and minority populations and determined that there is no disproportionately high or adverse effect and that the project meets the provisions of Executive Order 12898 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

WSDOT has identified and adopted the EA as being appropriate for this proposal after independent review. The document meets WSDOT's environmental review requirements for the current proposal and will accompany the proposal to the agency decision maker.

If the documents being adopted have been challenged (WAC 197-11-630), please describe: The documents have not been challenged.

Public Comments: This DNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2); WSDOT will not act on the proposal for 14 days from the date on which the DNS is being issued. Comments can be sent to rail@wsdot.wa.gov or mailed to the WSDOT Rail Office, PO Box 47407, Olympia, WA 98504-7407. Comments must be submitted by May 5, 2015 to be considered.

Name of Agency Adopting Document: Washington State Department of Transportation

Responsible Official: Carol Lee Roalkvam

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