

Appendix E

Wetland Mitigation

US-93, I-84 to SH-25 in Jerome County, Idaho
ITD Project Nos. NH-2390 (134) and NH-2390 (135)
Key Nos. 07800 and 07801

WETLAND MITIGATION APPROACH

In 2005, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) investigated the potential for a mitigation site at Castle Rock State Park administered by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR). The U. S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACOE) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) held a field visit to determine the suitability of a mitigation site within the Park. Negotiations with all of the responsible parties on March 16, 2005 led ITD to a wetland mitigation plan to protect in perpetuity approximately 10 acres of existing wetlands.

There is an additional approximately 2.5 acre parcel described as the Fringe Area on the attached map. This Fringe Area contains a minimum of 500 square feet of wetland on Almo Creek that will be protected as mitigation for the non-jurisdictional wetlands impacted on the US-93, I-84 to SH-25 project in Jerome County (07800 & 07801).

Implementation of the proposed roadway reconstruction project, US-93, I-84 to SH-25 in Jerome County, will entail encroachment into 45 square feet of non-jurisdictional wetland. The hydrologic source for these wetlands is the L4A Canal. The total estimated amount of wetlands to be filled is approximately 45 square feet.

The proposed mitigation for the wetland impacts involves the project sponsor, ITD working with IDPR at the Castle Rock State Park to implement a wetland mitigation site for the US-93, I-84 to SH-25 project in Jerome County (Key # 7800 and Key # 7801).

Rather than create new on-site wetland habitat adjacent to the highway, it is environmentally preferable to protect existing wetlands. Funds from an in-lieu-fee mitigation arrangement will compensate the IDPR for the costs that they will bear in this mitigation plan. The purpose of coordinating with IDPR is to establish the protection, maintenance, and monitoring of the wetland mitigation site in perpetuity on land administered by IDPR. This approximately 2.5 acre existing upland and wetland area is within the boundaries of the Castle Rock State Park. The area contains a minimum of 500 square feet of wetlands that will be preserved from degradation by cattle.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) met on site with the representatives of ITD, IDPR and Cassia County in March of 2005. The existing wetlands were presented as a potential mitigation site during the field visit to Castle Rock State Park on March 16, 2005. The COE agreed that this site met the criteria to be predominantly classified as wetlands.

IDPR will implement grazing restrictions on both the approximately ten acres and 2.5 acres that will promote the end goal of preserving these wetland areas in perpetuity. Noxious weed control will be provided by the IDPR (as necessary). Herbicides will be used as needed to control noxious weed

infestation on a limited as needed basis, and will be applied selectively to protect the native plant species and water quality. Blanket herbicide spraying of the site will not be permitted. IDPR will monitor and repair the constructed fences to prevent cattle from intruding into the protected wetland areas.

Documentation will be sent to the FHWA when the fence is completed which will keep cattle out of this 2.5 acre Fringe Area. The documentation will be submitted to FHWA through the District 4 ITD Senior Environmental Planner.

In consideration of the preservation goals cited by the COE and FHWA during the on-site review held March 16, 2005, the proposed mitigation site provides more than a 10:1 ratio of protected existing wetlands to wetlands lost due to roadway construction. The goal of this mitigation effort is to preserve existing wetlands that are presently impacted by grazing and in doing so, achieve the following objectives:

- Maintain foraging areas and shelter for small mammals and large game animals
- Maintain strong habitat for bird nesting and feeding
- Maintain habitat for local amphibians
- Maintain/improve the existing vegetation structure by removing and controlling invasive vegetation.

Existing Wetland Site Preservation

The mitigation plan entails the preservation of an existing wetland site adjacent to Almo Creek that is presently on State of Idaho owned property. The site is currently used by livestock for grazing and bedding and has areas containing the invasive and noxious weed species *Cirsium arvense* (Canada thistle), but the weed appears to be at minimal coverage.

The wetland preservation site, identified as the Fringe Area, is located on a parcel of ground located on both the west and east side of the existing Almo Creek respectively in a portion of the NW Sec 9, T15S, R24E. To prevent damage to the site from livestock and ranching operations, a wildlife friendly three-rail wood fence will be constructed. It will connect to the adjacent owner's fence so that cattle will be prevented from entering the preservation site.

IDPR will maintain public access through the wetland mitigation site. This would be for the benefit of the public to view birds, wildlife and plants. IDPR will assist in the inspection of the fence installation providing guidance as to the proper placement.

IDPR will control noxious weeds, and protect in perpetuity, the wetland mitigation site called the "fringe area" as shown on the attached map. The list of noxious weeds shall be as defined by the Cassia County Weed Control Office. IDPR will continue the activities of noxious weed control, fence maintenance, monitoring, and protection of these wetlands in perpetuity.

Within the wetland mitigation site there are existing irrigation diversions. It is agreed that IDPR will continue to operate these diversions for the benefit of the Park and the wetland mitigation site. The Water Master also has access for diverting water to a neighboring shareholder.

This Fringe Area mitigation site is approximately two and one-half (2.5) acres. No cattle grazing will be allowed within the protected wetland site.

CASTLE ROCK STATE PARK WETLANDS MITIGATION SITE

