Environmental Assessment

R5(504) - 1(4)4

Foys Canyon Road

Control No. 0733

Prepared for

Montana Department of Transportation

September 1996

Prepared by Carter-Burgess

RS (503)-1(4)4
Foys Canyon Road
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Carter & Burgess, Inc.

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RS 503-1(4)4
Foys Canyon Road
Control No. 0733
in
Flathead County

This document is prepared in conformance with MEPA requirements and contains the information required for an Environmental Assessment under the provisions of ARM 18.2.237(2)(3) and 18.2.239. It is also prepared in conformance with NEPA requirements for an Environmental Assessment under 23 CFR 771.119.

Submitted Pursuant to 42 USC 4332(2)(c)
and Sectors 2-3-104, 75-1-201 M.C.A.
by the
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
and the
Montana Department of Transportation

Submitted by: _____ Date: 9/10/96
Montana Department of Transportation
Environmental Services

Reviewed and Approved
for Distribution: _____ Date: 9/11/96
Federal Highway Administration
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Executive Summary

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), as advised by the Flathead County Commissioners, proposes to upgrade 6.1 kilometers (3.8 miles) of Foys Canyon Road located directly southwest of Kalispell, Montana (Figure 1-1). The proposed action will include widening the existing road, providing adequate clear zones, upgrading existing alignment, providing a paved surface, and improving the intersections at Birch and Patrick Creeks (Figures 1-2 and 1-3). The entire length will be a two-lane roadway with 3.6-meter (12-foot) lanes and 0.6-meter (2-foot) paved shoulders.

The project need is demonstrated by an abnormally high accident rate coupled with a projected increase in traffic volume on the existing roadway. Over the past ten years, the accident rate on the unimproved section of Foys Canyon Road has been nearly seven times greater than the statewide average. The Preferred Alternative is considered an improvement project designed to address the immediate safety issues associated with Foys Canyon Road.

A number of alternatives were developed during the design process and in response to public issues. These alternatives are discussed in Section 3.1.

An assessment of environmental impacts of the Preferred Alternative is included in Chapter 4 of this document. A summary of the major findings follows:

1. The Preferred Alternative will decrease accident probability.

2. The Preferred Alternative will increase emergency response efficiency and accessibility.

3. The Preferred Alternative will improve air and visual quality due to a decrease in dust.

4. Visual changes will occur, including the removal of trees.

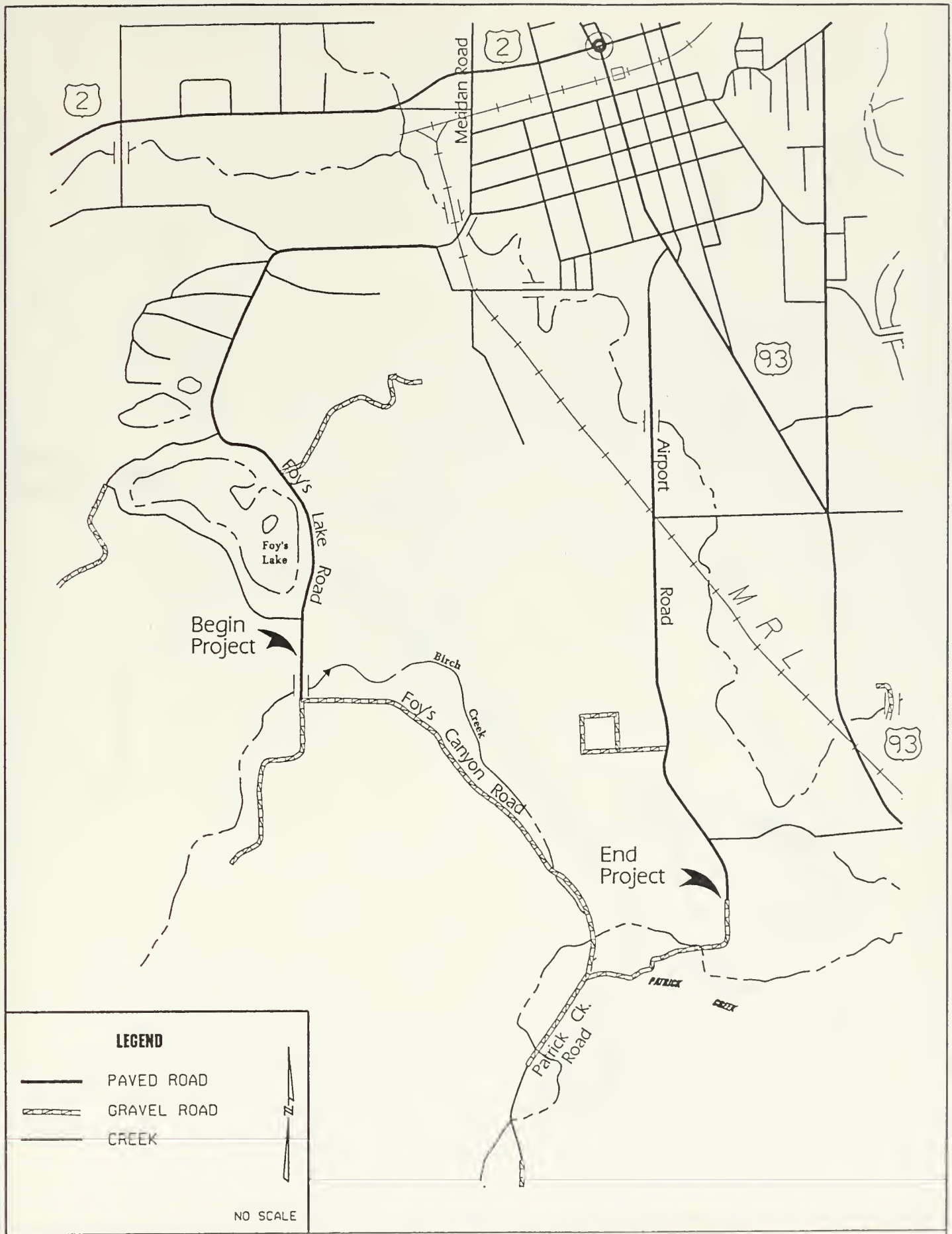
5. Approximately 0.82 hectares (2.04 acres) of wetlands will be filled.

6. Encroachment on the 100-year floodplain will occur.

7. Impacts to wildlife and fisheries habitat will occur.

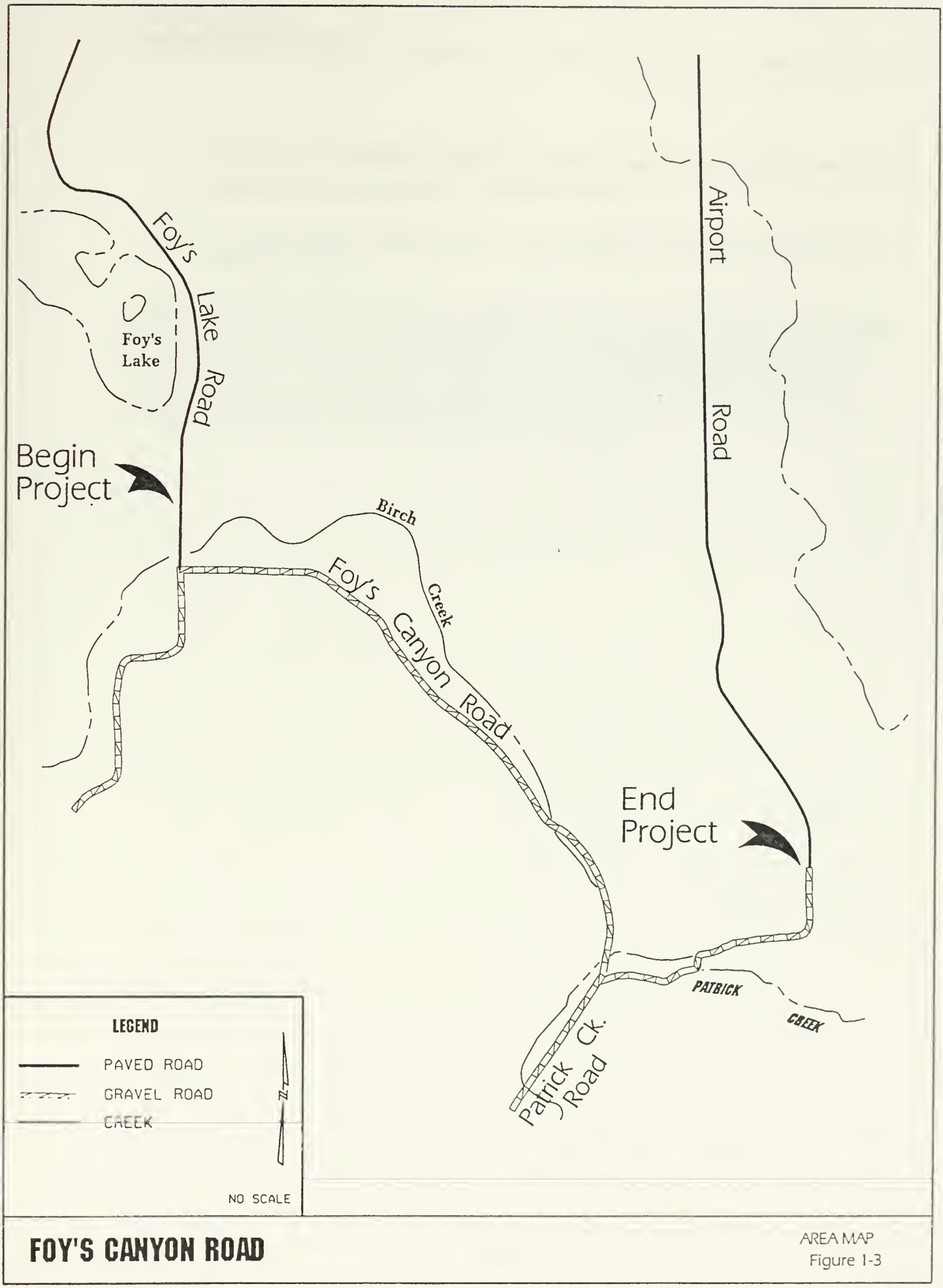
FOY'S CANYON ROAD

REGIONAL MAP
Figure 1-1



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

VICINITY MAP
Figure 1-2



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

AREA MAP
Figure 1-3

8. Short-term construction impacts include increased dust emissions, removal of vegetation, and temporary increases in noise.

9. The Preferred Alternative will provide improved access to local home and business owners.

Public coordination has included two public workshops, two newsletters, paid meeting announcements in the local newspaper, and two briefings with the Flathead County Commissioners. Consultation with affected federal and state agencies regarding project impacts was also completed and documented. A public hearing will be held following completion of this Environmental Assessment.

1.0 Description of Proposed Action

1.1 Study Area Description

The project study area is located approximately 3.22 kilometers (2 miles) southwest of the City of Kalispell in Flathead County, Montana. (See Figures 1-1 and 1-2). The proposed project, hereafter referred to as "Foys Canyon Road", is located along a 6.1 kilometer (3.8 mile) segment of Secondary Highway 503. The proposed project begins at a point on Foys Lake Road, approximately 305 meters (1000 feet) north of the intersection with Foys Lake Road and Foys Canyon Road at kilometer 6.1 (milepost 3.8) and ends at the intersection of Glacier Ranch Road at kilometer 12.2 (milepost 7.6). At the project endpoint, the road name changes to Airport Road.

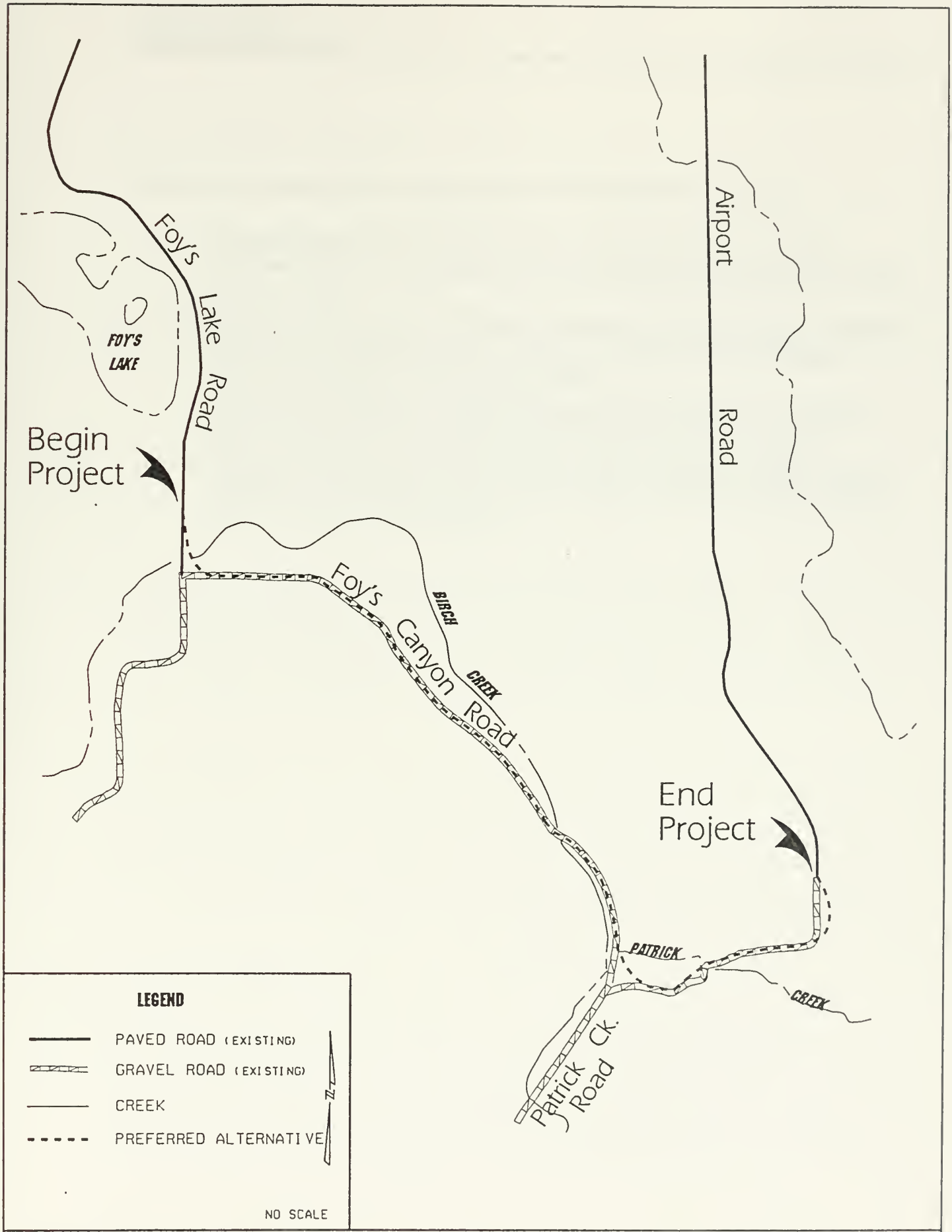
Foys Canyon Road is the middle segment of Secondary Highway 503, with Foys Lake Road and Airport Road at each end of the segment. Foys Canyon Road has a 6 meter (20 feet) gravel surface. Foys Lake Road and Airport Road have 7 to 9 meter (24 to 28 feet) paved surfaces.

1.2 Preferred Alternative Description

The Preferred Alternative consists of a design to secondary roadway standards. This includes improvements to achieve a 64 kph (40 mph) design speed. The alignments (horizontal and vertical) and the off-road characteristics (clear zone and side slopes) meet County and State requirements for provision of sight distance. The Preferred Alternative generally follows the existing alignment with larger curves replacing the existing tight curvature. The proposed vertical grades are all below seven percent. The side slopes of the Preferred Alternative will provide 6:1 slopes for approximately 2.4 meters (8 feet) beyond the edge of traveled way. These flatter slopes provide an opportunity for out-of-control vehicles traveling off the road to recover by providing a traversable slope with no permanent obstacles in the path.

The alignment of the Preferred Alternative is shown on Figure 1-4.

These improvements minimize accident potential by increasing driver visibility, and they maximize the opportunity for drivers to regain control of errant vehicles on and off the roadway surface. Results will likely improve safe roadway operations. Traffic growth can be handled without decreasing the existing Level of Service (LOS). Because no passing zones will be provided, the roadway will not experience an increase in vehicle capacity. Roadway dust will be abated by a paved surface.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Figure 1-4

Following is a summary of the major features of the Preferred Alternative:

- Widen the traveled way to provide two 3.7-meter (12-foot) lanes with 0.6-meter (2-foot) paved shoulders, thus providing additional width for errant vehicle recovery.
- Provide for a clear zone (width varies dependent on the side slope) which will increase the probability of errant vehicles returning to the traveled way without overturning or hitting a fixed object.
- Upgrade the alignment to improve stopping sight distance and reconstruct curves consistent with the proposed design speed of 64 kph (40 mph).
- Improve intersections with Birch Creek and Patrick Creek consistent with a 90 degree tee-intersection with stop sign control, resulting in improved sight distance for approaching vehicles.

2.0 Purpose and Need for Action

2.1 Introduction and Background

2.1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this project is to upgrade the Foys Canyon Road to Montana secondary roadway standards and to provide safer traffic operations along the County roadway system. These improvements will:

- Reduce existing high rate of accidents.
- Provide a facility which is constructed to current design standards.
- Provide a consistent, secondary roadway design between the Foys Lake and the Airport Roads (beginning and ending sections of Secondary Highway 503).

The project is the middle section of Secondary Highway 503 (S 503), a circular route southwest of Kalispell in Flathead County, Montana from kilometer 6.1 to 12.2 (milepost 3.8 to 7.6) (see Figure 2-1). Outside the limits of the Kalispell Urban Area, S 503 provides a route through heavily-forested lands with some pasture and open meadow areas. The land is transitioning from its past primary use as timber and farm land to incorporate rural and suburban tract development.

The existing Foys Canyon Road is characterized by relatively low traffic volumes and a high rate of accidents -- nearly seven times higher than the statewide average for secondary roadways. General traffic growth on this major collector, constructed to older, rural standards, will continue to exacerbate the number and frequency of accidents. Additionally, the County Road Department responsible for maintaining the road is stretched to maintain an adequate gravel surface during non-winter seasons.

2.1.2 Background

In 1984, the Flathead County Commissioners identified Foys Canyon Road as the third priority for county roadway improvements to the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). The project consisted of improving Foys Canyon Road, S 503 between kilometer 6.1 and 12.2 (milepost 3.8 and 7.6). The County's 1989 update to the priority list restated the Foys Canyon Road as needing improvement, this time as the second priority in the County.

The MDT administers improvements to secondary roadways involving Federal Aid throughout Montana. MDT requests that each county prioritize the secondary roadways needing improvements within their jurisdiction. This allows the local government to determine where federal and state monies should best be allocated. Each county receives an annual allotment and may accumulate the monies until adequate funds are available for project construction, including right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations. The MDT provides the technical support to develop design, environmental clearances, right-of-way needs, and utility issues. The MDT then administers construction and the county is responsible for maintenance of the secondary roadway.

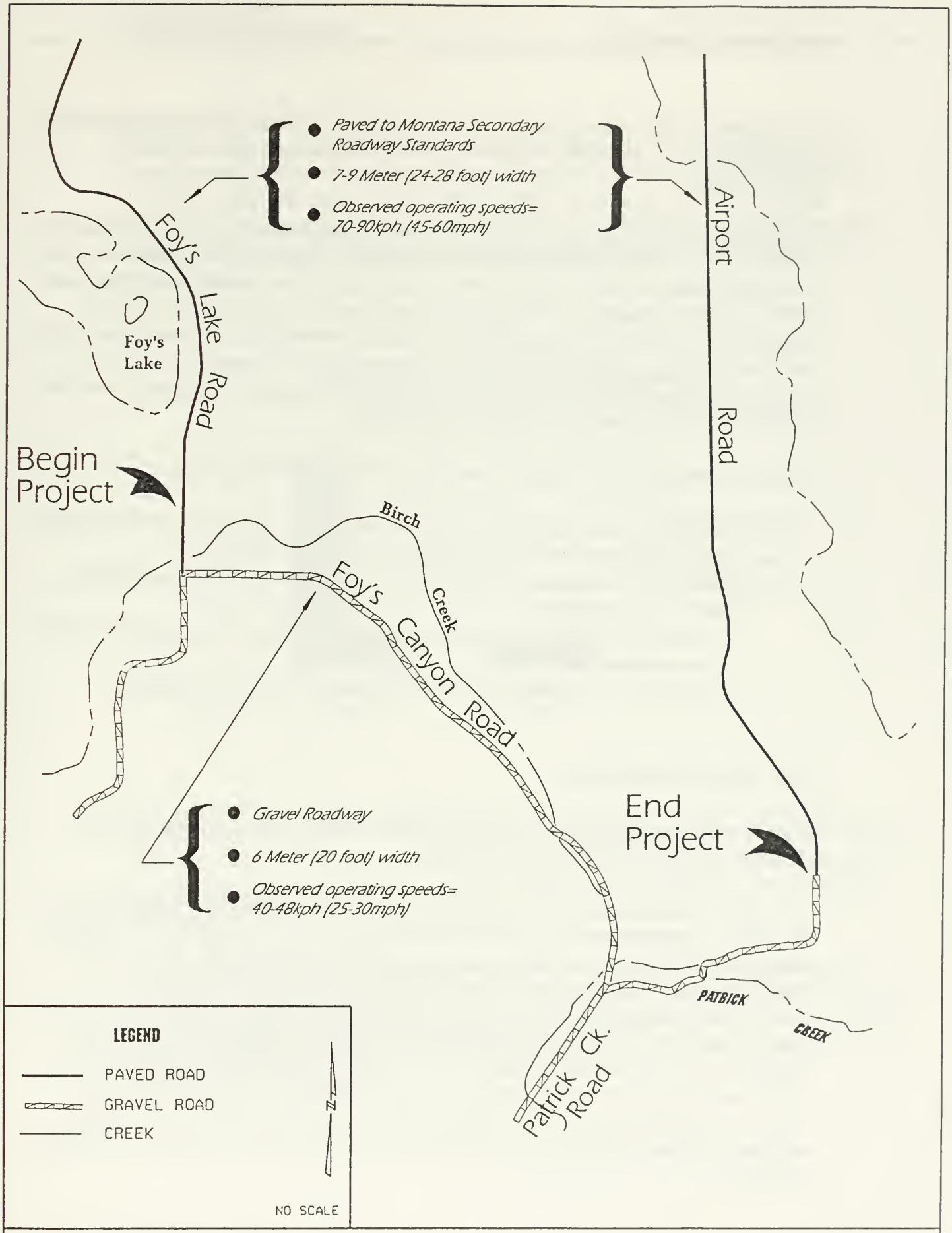
The project must be designed to secondary roadway standards in accordance with MDT Geometric Design Standards, dated December 4, 1992 (updated for metric units in 1994) to receive federal funds. This Environmental Assessment is based on survey, design and environmental work completed in English units, and will be completed in both metric and English units (English shown in parenthesis).

A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion document was completed and signed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 1986. Based on the approved Categorical Exclusion, MDT prepared a roadway design in accordance with federal, state and county standards for a 64 kph (40 mph) design speed, and right-of-way acquisition was started in 1992.

Because of the age of the previous NEPA document for this project (ten years), this Environmental Assessment (EA) will serve to update the Categorical Exclusion for S 503, the Foys Canyon Road section.

2.2 Overview of Purpose and Need

S 503 is a 16 kilometer (10 mile) circular route traversing agricultural, timber, residential, and recreational lands southwest of Kalispell. The existing road was informally constructed by Flathead County to provide a 6-meter (20-foot) wide gravel roadway section. The beginning and end sections of S 503 (Foys Lake and Airport Roads) have since been upgraded to approximate Montana secondary roadway standards, with a design speed exceeding 80 kph (50 mph) and a paved, 7- to 9-meter (24 to 28-foot) surface (see Figure 2-1). Design speed is the maximum safe speed that can be maintained over a specified section of highway when conditions are so favorable that the design features of the highway govern.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

EXISTING ROAD CONDITIONS
Figure 2-1

Foys Canyon Road currently provides a winding, narrow roadway with approximately 6 meters (20 feet) of gravel travel surface. A number of substandard conditions presently exist.

The existing road provides no shoulders, no passing opportunities, poor sight distances, few pullouts for vehicle breakdowns or for recovery during emergency maneuvers, and no recovery zone adjacent to the roadway, especially if other vehicles are on the road. With virtually no shoulders, drivers have no opportunity to recover control of the vehicle before hitting obstacles or traversing unrecoverable slopes. The terrain is hilly, with over 105 meters (350 feet) of elevation change within the project limits. In winter, the steep vertical grades combine with cold temperatures along with snow and shade from adjacent trees to produce icy conditions.

Roadway features contributing to these substandard conditions include:

- Narrow, winding roadway lacking shoulders for recovery, emergency parking, and/or adequate space for bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Substandard alignment resulting in poor sight distances and essentially no passing opportunities.
- Inadequate side slopes or open areas that would serve as a recovery area for errant vehicles.
- Essentially no protection (guardrail) in areas with steep side slopes.

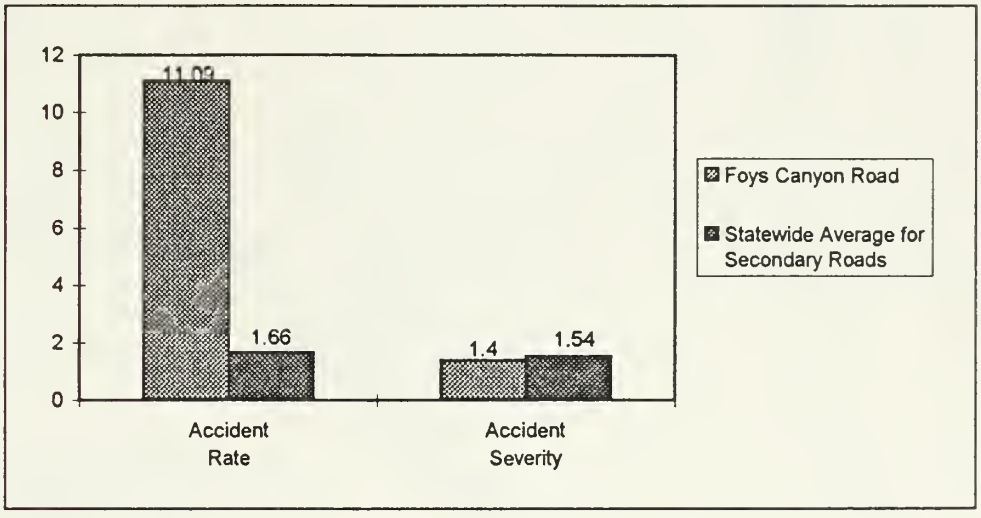
2.3 Safety Problems

Analysis of the past ten years of recorded accident data for the Foys Canyon Road identified deficiencies in the present road.

The physical features of Foys Canyon Road affect safety by influencing the ability of the driver to maintain vehicle control, determining the number and types of conflicts, determining the consequences of an out-of-control vehicle, and influencing overall driver behavior. These physical features include road cross-section, access characteristics and geometric conditions. Some factors, such as vehicle characteristics, have changed over the years to redefine the relationship between safety and road design so that once-accepted design is now outdated. Design improvements on the Foys Canyon Road can not only reduce accident rates but potentially lessen the severity of accidents. If corrective improvements are not implemented and traffic volumes continue to increase as projected, the rate and severity of accidents will likely increase.

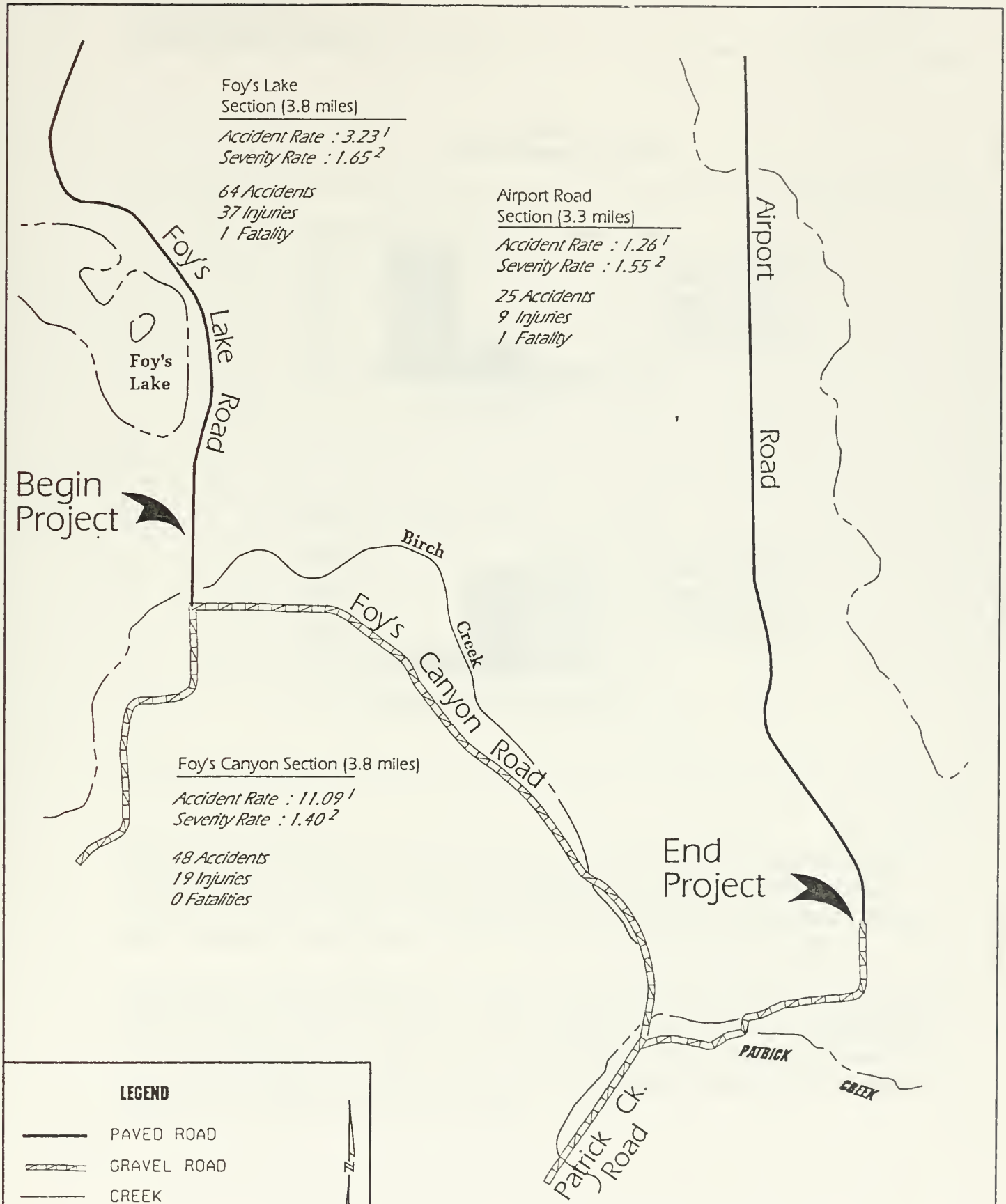
The accident rate on the Foys Canyon Road section is 11.09 accidents per million vehicle-miles, nearly seven times the state average of 1.66 for secondary roadways. The vehicle severity rate on Foys Canyon Road is 1.4, somewhat less than the statewide average of 1.54. (Vehicle severity is a ratio weighting fatal accidents and injury accidents greater than property-damage-only accidents.) (See Table 2-1 and Figure 2-2.)

Table 2-1
Accident Rate and Accident Severity Information



These rates reflect only the accidents reported to authorities. Public comment obtained from the public meetings (see Appendix A) indicated that a large number of accidents occur that are not reported, primarily resulting from vehicles traveling off the roadway surface due to snowy, slick conditions or due to driver error combined with a limited roadway (narrow roadway and no recovery zone).

Table 2-2 illustrates the accident rates and traffic volumes on Foys Canyon Road compared to the adjoining section of S 503. The accident rate on Foys Canyon Road is 3.4 to 8.8 times the rate on the Foys Lake or Airport Road section of S 503. This is a striking comparison to the traffic volumes on this section, which are substantially lower than the adjoining sections.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

1985-1994 ACCIDENT CONCENTRATIONS BY ROADWAY

Figure 2-2

Table 2-2
Accident Rates on S 503

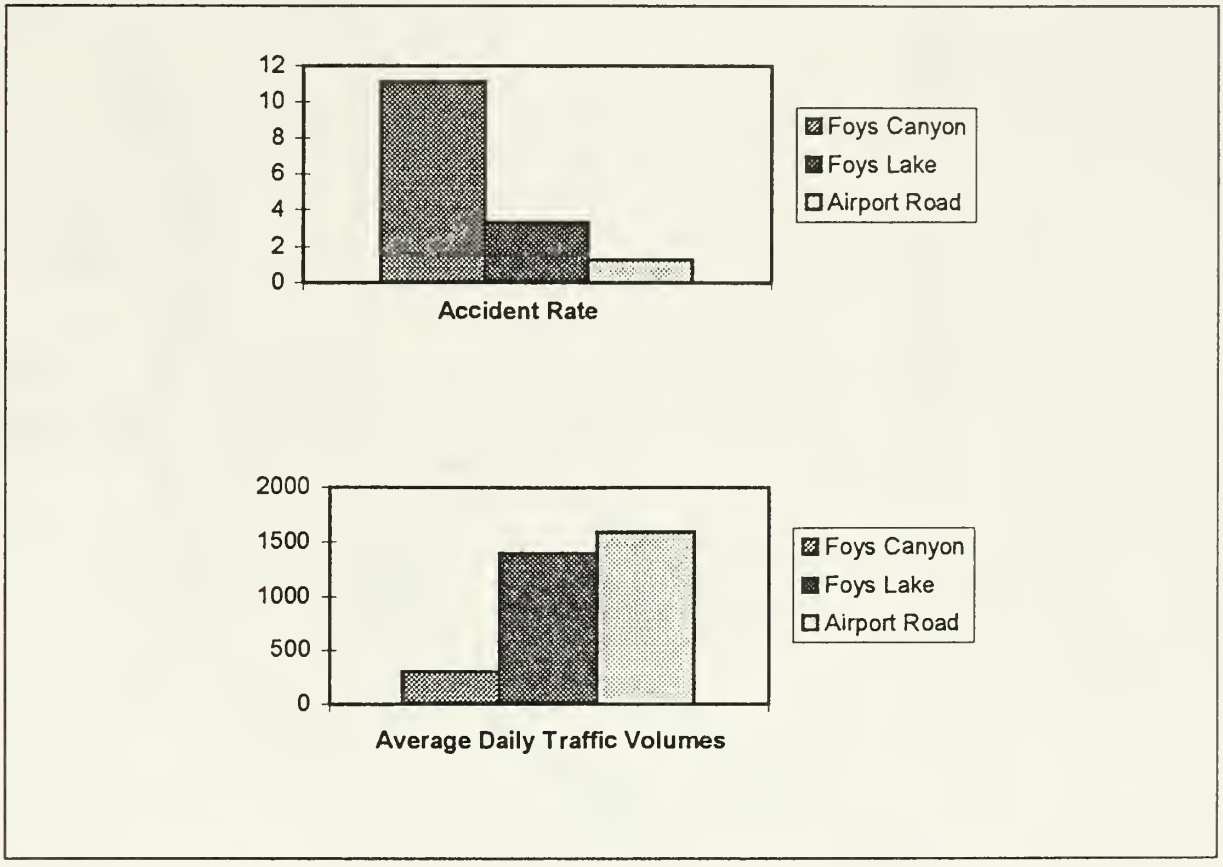
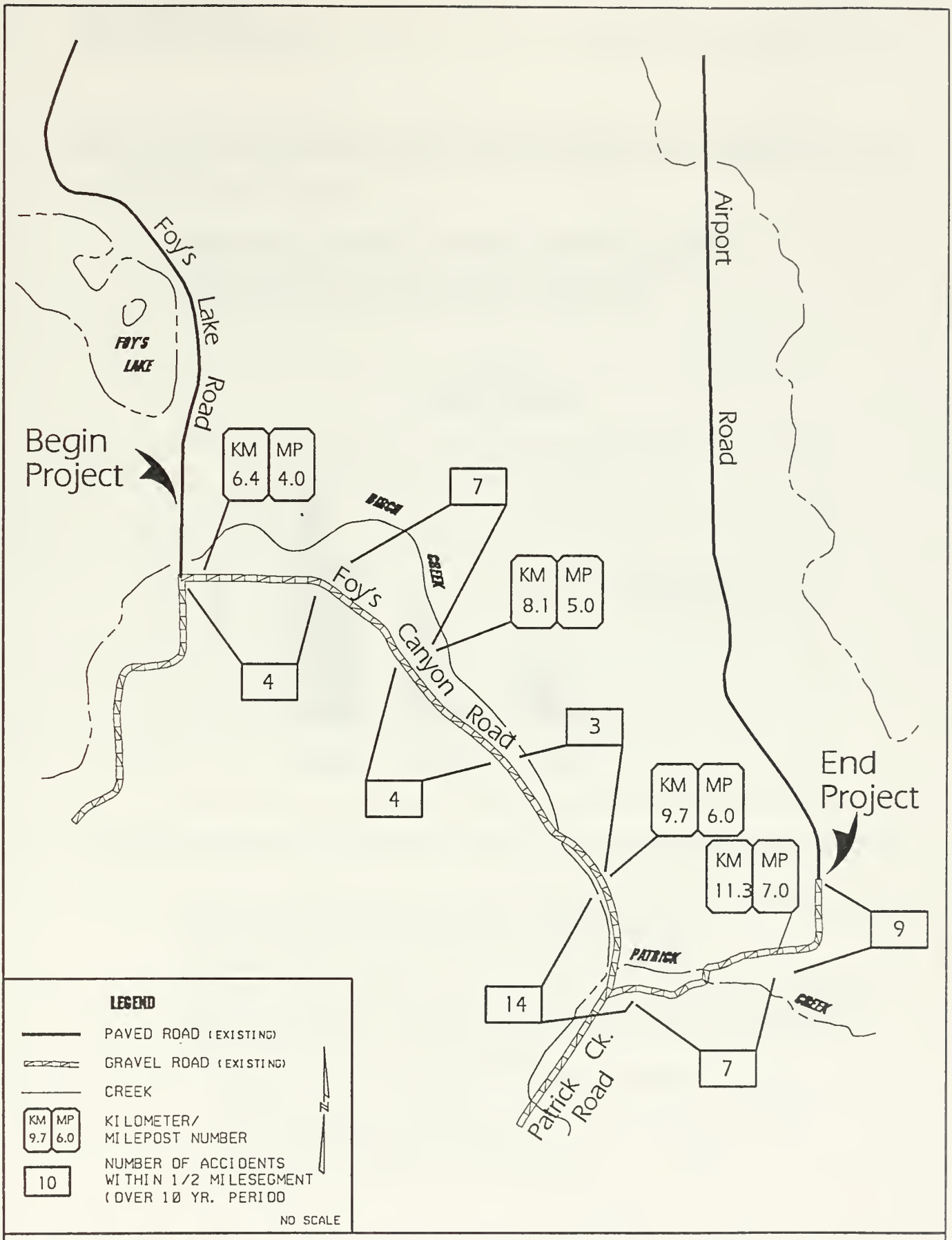


Figure 2-3 illustrates the accident locations along the Foys Canyon Road stretch. Seventy percent of the total number of accidents occur within a two-mile section between kilometers 9.0 and 12.2 (mileposts 5.6 and 7.6), where Foys Canyon opens into a meadow at the confluence of the Patrick and Birch Creek drainages.

The roadway in this accident-prone segment is characterized by tight curves with sight distance frequently limited by the curvature and/or off-road obstacles (usually trees). This two-mile section is intermittently forested which compounds icy conditions in the winter. This section of roadway also has seen an increase in residential development, with direct access from Foys Canyon Road.



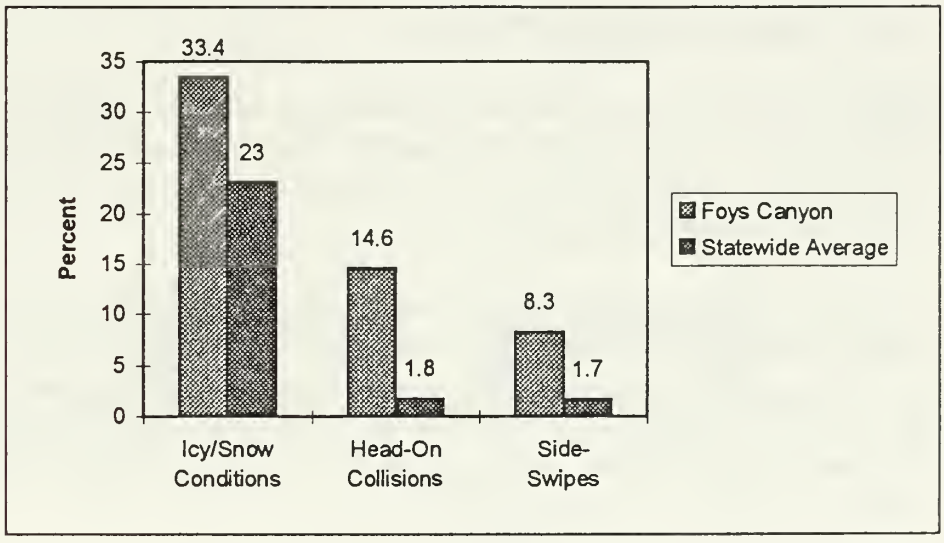
FOY'S CANYON ROAD

ACCIDENT LOCATIONS BY 0.5 MILE SEGMENTS
Figure 2-3

Table 2-3 illustrates the types of accidents occurring along Foys Canyon Road compared to the statewide averages. As shown, the percentage of accidents occurring along Foys Canyon Road are:

- Higher than the statewide average for icy/snowy conditions.
- Higher than the statewide average for head-on collisions.
- Higher than the statewide average for side-swipes.

Table 2-3
Types of Accidents



A summary of the Foys Canyon Road accident data provides the following conclusions:

- Given the traffic volumes, the Foys Canyon Road section of S 503 has a very high number of accidents (48) over a ten-year period.
- No fatal accidents occurred within the ten-year period.
- One-third of the recorded accidents occurred during icy/snowy conditions.
- A significant number of accidents occur within the final 3 kilometer (two mile) section of the project, including:
  - 70 percent of the total number of project accidents,
  - all seven head-on accidents,
  - all four sideswipe accidents, and
  - both accidents with tractor/trailer units.

2.4 Roadway Deficiencies and Relationship to Design Standards

Widening of the existing road, providing a paved surface, providing a clear zone for recovery on the shoulder and adjoining cross-slopes, and improving geometrics would be expected to reduce the accident rate. The current high accident rate indicates that the narrow road section and the limited clear zone (side visibility) encourages vehicles to utilize the center of the road, rather than a designated lane. Statistics show that improvements such as widening the roadway, providing striping on the paved surface, and improved clear zone visibility help reduce these accident causes.

2.4.1 Shoulder and Lane Widths

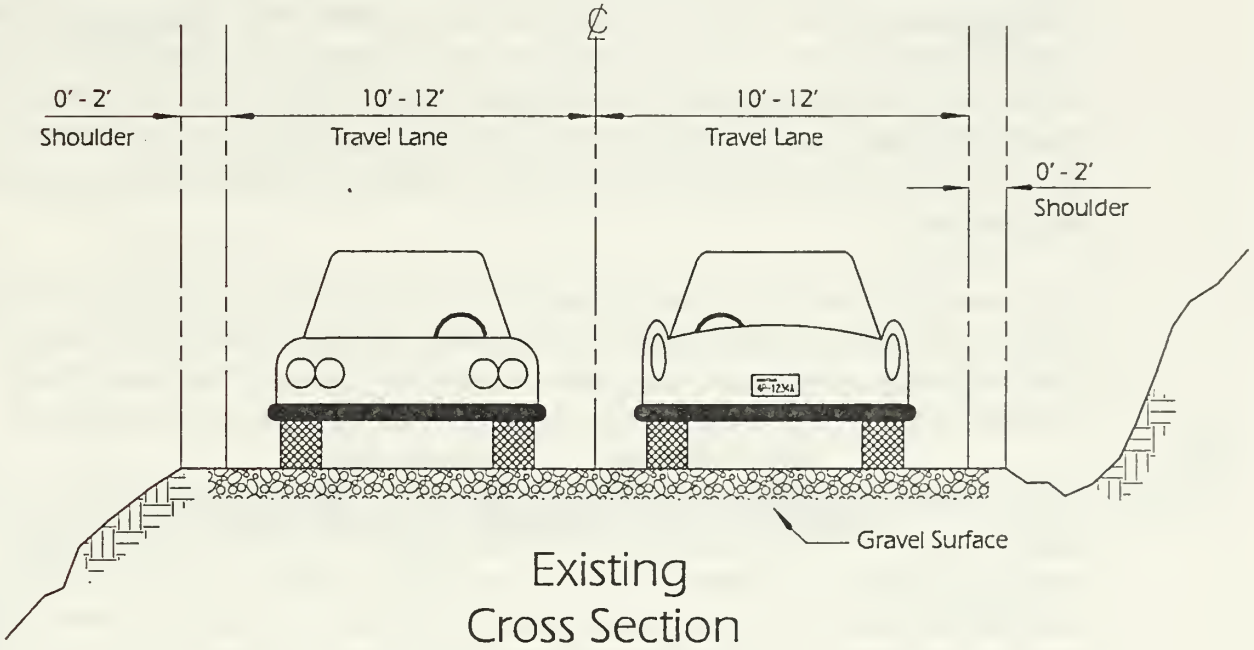
The narrow roadway encourages encroachment into the opposing lanes, resulting in head-on accidents or vehicles that are forced off the roadway. Any bicycle, equestrian or pedestrian traffic may force traffic into the opposing lane to travel around these other travelers (see Figure 2-4).

Traffic accident analysis indicates that accidents (sideswipes, head-on accident and single vehicle accidents) are consistently attributable to the narrow lanes and lack of shoulders. Fourteen percent of the accidents in the ten-year period were head-on, 8 percent were sideswipe accidents and over 55 percent of the accidents on Foys Canyon Road were single vehicle accidents. Wider travel lanes would be a factor in reducing head-on and sideswipe accidents.

The narrow shoulder and lane widths negatively affect the response time for providers of emergency services.

2.4.2 Alignment

Roadway alignment is a composite of curvature and sight distance, or the driver's ability to perceive and react to driving hazards typical on an access-type roadway such as Foys Canyon Road, including the need to decelerate for turning vehicles. Traffic safety can be enhanced by flattening curves, as well as widening the lane or shoulder width or providing sight distance for conditions on the roadway ahead (such as a turning vehicle).



Existing
Cross Section

FOY'S CANYON ROAD

EXISTING TYPICAL SECTION
Figure 2-4

2.4.3 Side Slopes and Clear Zone

The roadway environment, including steep slopes and fixed objects, affect both the likelihood that an accident will occur and the severity of the accident. Figure 2-4 illustrates the current roadway cross-section exhibiting these characteristics.

Accident data for the past ten years show that 33 percent of all accidents resulted in a vehicle overturning, while 30 percent of the accidents resulted in a vehicle striking a fixed (off-road) object. Also, 30 percent of the accidents were attributed to limited visibility by the driver. All these conditions result from the existing roadway design which provides no clear zone and substandard sight distance. The clear zone is the gradually-sloped area adjacent to the traveled way that has no fixed objects and provides a recovery area for errant vehicles. Figure 2-5 illustrates the proposed typical cross-section.

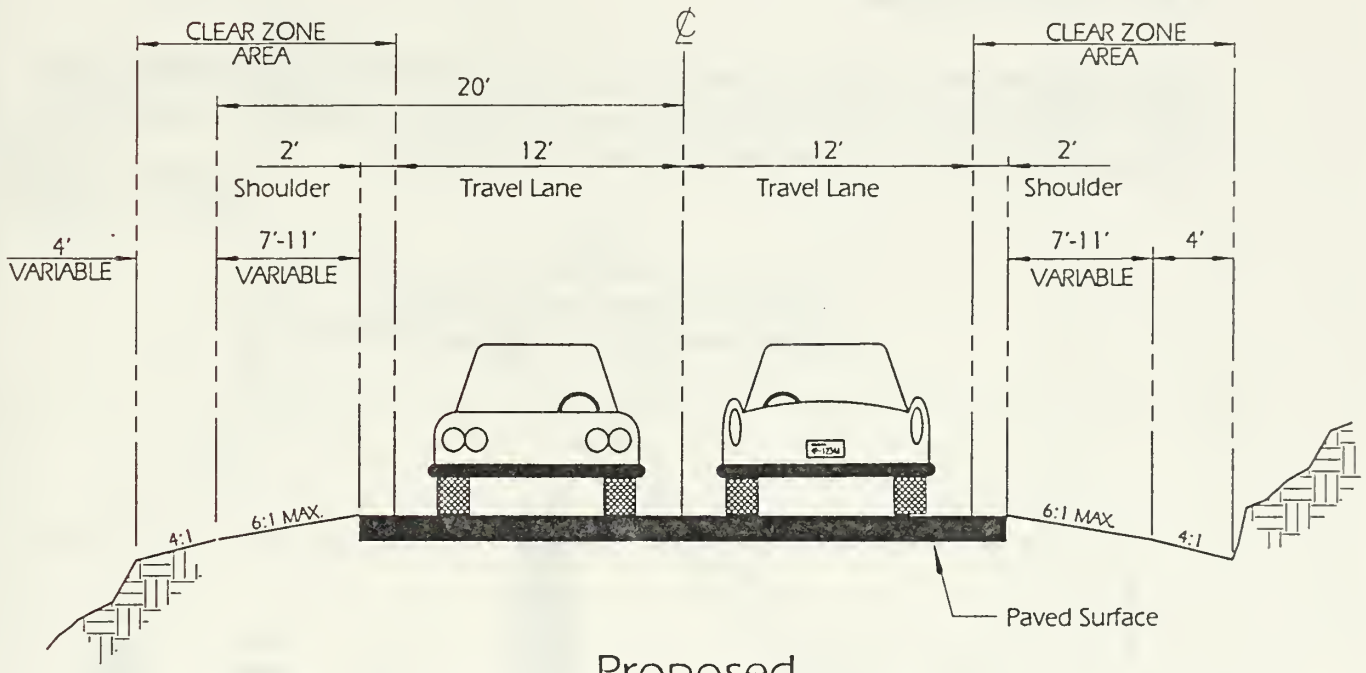
Once a vehicle has left the traveled lane it is up to the driver to regain control of the vehicle and direct it back onto the traveled lane. When encroachments prevent drivers from regaining control, accidents occur. In the Foys Canyon Road area, these encroachments include such objects as trees, fences, steep slopes or large rocks.

MDT design criteria for a rural two-lane cross-section establishes minimum clear zone widths based on the design needs. For the proposed 60 kph (40 mph) design and the projected traffic, the minimum clear distances vary depending on the side slope and roadway curvature. The clear zone is the distance from the edge of a traveled way to encroachment by a fixed object, including the shoulder and the ditch or fill slope. The clear zone must be free of large vegetation, large rocks, structures, and steep slopes. Only vegetation that is small in diameter [under 10 centimeters (4 inches)] and would not grow to a height that would obscure sight distance is allowed in the clear zone. Generally, this includes only grasses and small shrubs.

In the study area, the clear zone is typically non-existent. The proposed clear zone would be 3 to 5.1 meters (10 to 17 feet).

2.5 System Linkage

Improvements to the Foys Canyon Road portion of S 503 will serve to connect two highway segments which have been improved to secondary roadway standards. Drivers expect that a secondary highway will provide an adequate travel surface with consistent



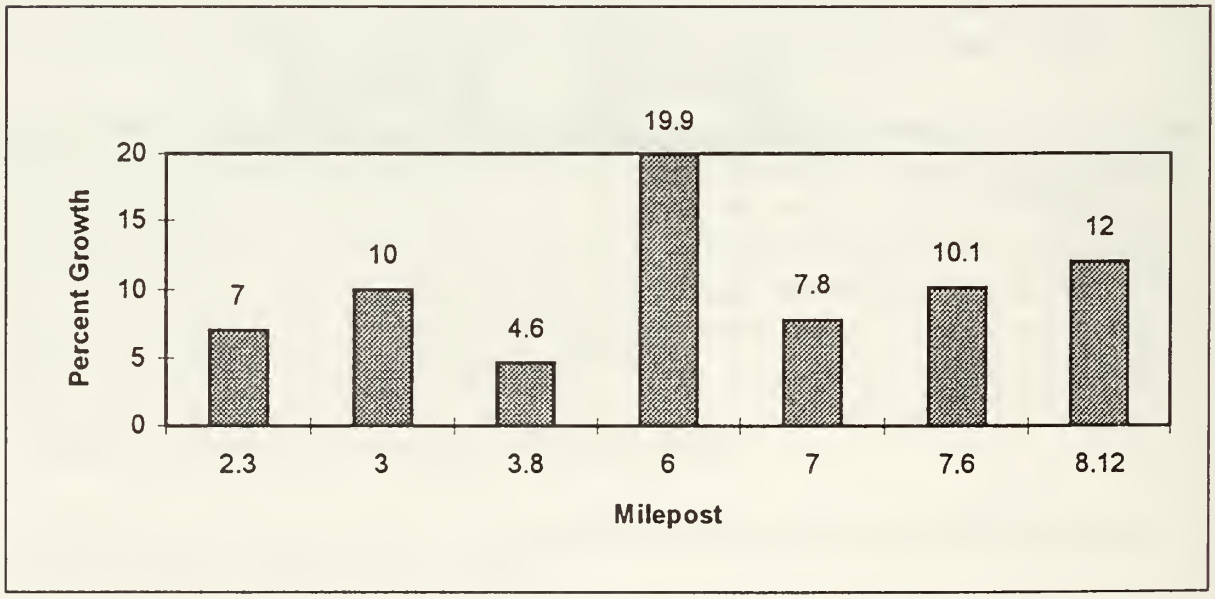
Proposed
Cross Section

design features throughout its length. The Foys Lake Road and Airport Road sections provide good sight distance, gradually curving alignments and geometry consistent with a higher-speed roadway [60 kph (40 mph)] or greater. As traffic volumes increase on S 503, the discrepancy between the improvements to Foys Lake Road/Airport Road and the currently unimproved Foys Canyon Road may result in greater driver error and increase in accidents (see Figure 2-6).

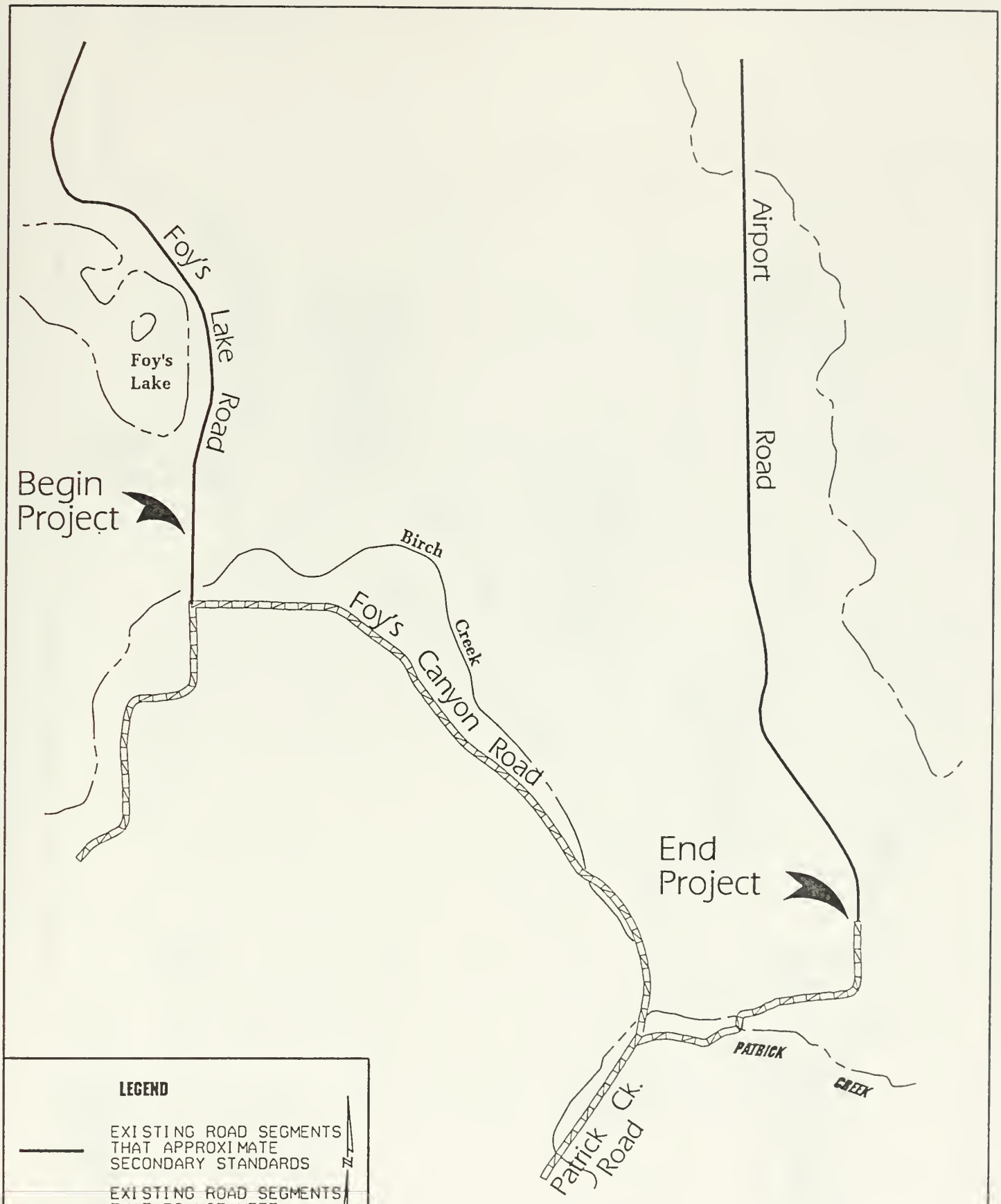
2.6 Traffic Volumes

Historical increases in traffic volumes for the study area (for the period 1989 to 1994) are shown in Table 2-4. The highest increases occurred in the area at the south end of the canyon, where the most residential growth has occurred.

Table 2-4
Historical Growth in Traffic Volumes
Annual Growth Rate for 1989 to 1994

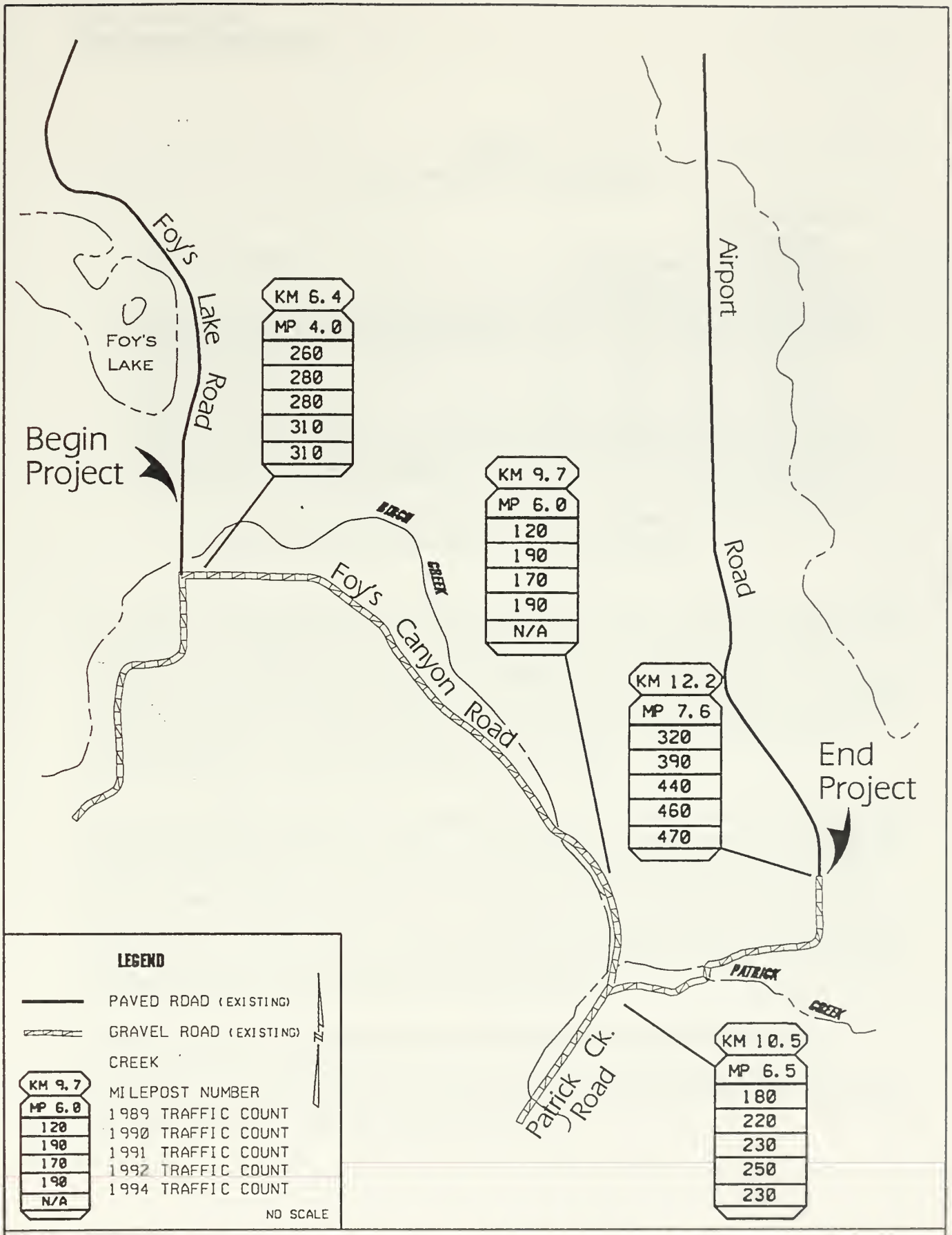


Identifying the historic traffic growth patterns of the area allow for projections to be made to guide the design to accommodate the next 20 years of traffic growth. In order to determine the growth rate to the year 2015, historic data was analyzed between 1989 to 1994 and between kilometers 6.1 to 12.2 (mileposts 3.8 to 7.6), as shown in Table 2-5 below and in Figure 2-7.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

SYSTEM LINKAGES
Figure 2-6



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

HISTORICAL TRAFFIC COUNTS
Figure 2-7

Table 2-5
S 503 Average Traffic Growth Rates

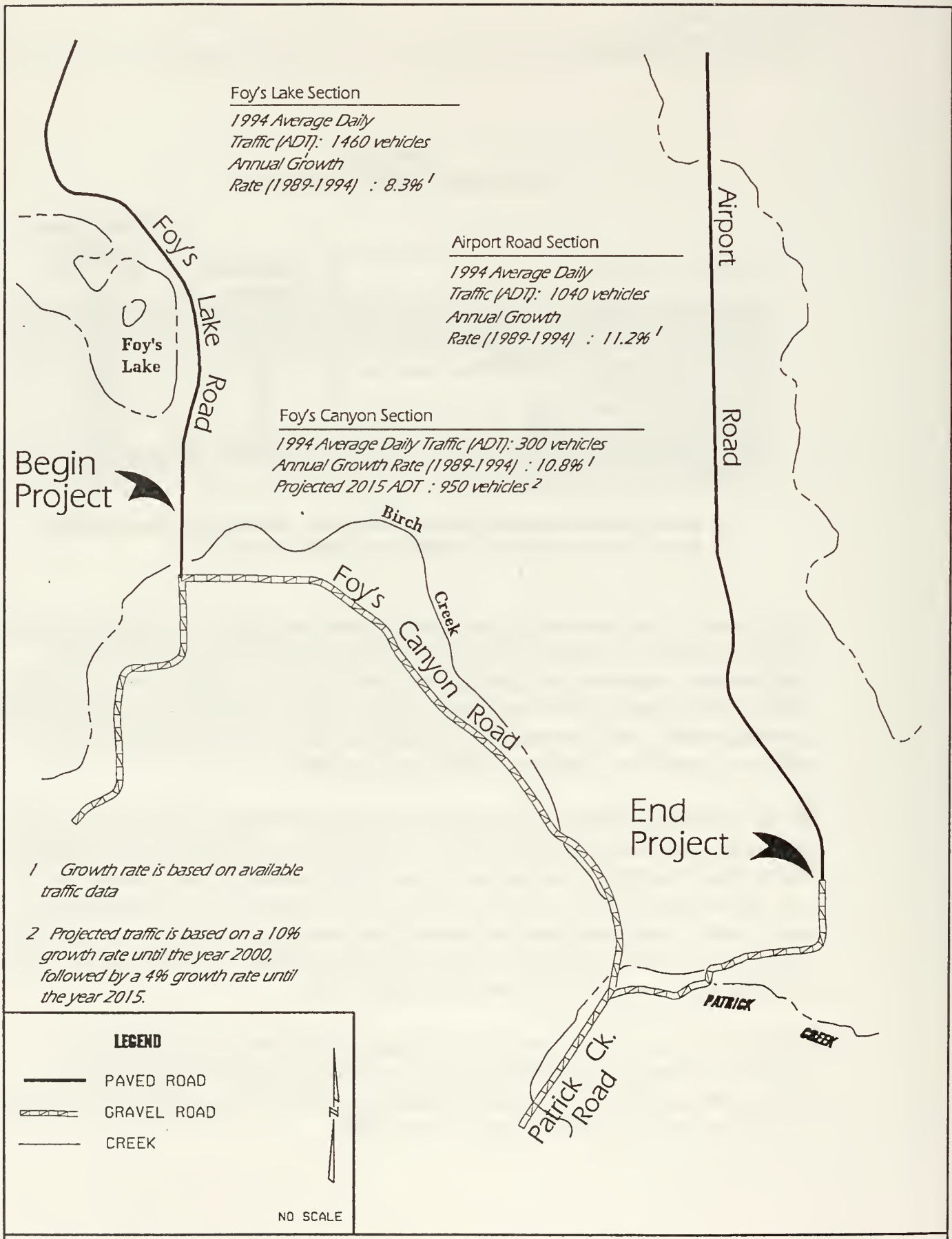
Location on S 503	Approximate Milepost	Annual Growth Rate (1) 1989-1994 6 years
North of Foys Lake	2 -3	6.7%
North of Junction of Canyon & Lake Roads	3	9.9%
Foys Canyon Road ---- Beginning	3.8	4.6%
South end of Canyon	6	19.9%
East of Patrick Creek Road	7	7.8%
Foys Canyon Road ------End	7.6	10.1%
South of Railroad Crossing	8-12	12.32%
AVERAGE RATE IN PROJECT AREA		10.6%

(1) Growth rate is based on historical traffic data. Shaded areas are outside the project limits and are not included in average calculations

An increase in rural residential development is contributing to the traffic growth in the Foys Lake and Foys Canyon area southwest of Kalispell. This general trend may continue for a number of years, but is not expected to grow at the current ten percent annual traffic growth rate for the 20-year design forecast. Original design plans for this project assumed a four percent annual traffic growth rate, which is more typical of moderate growth in a rural area outlying an urban area.

Forecasted traffic volumes were projected by using 1994 traffic counts as a base year. The design year for this project is 2015. 1994 traffic counts indicate an Average Daily Traffic (ADT) of 300. A ten percent annual traffic growth rate was utilized for the next six years (to 2000), followed by a four percent growth rate for the remaining 14 years. Based on the combined ten percent/four percent growth factors, the projected ADT for 2015 is 950 vehicles per day for Foys Canyon Road. This is an average of six percent growth per year for 20 years (see Figure 2-8).

Population projections prepared for the *Kalispell Transportation Plan* indicate a population growth rate for Flathead County of about six percent every five years through the year 2015. The Greater Kalispell population is expected to grow by about 6.5 percent every five years through the year 2015.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

TRAFFIC DATA
Figure 2-8

Rural roadway level of service (LOS) reflects three parameters: average travel speed, percent time delay, and utilization of capacity. These parameters vary between roadways which primarily provide mobility versus accessibility. Level of service is described graphically in Figure 2-9.

The relatively low volumes and low operating speed on S 503 support the roadway's designation as a rural, major collector. The low volumes indicate the roadway currently operates at approximately LOS B.

The general growth in the area will result in increased traffic volumes using S 503. The year 2015 projected volumes for the Preferred Alternative (less than 1000 AADT) are well under the capacity of a rural roadway, including the existing section. All existing access points will be maintained with the proposed project. Therefore, the future LOS will reflect the Preferred Alternative's roadway conditions (safe operating characteristics) and its provision of access.

2.7 Maintenance

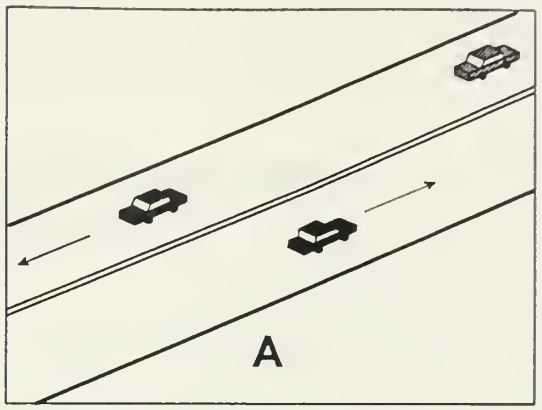
S 503 is currently maintained by Flathead County and will continue to be maintained by the County. The existing gravel surface requires frequent maintenance by County forces during summer months. The County estimates the summer maintenance requires grading and additional gravel every two weeks, with approximate annual costs of $8,500 per year (1995 dollars). A paved road would not require this seasonal expense but would, however, require paved road maintenance such as striping, crack sealing, and patching consistent with Airport and Foys Lake Roads. It is expected that the average annual maintenance costs for Foys Canyon Road would decrease with the Preferred Alternative.

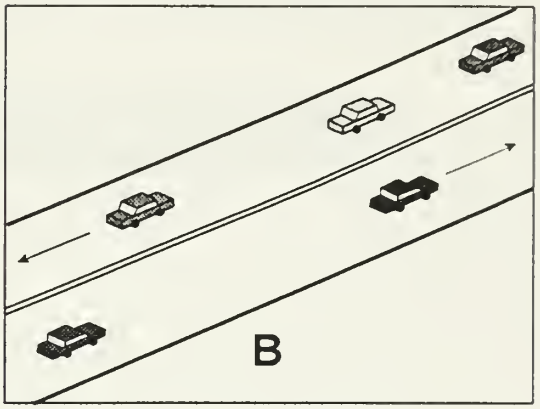
Winter maintenance costs relate directly to plowing and are also provided by County forces. The County prioritizes paved roadways for plowing. Due to the beginning and ending sections of S 503 being paved, it is assumed that the plowing priority for the middle section (Foys Canyon section) will be based on the plowing of the entire, circular roadway.

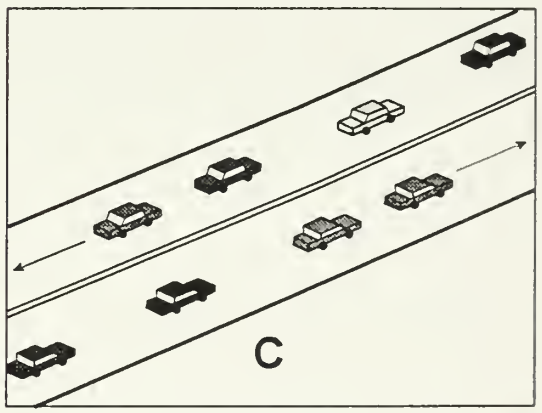
Maintenance problems associated with Foys Canyon Road are:

- insufficient shoulder widths for maintenance vehicles and operations,
- shading and icing of the roadway due to proximity of the trees, and

LOS	Roadway Segments
A	Free flow, low traffic density
B	Minimum delay, stable traffic flow
C	Stable condition, movements somewhat restricted due to higher volumes, but not objectionable for motorists
D	Movements more restricted, queues and delays may occur during short peaks, but lower demands occur often enough to permit clearing, preventing excessive backups
E	Actual capacity of the roadway involves delay to all motorists due to congestion
F	Forced flow with demand volumes greater than capacity resulting in complete congestion







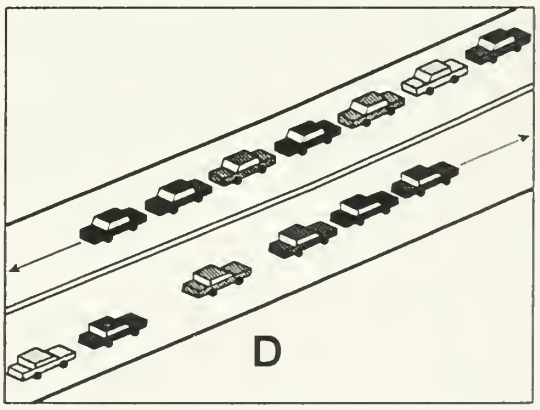


Figure 2-9

Level of Service Definitions

- pot-holing and winter icing as a result of deficient roadway drainage (roadway-cross slope and through the roadway-culverts).

2.8 Summary of Purpose and Need

To summarize, the primary purpose and need for improvements to Foys Canyon Road is to:

- Reduce the existing high rate of accidents
- Provide a facility which is constructed to current design standards.
- Provide for continuity in roadway cross-sections between the Foys Lake Road and Airport Road sections.
- Provide for anticipated traffic growth.
- Reduce maintenance problems.

3.0 Alternatives

A number of alternatives for improvements to Foys Canyon Road were developed and considered during the design process and public workshops. This chapter describes the alternatives considered but not advanced, presents the screening evaluation used, and states the alternatives advanced.

3.1 Alternatives Advanced

The alternatives advanced include the No-Build Alternative and Preferred Alternative.

3.1.1 No-Build

The No-Build alternative would retain the existing roadway in its current state with no improvements and current maintenance requirements. Traffic growth could be adequately handled without decreasing the existing level of service (LOS). No changes would be made to lessen the accidents or to increase off-road safety features. Roadway dust, noise and maintenance requirements would increase proportionally to increased traffic growth.

3.1.2 Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is described in Section 1.0 (Description of Proposed Action) and shown on Figure 1-1.

3.2 Alternatives Considered But Not Advanced

The following alternatives were considered but not advanced for further analysis. Descriptions of these alternatives and reasons they were not carried forward are described in this section.

3.2.1 Secondary Roadway Design Modifications

Modifications to the secondary roadway design were considered and are described below:

3.2.1.1 Modification A, Kilometer 6.1-7.2 (Milepost 3.8-4.5).

This modification shifts north at approximately kilometer 5.6 (milepost 3.5) to traverse the open field in an easterly direction for about 0.4 kilometers (1/4 mile), then curves southward to rejoin the Preferred Alternative alignment at approximately kilometer 7.1 (milepost 4.4). This modification:

- Is not a high accident zone and would be more distant from, and thus create the potential for adding parking spaces to, the Foys Community Center.

- Results in potentially-reduced wetland impact, reduced vertical grades and reduced earthwork requirements. It would result in impacts to designated prime farmlands.

- Was suggested by Dallas Herron, one of the owners of the property that the alignment would cross. Further discussions among the family members owning the property resulted in not favoring the modification since it would split the 16 hectare (40 acre) parcel and have potential impacts to future building plans of several family members.

This modification was not advanced based on impacts to prime farmland, splitting a parcel, and landowner objections.

3.2.1.2 Modification B, Kilometer 9.7-11.3 (Milepost 6.0-7.0).

This modification shifts north to traverse the hillside above Patrick Creek between kilometers 10.1 and 10.9 (mileposts 6.25 and 6.8). and rejoins the Preferred Alternative alignment between kilometers 11.1 and 11.3 (mileposts 6.9 and 7.0), near Wild Rose Trail. Modification B will result in the following:

- Results in potentially reduced wetland impacts.

- Traverses a slope exceeding 20 percent where the alignment follows the hillside, thus requiring substantial cut and fill.

- Results in noise, visual, and other roadway-related impacts to Wild Rose Trail residents.

This alternative was not advanced because of impacts to residential areas (noise, visual) and the steep grade of the alignment.

3.2.1.3 Modification C, Kilometer 11.1 (Milepost 6.9)

This modification shifts easterly at the existing s-curves located between Patrick Creek Road and Wild Rose Trail, and rejoins the original secondary roadway near Wild Rose Trail.

This alignment lessens impact to wetlands by approximately 0.15 hectare (0.38 acre) and was evaluated in detail for this reason.

It was not advanced for the following reasons:

- Right-of-way would be required from 4 additional properties, resulting in landowner hardship.
- Three driveways would be relocated.
- A nearly 12 meter (40 foot) vertical cut would be required, resulting in a visual impact.
- A stand of mature coniferous trees would be removed, resulting in a visual impact.
- Construction costs would be increased by approximately $50,000 due to increased earthwork and grading requirements. In addition, right-of-way costs would be increased.

3.2.1.4 Modification D, Kilometer 11.3-12.1 (Milepost 7.0-7.5)

This modification shifts the alignment northwesterly, further up the hillside above the existing roadway and rejoins the Preferred Alternative alignment at approximately kilometer 12.1 (milepost 7.5) before a large stand of coniferous trees.

- This alternative results in severe impacts to residential properties, including the potential need to displace a structure.

This modification was not advanced due to severe impacts to residents.

3.2.2 Pave Existing Surface Only

This alternative provides an asphalt surface for the existing roadway surface with no changes in right-of-way, curves, or off-road features.

- No changes would be made to lessen the accidents or to increase off-road safety features.
- Possible underground springs which may surface in canyon roadway section would substantially affect operating conditions and maintenance needs if they occur. Maintenance needs would be reduced if the springs do not appear.

This alternative would not address the tight curves, lack of sight distance, and lack of a clear zone, and would therefore perpetuate the high accident rate along Foys Canyon Road. This alternative would not meet driver expectations for design features found on Foys Lake and Airport Roads. This alternative was not advanced because it would not meet purpose and need for the project and is not eligible for federal or state funding.

3.2.3 Non-Secondary Road to 48 kph (30 mph) Design

This alternative would provide an asphalt surface for the existing roadway with some changes in right-of-way, curves, and off road features.

- This alternative would reduce roadway dust and maintenance needs.
- The 48 kph (30 mph) design may reduce the potential for accidents.
- The 48 kph (30 mph) design is not compatible with the roads on either end of Foys Canyon Road (Airport Road and Foys Lake Road).
- This design would create continuity, providing an unbroken paved surface between Foys Lake Road and Airport Road.

This alternative would not meet driver expectations for design features found on Foys Lake and Airport Roads. This discrepancy between the improvements to Foys Canyon Road and the two other segments may result in an increase in accidents.

This alternative was not advanced because it does not meet purpose and need, and it is not eligible for federal or state funding.

3.2.4 Proposed Secondary Roadway with Design Exceptions

Two design exceptions were considered. Design exceptions allow specific roadway sections and/or elements to be designed to a standard less than the overall roadway. Design exceptions must be justified and approved at state and federal levels for each site where applicable criteria are not met. Each exception requested should address the impacts to: the accident data, environmental impacts, right-of-way, construction costs and serviceability impacts (source: *MDT Roadway Design Manual*, Section 8.8).

3.2.4.1 Design Exception A, Horizontal Curve Exception at Project Beginning

This alternative would provide a horizontal curve between north/south Foys Lake Road and the east/west Foys Canyon Road constructed to a 48 kph (30 mph) curve versus the 64 kph (40 mph) curve included with the Preferred Alternative.

3.2.4.2 Design Exception B, Stop-Sign Controlled, Tee Intersection at Junction with S 503 and Patrick Creek Road

With this alternative, Patrick Creek Road would continue into the S 503 alignment to the east, while the Canyon leg would tee into this roadway at a 90-degree intersection. A three-way stop sign would require all vehicles to stop.

3.2.4.3 Summary of Design Exceptions A and B

- Neither design exception A nor B would provide a consistent roadway for the traveling public.
- Neither design exception A nor B would meet driver expectancy, thus increasing the potential for accidents in these two areas.

- Design exceptions for A or B cannot be justified based on any of the following:
  - Lessening of environmental impacts
  - Right-of-way constraints
  - Increased construction costs
  - Improved safety conditions
  - Improved serviceability

Both design exceptions were not advanced because of safety problems and because they do not meet the purpose and need of the project.

4.0 Existing Conditions, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

4.1 Land Use, Zoning and Land Use Planning

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

The majority of the study area is currently devoted to low-density, single-family housing. Some agricultural land uses remain, but they are being rapidly converted to large-lot subdivisions. This type of land use conversion (agriculture to housing) is endemic throughout Flathead County and will likely continue well into the next century. There are no commercial land uses along the Foys Canyon Road section of Secondary Roadway 503. Land ownership in the study area is primarily private, the exceptions being County-owned Herron Park, Foys Community Center and one parcel of state-owned land (see Figure 4-1).

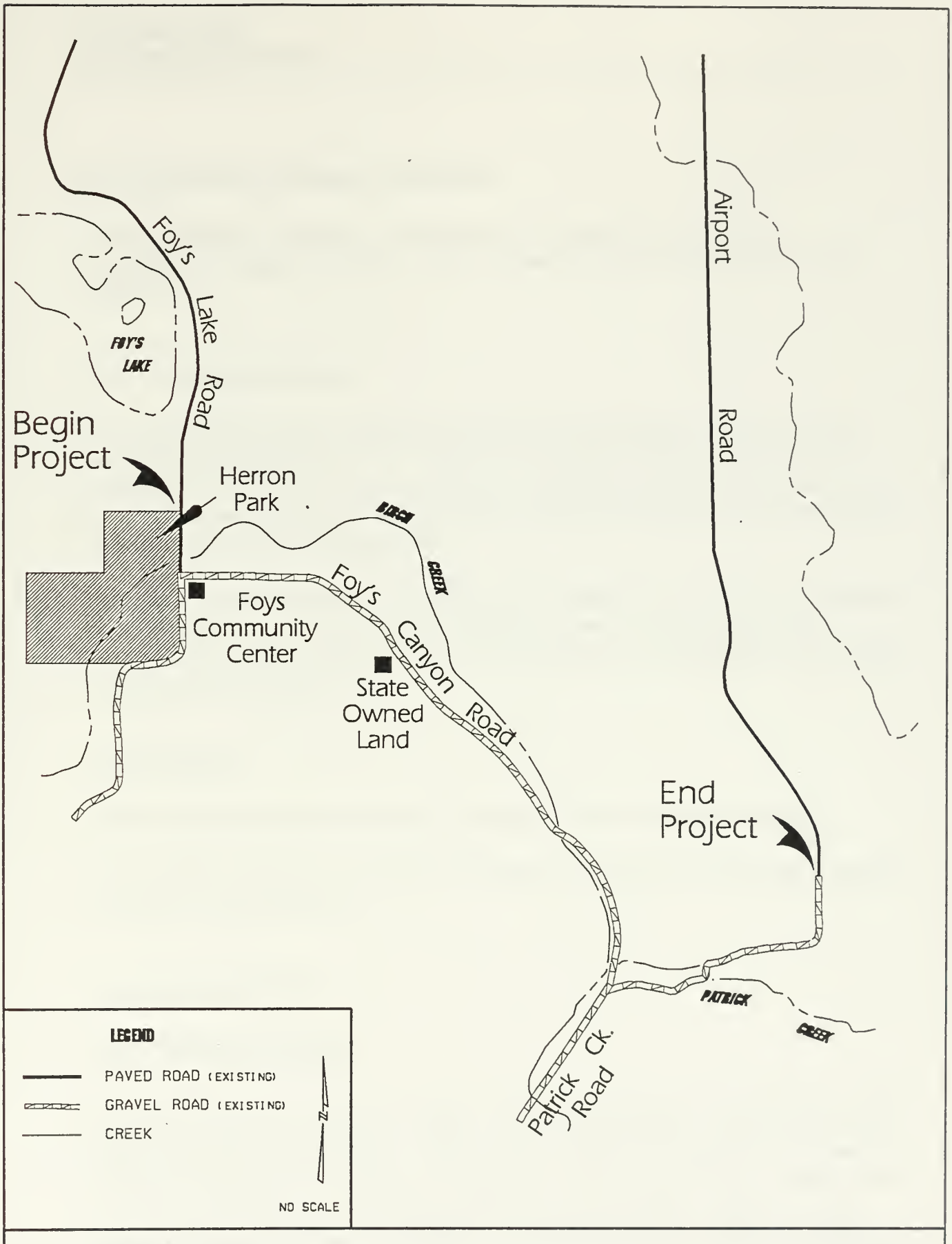
The study area is under the jurisdiction of Flathead County and is currently not subject to zoning regulations. The first three goals of the *Flathead County Master Plan, Update 1994* are to protect water quality, air quality, and private property rights. As a result, the direction and form that growth takes is largely dictated by market interests rather than local government regulation. The *Master Plan Map, Year 2000* calls for the study area to be developed as "suburban (two units per acre)."

4.1.2 Impacts

Improved access to the study area, and improved safety and paving will likely promote accelerated residential development in the near term. These land use changes will be an acceleration of the present trend of land conversion of undeveloped land to residential use. Over the long term (to year 2015), however, land use in the study area is anticipated to be the same with the No-Build and with the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative is generally consistent the *Flathead County Master Plan, Update 1994*. Localized air quality will improve with the elimination of dust generated from the existing gravel road.

The current trends in the area will likely continue with the No-Build alternative. The No-Build alternative is generally consistent with the Master Plan, and is not likely to induce or accelerate land use changes in the near term.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

PUBLICLY OWNED PROPERTY IN STUDY AREA
Figure 4-1

4.2 Prime and Unique Farmlands

Prime and unique farmland is protected by the Farmland Protection Act. Coordination is required with the USDA, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).

4.2.1 Existing Conditions

No published soil survey is available for this portion of Flathead County. However, the Flathead County office of the NRCS was contacted and they provided a map depicting Prime farmland in the project area. In addition, NRCS staff conducted a site investigation and confirmed that the prime farmland provided on the map was correct (see correspondence in Appendix B).

No unique farmland is located in the study area. In addition, there are no farmlands of either statewide or local importance located in the study area. The only prime farmland in the project area is located at the intersection of Foys Lake Road and Foys Canyon Road (see Figure 4-2).

4.2.2 Impacts

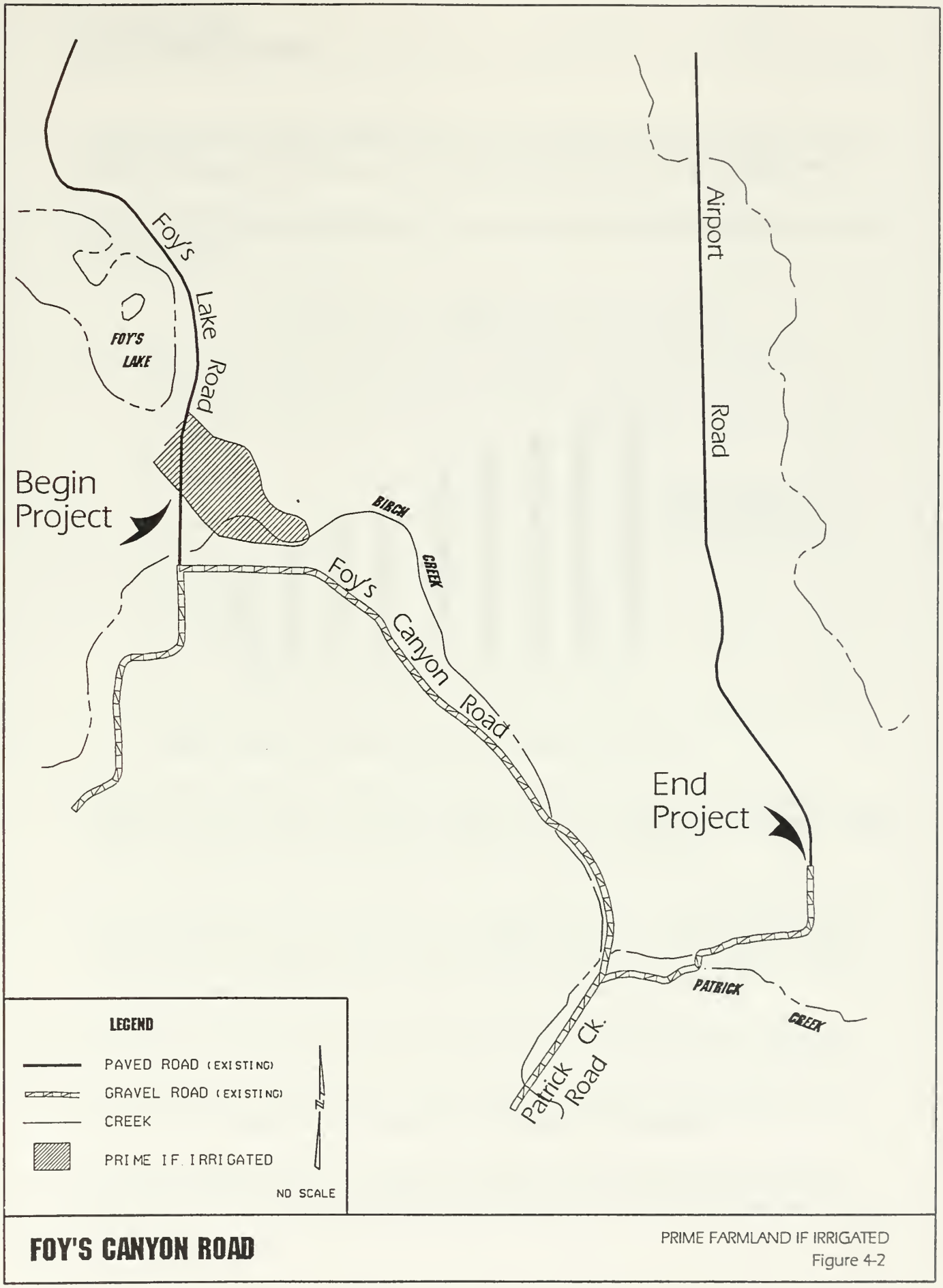
The No-Build alternative will have no impacts to prime or unique farmland.

The Preferred Alternative is in close proximity to the prime farmland identified above, but will not directly impact it.

4.3 Socioeconomic

4.3.1 Existing Conditions

Flathead County has experienced major population growth over the past 30 years, with the 1994 population estimated at 64,000. In 1991 and 1992 the county led the state in single-family home construction. From 1960 to 1990, over 90 percent of the growth in the Greater Kalispell Area [defined as roughly a 6.4 kilometer (4 mile) unincorporated area surrounding the city limits and including the city] has been outside of the city limits in unincorporated areas, including the project study area. In the early 1990s,



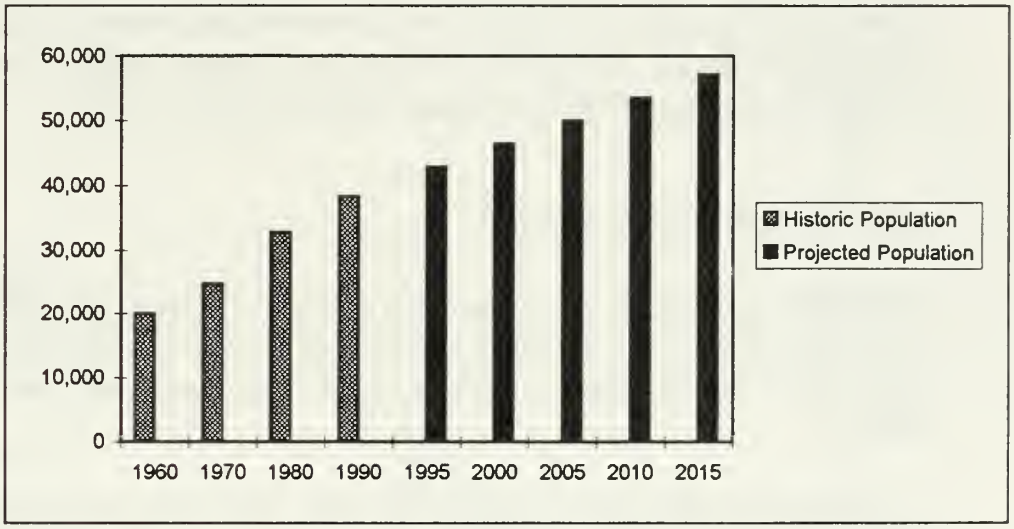
FOY'S CANYON ROAD

PRIME FARMLAND IF IRRIGATED
Figure 4-2

population in the Greater Kalispell Area grew at about 2.5 percent a year. (Source: *Kalispell Transportation Plan and the Flathead County Master Plan*, Update 1994.)

The following information describes the past and projected population for the Greater Kalispell Area:

Table 4-1
Greater Kalispell Area Historic and Projected Population



Source: Kalispell Transportation Plan, US Bureau of the Census

The population identified in Table 4-1 does not account for the summer seasonal population, which adds an estimated 5,000 people to the Greater Kalispell area. Most of these people live in the unincorporated areas outside of Kalispell.

The average 1993 income in Flathead County was $19,282. According to calculations made in the *Flathead County Master Plan, Update 1994*, the average annual income needed to rent is $19,800, and the average income needed to buy is $38,850. These figures illustrate a shortage of affordable housing in Flathead County.

There are no distinct minority or low-income groups located within the study area.

Fire protection is provided by the Smith Valley volunteer fire department. Police protection is provided by the Flathead County Sheriff Department.

Currently, the character of the study area is rural, with agricultural and ranching interspersed with suburban-type residential development. The open space and vistas

available due to the presence of the agricultural/ranching and timbered landscapes provide an attractive setting.

As discussed further in Section 4.6 of this document, the Foys Community Center provides a facility for gatherings of all types. Both the Community Center and Herron Park (located directly west of the Community Center) are used by residents in the study area, as well as many others who live outside the study area (see Figure 4-3).

Secondary Road 503, including the Foys Canyon Road section, serves as a primary access route for private and US Forest Service logging access to timber stands via Patrick Creek Road. According to both private loggers and the Forest Service, use of the road for logging trucks is expected to decrease in the future.

4.3.2 Socioeconomic Impacts

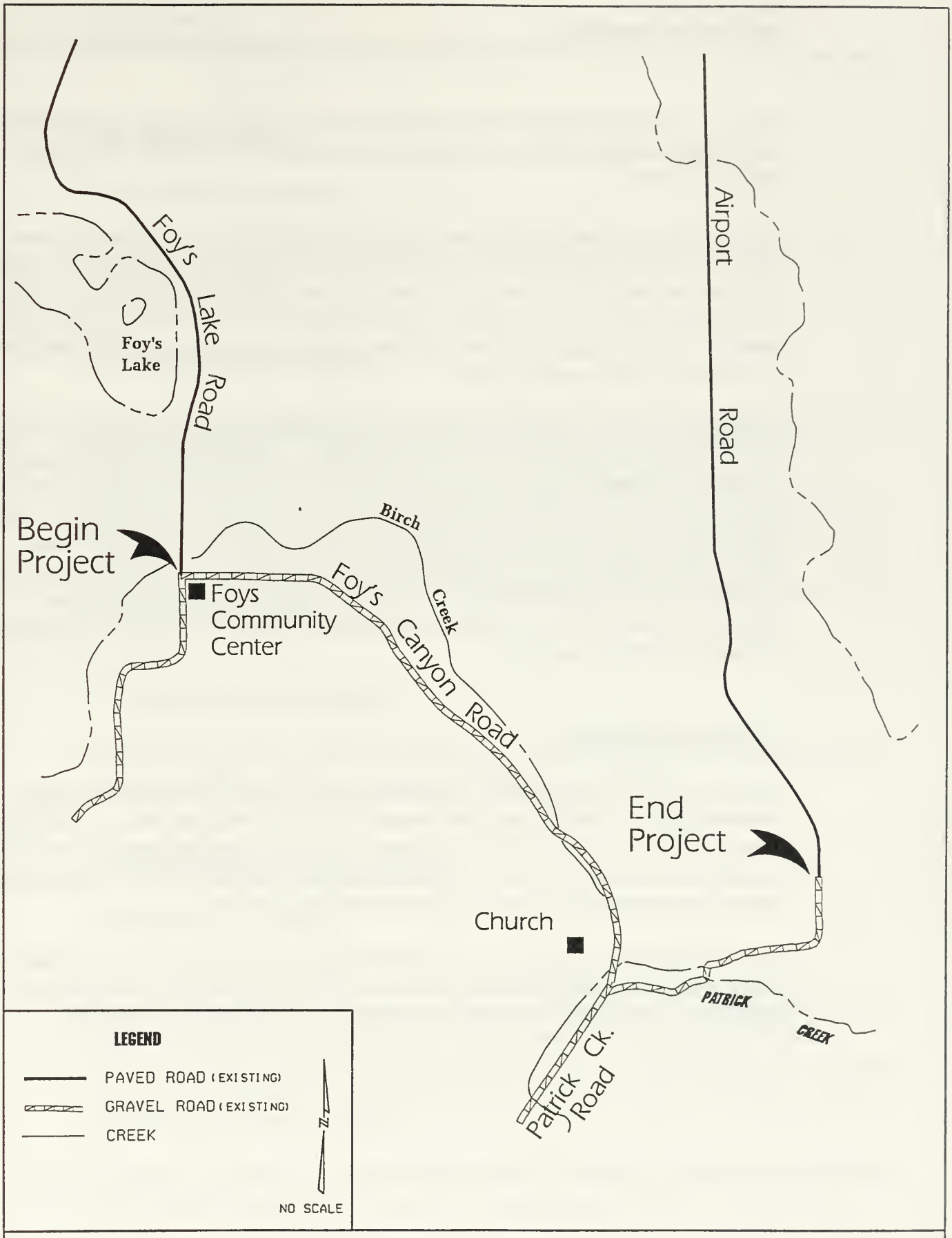
No changes to access to Foys Community Center will occur with the No-Build alternative. Response time for fire and police should remain the same. The contribution that the existing roadway makes to the rural character of the area will not change.

As mentioned in Section 4.1.2 of this document, the Preferred Alternative is likely to encourage the acceleration of residential development in the study area. The increased traffic and conversion of the current undeveloped lands to developed areas will change the character of the area to somewhat less rural, or more suburban. Although these changes are also expected with the No-Build alternative, they will occur sooner with the Preferred Alternative.

With the Preferred Alternative, the road itself will change from a winding gravel road tightly woven through stands of trees to a straightened paved road with clear zones devoid of trees. This will contribute to a change in character from rural to more suburban.

The Preferred Alternative will improve access for the Forest Service and logging companies who currently use the unimproved section of Foys Canyon Road. Response time of fire and police providers is expected to improve with implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

Access to the Foys Community Center will be changed by the Preferred Alternative's new alignment. The road currently passes directly in front of the Community Center; however, the new alignment will shift Foys Canyon Road to the northeast, away from



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

COMMUNITY FACILITIES
Figure 4-3

the Center. This will create a buffer between the Community Center and the road, presenting the opportunity to gain additional and needed parking for the Center (Norwood, 1995).

The Preferred Alternative will move Foys Canyon Road closer to some structures and away from others. Specifically on the east end of the project, the Preferred Alternative will move the road farther away from the church located near the junction of Patrick Creek Road and Foys Canyon Road. This will produce a net decrease in noise at this location. It will also open up more available space adjacent to the church which could be developed into compatible uses.

Moving east along the Preferred Alternative, a residence located on the north side of the road between Patrick Creek and Wild Rose Trail will be negatively affected by the new alignment which brings the road closer to the house. On the far east end of the project, the Preferred Alternative will bring the road closer to the residence located directly east of where Foys Canyon Road turns due north to meet Airport Road. These two residences may experience an increase in noise levels during peak travel hours due to the decreased distance between traveling vehicles and the house. Existing and predicted noise levels for the above-mentioned structures can be found in Section 4.8.2 of this document.

Environmental Justice

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898 requiring federal agencies to incorporate Environmental Justice considerations into the NEPA planning process. The purpose of this order is to ensure that low-income households, minority households, and minority businesses do not suffer a disproportionate share of adverse environmental impacts resulting from federal actions.

Neither the Preferred Alternative nor the No-Build alternative will affect, separate or isolate any distinct neighborhoods, low-income groups, or minority households or businesses. This proposed project is therefore in compliance with EO 12898.

4.4 Right-of-Way

4.4.1 Existing Conditions

The No-Build alternative will require no right-of-way acquisition, and will have no right-of-way impacts.

4.4.2 Right-of-Way Impacts

MDT has purchased the majority of the right-of-way needed for implementation of the Preferred Alternative. Approximately 49 separate parcels are required for the Preferred Alternative, of which 37 have been purchased. The process of acquiring right-of-way has been put on hold by MDT until this NEPA document and process is completed. The Preferred Alternative will also require the taking of one barn. This structure is located on the north side of Foys Canyon Road just east of Patrick Creek Road. The acquisition of property by MDT has been delayed pending the approval of the environmental assessment.

4.4.3 Right-of Way Mitigation

All right-of-way acquisition will be done in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

4.5 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

4.5.1 Existing Conditions

Due to a lack of viable roadway shoulders and visibility restrictions caused by substandard horizontal and vertical curvature and road dust, Foys Canyon Road does not provide a safe or otherwise optimal travel course for pedestrians or bicyclists. These elements presently discourage regular walking and bicycling along this roadway. However, there is limited use of the Foys Canyon Road section of S 503 by cyclists and pedestrians, as well as equestrians.

Although not listed on the official bicycle plan for Flathead County, local officials have indicated that if improved, S 503 could be used as a loop bicycle route for cycling

enthusiasts. The loop route is not currently used because Foys Canyon Road is gravel and relatively unsafe for bicyclists (Jentz; Norwood, 1995).

4.5.2 Pedestrian and Bicyclists Impacts

The No-Build alternative will prolong the inadequate conditions for non-motorized travel that presently characterize Foys Canyon Road. As vehicular traffic continues to increase along this roadway, the non-motorized travel environment will further deteriorate.

The Preferred Alternative will substantially enhance travel conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists using Foys Canyon Road. Paving the roadway, smoothing existing substandard horizontal and vertical curves, and widening the facility to accommodate 0.61-meter (2-foot) paved shoulders will produce a route that is more conducive to non-motorized uses.

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative will complete an improved 16 kilometer (10 mile) loop route which could be used by bicyclists.

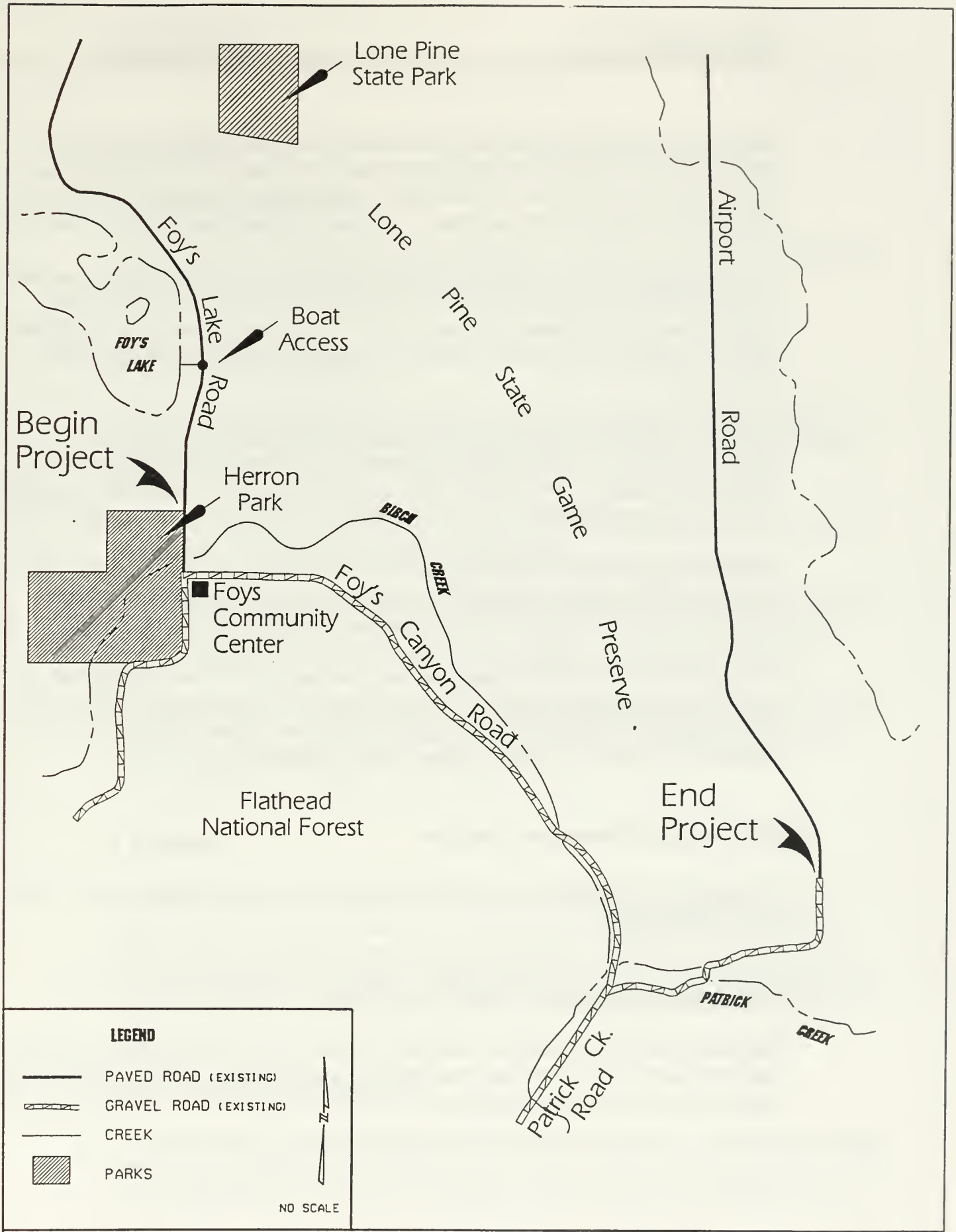
4.6 Parks and Recreation

4.6.1 Existing Conditions

A variety of parks and other recreational opportunities are provided within the study area and nearby. The Foys Community Center and Herron Park, both owned and administered by Flathead County Parks Department, are located within the project area at the intersection of Foys Lake and Foys Canyon Road (see Figure 4-4).

Foys Community Center stands on 0.8 hectares (2 acres) at the site of the former Foys school which was destroyed by fire years ago. The Community Center is a one-room structure with kitchen facilities and can accommodate about 30 to 50 people. It is not wheel-chair accessible. It is commonly used for meetings, weddings, parties and similar activities, sometimes in conjunction with activities at the nearby Herron Park. Access to the Foys Community Center parking area is located on the west side between the Community Center and Oftedahl Lane.

The 47 hectare (117 acre) Herron Park has facilities for equestrian events, picnics, hiking, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, Boy Scout events, and wildlife viewing.



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

PARKS : RECREATION
Figure 4-4

Access to the Herron Park parking area is about 60 meters (200 feet) south of the intersection of Foys Lake and Foys Canyon Roads via Oftedahl Lane, a gravel road extension of Foys Lake Road. Both Herron Park and Foys Community Center are well used by residents in the study area, as well as individuals outside of the study area.

The Foys Canyon Road section of Secondary Road 503 defines the southern perimeter of the Lone Pine State Game Preserve, a state-authorized, non-hunting set-aside originally intended to protect huntable wildlife. The Game Preserve was established under the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.9.204, and is composed of private lands.

Lone Pine State Park is a separate entity situated at the north end of the larger Preserve. This state-owned parcel is managed by the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks to provide picnic areas, interpretive points and handicap-accessible tracts for the general public. Figure 4-4 shows both the Preserve and the State Park.

The Flathead National Forest is located about 16 kilometers (10 miles) south of the study area and is accessed via Patrick Creek Road. The National Forest offers a number of recreational opportunities, including hiking, camping, and hunting.

The Flathead County Parks Department also provides a public boat ramp access at Foys Lake, located on Foys Lake Road approximately 2.4 kilometers (1.5 mile) north of the intersection of Foys Lake and Foys Canyon Road. Water skiing, fishing, and swimming activities are provided at Foys Lake (see Figure 4-4).

4.6.2 Parks and Recreation Impacts

No changes to existing parks or recreational opportunities will occur as a result of the No-Build alternative.

Access to the Flathead National Forest will be somewhat improved, however no improvements will be made to Patrick Creek Road.

Completion of S 503 to secondary roadway standards may encourage greater use of the boat ramp at Foys Lake from potential users via Airport Road. Those users trailering boats may be more inclined to utilize Foys Lake via a paved roadway with less curves.

4.7 Air Quality

4.7.1 Existing Conditions

The project area is located in an "unclassifiable" / attainment area of Montana for air quality. It lies outside of the PM_{10} non-attainment area for Kalispell.

4.7.2 Air Quality Impacts

The No-Build alternative will result in the continuation of localized dust from the gravel road. However, no construction-related impacts will occur with the No-Build alternative.

Short-term air quality emissions will occur during the construction period, however these impacts are not considered to be substantial.

The Preferred Alternative involves paving a gravel road. There will be no additional lanes, and only minor alignment shifts. Therefore, the transportation conformity regulations of the Clean Air Amendments of 1990 do not apply to this project.

No long-term adverse impacts to air quality are expected as a result of the Preferred Alternative. Paving the existing gravel road will improve localized air quality and reduce PM_{10} emissions due to the reduction of dust.

4.8 Noise

In order to determine the traffic noise impact of the proposed improvements to Foys Canyon Road on local noise levels, an analysis as prescribed in *Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 772* was undertaken. Related to this noise analysis, the following material provides a description of existing noise conditions, summarizes analysis results and determination of impact, and discusses the need for mitigation.

4.8.1 Existing Noise Conditions

The existing land uses along Foys Canyon Road are classified by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as Activity Category B and should not receive exterior noise levels greater than 67 dBA Leq. Leq refers to " the equivalent, steady-state sound

level which in a stated period of time contains the same acoustic energy as the time-varying sound level during the same period." See Table 4-2 for a complete description of the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC).

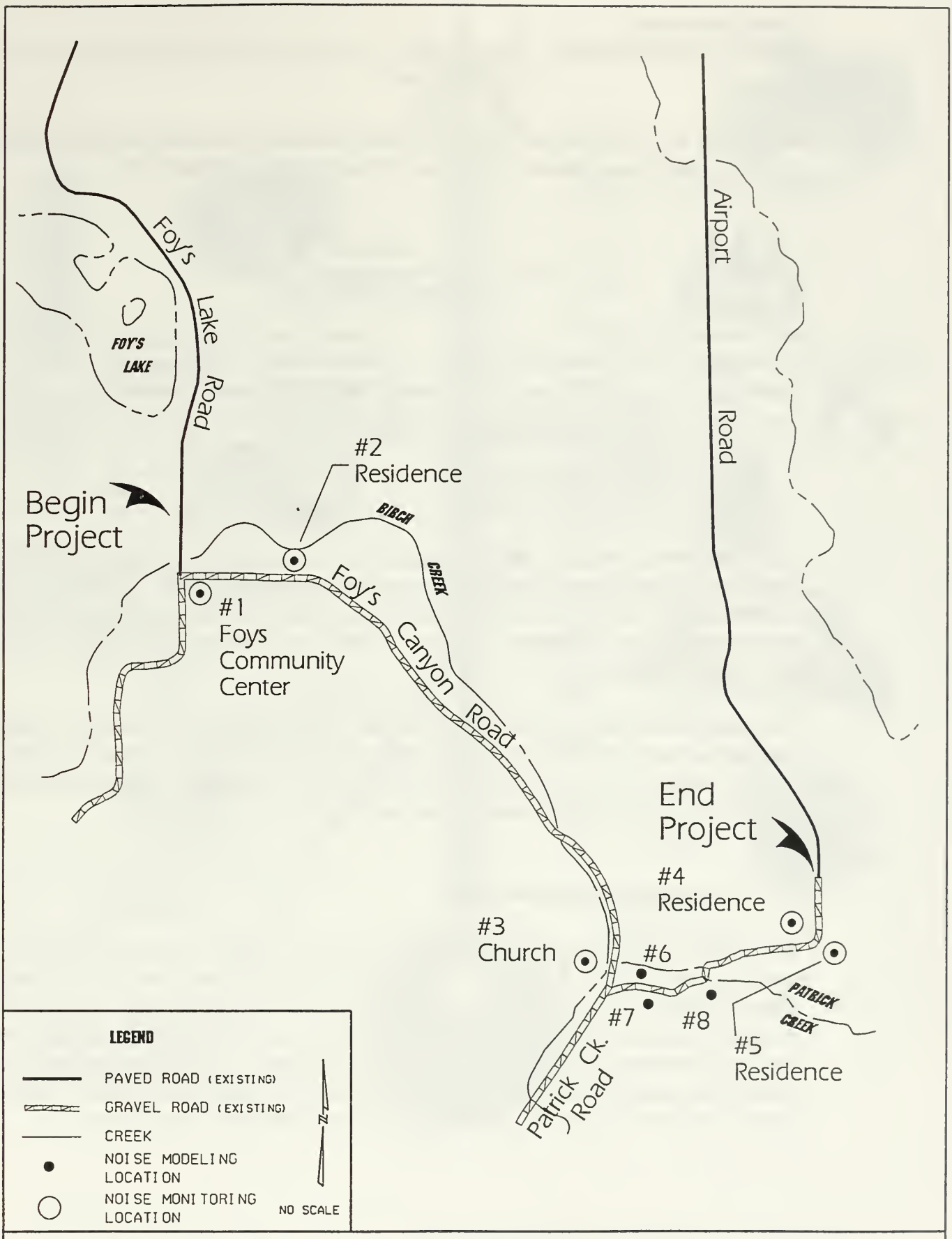
Table 4-2
FHWA Design Noise Level/Activity Relationships

Activity Category	Design Noise Levels - dBA[1] Leq (1 hr)	L10 (1 hr)	Description of Activity Category
A[2]	57 (exterior)	60 (exterior)	Tracts of land in which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose. Such areas could include amphitheaters, particular parks or portions of parks, open space, or historic districts which are dedicated or recognized by appropriate local officials for activities requiring special qualities of serenity and quiet.
B[2]	67 (exterior)	70 (exterior)	Picnic area, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, and parks which are not included in Category A and residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 (exterior)	75 (exterior)	Developed lands, properties or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	--	--	Undeveloped lands; no standards apply unless development planned, designed, and programmed and likely to be built, then the applicable A, B, C or D regulation applies.
E	52 (interior)	55 (interior)	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.

[1] *Either L10 or Leq (but not both) design noise levels may be used on a project.*
[2] *Parks in Categories A and B include all such lands (public or private) which are actually used as parks as well as those public lands officially set aside or designated by a governmental agency as parks on the date of public knowledge of the proposed highway project.*

Source: Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise. Federal-Aid Highway Program Manual Volume 7, Chapter 7, Section 3. Federal Highway Administration.

Existing ambient noise measurements were taken at five locations in the study area, as shown on Figure 4-5. The results from these field measurements are provided in Table 4-3. All locations were selected because they represent sensitive land uses that fall into Activity Category B described above. The noise monitoring locations selected are located near the existing and future roadway alignments, thus capturing the worst-case noise conditions within the study area. At each location, the measurement was taken along the building facade which faces Foys Canyon Road in an area that represents an "active space." Noise monitoring was conducted in October and



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

NOISE MONITORING AND MODELING LOCATIONS
Figure 4-5

November of 1995. Due to the traffic volume consistency between the two peak travel periods, noise measurements were taken during both the AM and PM.

Table 4-3
Noise Monitoring Locations and Results
(Peak Traffic Period)

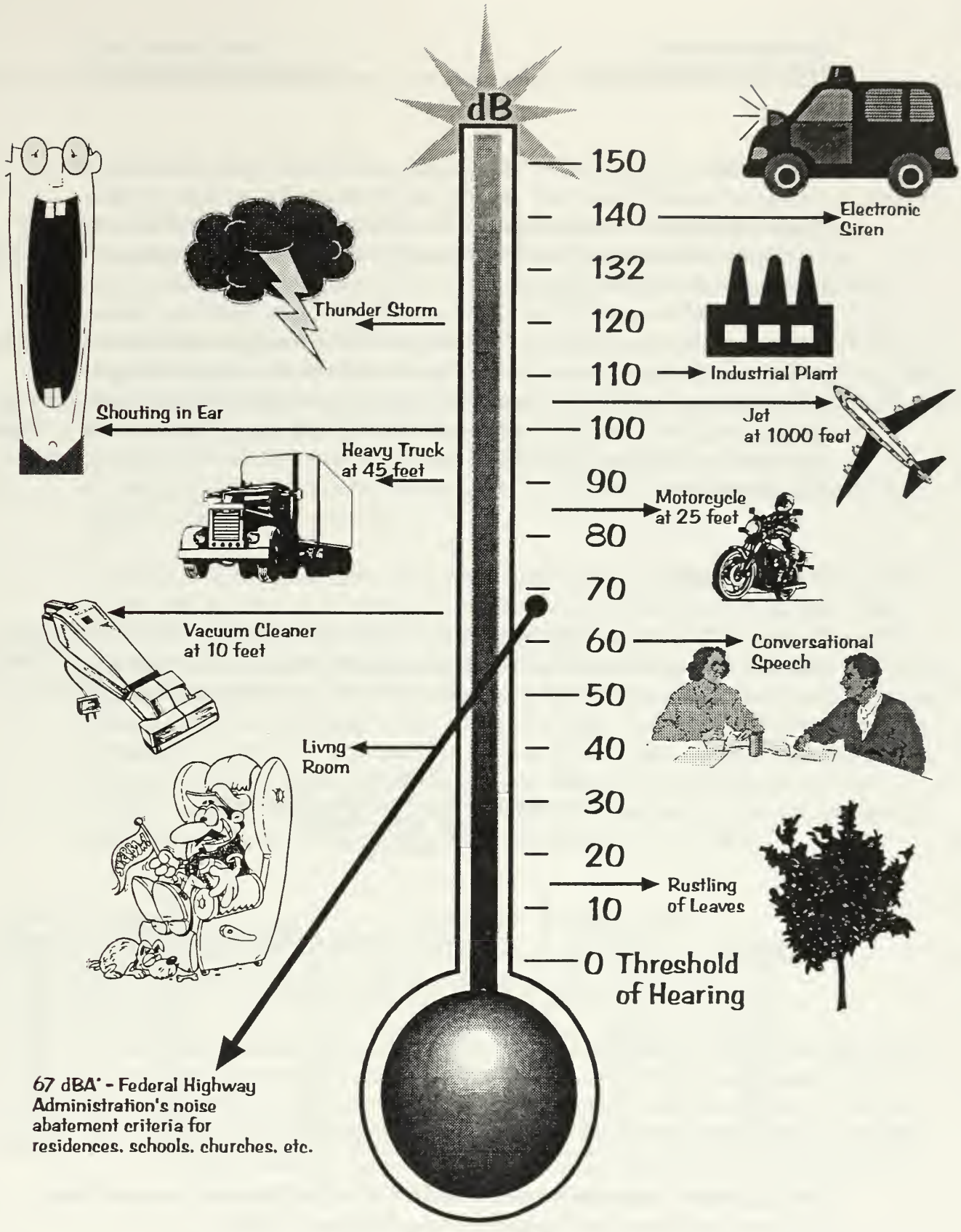
Receptor	Location Description	Distance to Noise Source {meters (feet)}	Noise Reading dBA L_{eq}	FHWA NAC dBA L_{eq}
#1	Community Center	29 (96)	56	67
#2	Single-family Residence	27 (89)	51	67
#3	Church	32 (105)	51	67
#4	Single-family Residence	83 (277)	51	67
#5	Single-family Residence	90 (300)	50	67

The noise measurements recorded ranges from a low of 50 dBA to a high of 56 dBA. Vehicles on Foys Canyon Road are the predominant noise sources. Monitored noise levels represent all exterior noise sources recorded at the sites, including natural and mechanical sources and human activities, whereas calculated noise levels represent traffic-generated noise only.

The monitored noise levels are well below the FHWA NAC at all receptors. The field monitoring results for this project are consistent with a non-urban setting with low-density development and limited vehicular activity. As a point of reference, Figure 4-6 provides sound level comparisons of various activities.

4.8.2 Noise Results and Impacts

The FHWA's STAMINA 2.0 noise model was used to calculate 1995 traffic noise levels and predict 2015 traffic noise levels for the No-Build and Preferred Alternatives. The STAMINA 2.0 model uses traffic volume, vehicle mix, speed, roadway design, and receptor location information to determine traffic noise levels at receptors. The year 2015 was chosen as the future analysis year in accordance with FHWA procedures for traffic noise analysis. These procedures (as defined in *Federal-Aid Highway Program Manual Volume 7, Chapter 7, Section 3)* require analysis of the design year.



*The Federal Highway Administration's noise abatement criteria are listed as dBA. dBA is a time weighted value for noise. dB represents an individual noise event. dBA for a noise source is generally less than dB.

Figure 4-6

Sound Level Comparisons

Data Inputs

The traffic analysis conducted for this project was the source of all data related to existing and projected vehicular volume, mix, and operating speed. A summary of this information is provided in Section 2.

Preliminary engineering design plans were utilized for all geometric data requirements for this noise analysis. Noise receptor locations were determined through field observations and a review of aerial photographs. Five locations were monitored in the field, while a total of eight locations were modeled for impact determination. These eight modeled locations included six residences, a church, and a community center along Foys Canyon Road.

Analysis Results

Three model runs were completed as part of this noise analysis. These model runs included 1995 calculated, 2015 No-Build, and 2015 Preferred Alternative. The results from these noise model runs are provided in Table 4-4. Refer to Figure 4-5 for the receptor locations.

Table 4-4
Calculated Existing and Future Noise Levels
(Peak Traffic Period)
dBA L_{eq}

Receptor	1995 Existing Monitored	1995 Existing Calculated	2015 No-Build	2015 Preferred Alternative	FHWA NAC
#1	56	50	52	50	67
#2	51	47	50	55	67
#3	51	48	51	44	67
#4	51	45	48	50	67
#5	50	41	44	48	67
#6	-	46	49	52	67
#7	-	50	53	54	67
#8	-	45	48	49	67

1995 calculated noise levels are used for noise analysis purposes because these represent only noise that is generated from highway vehicles.

A comparison of 1995 monitored results with 1995 calculated results indicates some inconsistencies between noise levels. As stated previously, the monitored values

represent all noise occurrences present, while calculated noise levels only represent vehicular sources. The existing monitored values are consistently higher (3 to 9 dBA) than the existing calculated levels. Two major reasons account for these inconsistencies. The first is the presence of background (non-vehicular) noise occurrences in the field that increase the existing monitored values. The second reason is the high percentage fluctuation in traffic volumes that occurs with slight variations in travel when there are low overall peak-hour traffic levels. Given that the study area has a very low hourly traffic volume, an increase of ten vehicles during field monitoring may result in noise levels that are different than existing calculations based on an assumed peak-hour traffic volume factor.

All existing noise levels (both monitored and calculated) are well within FHWA's NAC for Category B land uses.

The year 2015 No-Build alternative results, when compared with existing calculated results, indicate that noise levels will increase by 2 to 3 dBA at all receptors. This increase in noise level is caused by growth in traffic volume that would occur within the study area. The comparison of existing calculated values with year 2015 results for the Preferred Alternative indicates that noise levels will increase (+4 to 8 dBA) at six locations, decrease (-4 dBA) at one receptor, and stay the same at one location. The increases in noise levels with the 2015 Preferred Alternative will be caused by growth in traffic volume, widening of the roadway cross-section, and realignment of the roadway in certain locations. In other locations, the roadway's proposed realignment will benefit some people by moving further from sensitive receptors.

Impact Determination

FHWA criteria for determining noise impacts are:

- Comparison of predicted noise levels with the FHWA NAC. Any predicted noise level which approaches or exceeds the NAC level is considered an impact requiring consideration for abatement. FHWA defines "approach" as 1 dBA Leq less than FHWA NAC. The relevant NAC levels are 67 dBA Leq for Activity Category B. Therefore, an impact occurs to land uses in Category B at levels of 66 dBA Leq and above.

- Determination of whether a substantial increase will occur from existing to predicted noise levels. A substantial increase is considered an impact

requiring consideration for abatement. MDT has defined "substantial increase" as one of 10 dBA Leq or greater.

In 1995, for both the existing monitored and calculated, none of the receptors received traffic noise levels which approach or exceed FHWA NAC. Under the 2015 No-Build and Preferred Alternatives, no receptors are projected to receive traffic noise levels which approach or exceed FHWA NAC.

The comparison of 1995 existing calculated results with the 2015 Preferred Alternative results indicates that no receptors are projected to receive substantial increases in traffic noise levels over the next 20 years with implementation of the proposed action. The largest increase in noise level between the 1995 existing calculated and the 2015 Preferred Alternative is 8 dBA (Receptor #2).

4.9 Water Resources/Quality

4.9.1 Existing Conditions

The study area contains two creeks, Birch Creek and Patrick Creek, which are tributaries to the Upper Flathead River Basin. Birch Creek generally parallels Foys Canyon Road as it travels southeast to join Patrick Creek near the Patrick Creek Road junction. Patrick Creek then flows roughly east to join the Flathead River. These creeks serve to drain the runoff from the hills which border the valley through which Foys Canyon Road passes.

Water collected in the Upper Flathead Basin flows into Flathead Lake. From there it flows down the Lower Flathead River which joins the Clark Fork River, and eventually the Columbia River by way of the Pend d'Oreille. The waters discussed in this section are part of the western slope of the Continental Divide which eventually discharges into the Pacific Ocean.

According to United States Geological Service (USGS) topographic maps, Birch Creek is intermittent. Within the study area the creek undergoes several significant changes. Before the creek enters Foys Canyon, it is relatively slow flowing and sinuous, making its way gradually southeast to the canyon entrance. Upon entering the steeper gradient of Foys Canyon, Birch Creek becomes straighter and faster. Based on field observations, it should also be noted that the relationship between Birch Creek and surface/groundwater becomes complicated within Foys Canyon. The waterway

will disappear at times, going underground and then reappearing farther down the canyon until it meets Patrick Creek above ground.

Patrick Creek is identified as constant and meanders across the relatively flat valley floor out of the study area towards the Upper Flathead Basin. Both waterways are dependent on spring runoff and their level and velocity will vary accordingly.

Water Quality

Patrick Creek and Birch Creek are rated B-1 for water quality throughout their course. A summary of this classification is: Waters classified as B-1 are suitable for drinking, culinary or food processing purposes after conventional treatment; bathing, swimming and recreation; growth and propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl and furbearers; and agricultural and industrial water supply.

4.9.2 Water Resources/Quality Impacts

Two major issues related to water resources or water quality are:

- Increased impurities in stormwater runoff water from increased traffic flow, increased impervious surface and/or increased maintenance activities.

- Sediment loading during and after construction activities due to the exposure of bare substrate.

The No-Build alternative would have no short-term impact on existing water quality conditions and will result in less surface runoff since a gravel surface would remain. Long-term impact to water quality would occur with the No-Build alternative, as increases in traffic volume would eventually result in increased runoff contaminants over existing conditions.

Current traffic characteristics show only two percent of the vehicles which travel Foys Canyon Road to be heavy trucks. Nonetheless, the potential for chemical or hazardous material spills exists. The chances that such an accident might occur increase with time under the No-Build alternative since this alternative does nothing to reduce accident probability.

Impacts related to the implementation of the Preferred Alternative are limited to the crossing of Patrick and Birch Creeks. The construction required to make these crossings may have several impacts:

- Temporary increase in sedimentation from construction-related activities.
- Increase in contaminated stormwater runoff flowing into the water feature.
- Construction activities, including vegetation removal, the use of selected fill, and culvert replacement, would result in localized increases in suspended sediment load or turbidity at downstream locations.

Long-term water quality impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative would result from close proximity to the water crossings within the study area. In these areas, the increased impervious surface and increased traffic volume will result in increases in runoff volume and increases in runoff contaminants. Contaminants can include volatile solids, grease, petroleum, rubber, phosphate, nitrate, various heavy metals, and organic particulates abraded from the roadway surface. Long-term impacts are not anticipated to be significant based on relatively small projected average daily traffic levels.

The increase in contaminated stormwater runoff is not a critical issue. Previous studies have shown that 30,000 average daily traffic (ADT) is the threshold at which contaminants from roadway surfaces begin to impact surrounding waters. The projected ADT for this roadway is considerably less than 30,000, since the project ADT is 950 in the year 2015. Consideration should still be taken to route stormwater carefully into existing stormwater facilities where possible, or direct them into well-vegetated surface drainage networks.

The flatter side slopes and ditches which are provided with the Preferred Alternative will assist in containing and filtering roadway runoff.

4.9.3 Water Resources/Quality Mitigation

Throughout the construction phase, the use of procedures described in the *MDT Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Work Plan* will be implemented. Some of these mitigation measures include:

1. Appropriately designed and located silt fences (during construction) to strain excessive sediment from runoff before entering water features.

2. Temporary and permanent retention ponds (during construction) to optimize settling time for sediment-laden runoff before entering a water feature.

3. Minimization of vegetation disturbance.

4. Restriction of movements of construction vehicles on unpaved areas where possible.

5. Preparation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan in the construction specifications which will be implemented by the contractor.

4.10 Wetlands

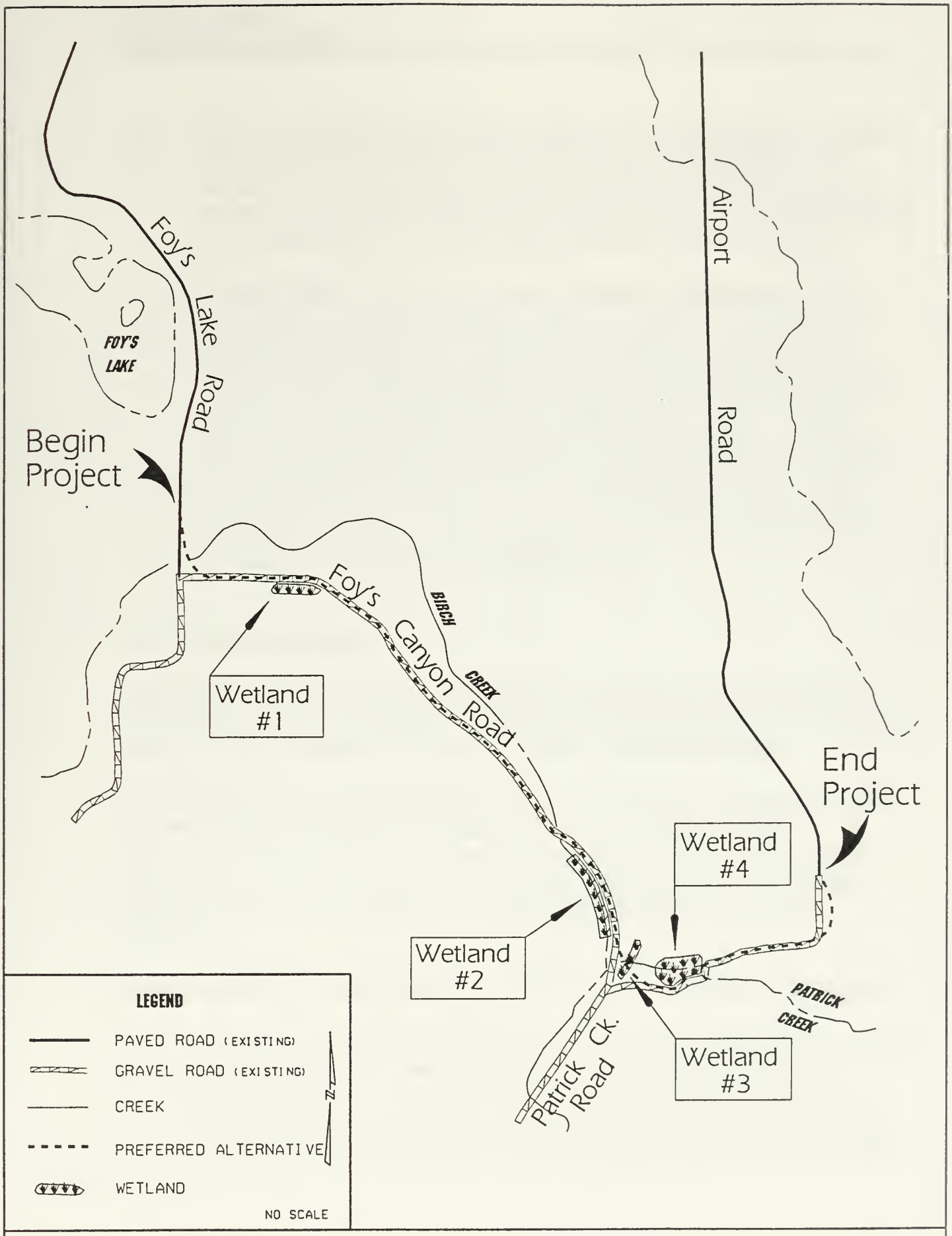
4.10.1 Existing Conditions

In October 1995, a wetlands survey was performed to document the existence and extent of wetlands within the study area. Wetland delineations were conducted in accordance with the *US Army Corps of Engineers 1987 Wetlands Delineation Manual* (COE 1987). Wetlands are shown on Figure 4-7 and described below:

- **Wetland Site #1** - Site 1 is created by the impoundment of sheet surface and groundwater flows by the crossing of the existing road grade. These flows would naturally travel northeast and begin to concentrate at the headwater of Birch Creek. No surface flows were identified to be flowing into this wetland, however there was standing water/inundation present.

- **Wetland Site #2** - Site 2 is a result of Birch Creek as it flows into the narrow portion of the canyon. At this point several lateral ephemeral flows have joined Birch Creek. There is enough flow to support the channelized, forested wetlands that cover the bottom of the narrow valley adjacent to the roadway.

- **Wetland Site #3** - Site 3 is a riparian area that is supported as Patrick Creek crosses the existing alignment and flows through a pasture area. The channel is approximately 1 to 1.5 meters (3 to 5 feet) wide on average and saturates/supports a wetland corridor approximately 7.6 to 9.1 meters (25 to



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

EXISTING WETLANDS
Figure 4-7

30 feet) wide along its path. The channel is 31 to 61 centimeters (1 to 2 feet) deep in most places and was running full during the investigation. The adjacent stream banks slope very gently toward this channel so that at 4.6 meters (15 feet) from the channel the ground is only 45 to 50 centimeters (18 to 20 inches) above the ordinary high water mark in the open channel.

- **Wetland Site #4** - Site 4 is an emergent freshwater marsh created by the impoundment of Patrick Creek for agricultural purposes. It appears that these irrigation ponds may no longer be in regular use. The ponds have silted in and are completely vegetated. At the time of investigation, shallow surface water appeared sporadically through out the wetland. Although there are no large or significant open channels, surface water was flowing sinuously throughout the area in rivulets, eventually flowing out a breach in the berm close to the roadway. There are several parallel dikes or berms built approximately perpendicular to the original flow of the stream. The stream flows around the end or through the breach of the lowermost berm into a culvert and crosses underneath the road.

4.10.2 Wetlands Impacts

Impacts that will occur to wetlands include short-term impacts during construction, long-term impacts due to the placement of dredged or fill material in the wetlands, and long-term indirect effects due to receipt of runoff from the paved roadway.

Wetlands along the existing road (includes all of the identified wetlands) are currently receiving impact due to activities on adjacent agricultural lands, as well as sedimentation and pollutants (e.g., gravel) released during wind and runoff events. These impacts will continue with the No-Build alternative. However, the No-Build alternative will result in no additional fill in adjacent wetlands due to roadway construction.

Impacts related to the construction of the Preferred Alternative are described below:

- **Wetland #1**: This wetland is contained on its northern border by the existing roadway and will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative due to the proposed road widening and the construction of fill slopes. A total of 0.17 hectares (0.41 acres) or 59 percent of the existing wetland will be impacted, leaving a remaining wetland size of approximately 0.12 hectares (0.29 acres).

- **Wetland #2**: This wetland is narrow and long and will incur substantial impacts due to road widening and the construction of fill slopes required by the Preferred Alternative. A total of 0.34 hectares (0.85 acres), or 89 percent of the total existing wetland will be impacted, leaving a remaining 0.05 hectares (0.11 acres) of roadside wetland.

- **Wetland #3**: Unlike the other three wetlands, this wetland is not adjacent to the existing roadway and will be crossed rather than longitudinally encroached. The Preferred Alternative will cut through Wetland #3 in an attempt to smooth the existing curve of Foys Canyon Road as it exits the southern end of Foys Canyon. A total of 0.03 hectares (0.08 acres), or six percent of the total existing wetland will be impacted, leaving 0.46 hectares (1.13 acres). Of the four sites, wetland #3 will undergo the least relative impacts due to construction of the Preferred Alternative. There are no further impacts anticipated due to drainage improvements or culvert installation.

- **Wetland #4**: This wetland is located adjacent to the S-curve in Foys Canyon Road on the west side. The Preferred Alternative will impact 0.28 hectares (0.7 acres), or 16 percent of the total existing wetland, leaving 1.4 hectares (3.6 acres) of wetland.

To summarize, the following direct, permanent impacts (see Table 4-5) would occur as a result of implementation of the Preferred Alternative:

Table 4-5
Wetland Impacts

Site No.	Existing Area	Impacted Area
1	0.28 hectare (0.28 acre)	0.17 hectare (0.41 acre)
2	0.39 hectare (0.96 acre)	0.34 hectare (0.85 acre)
3	0.49 hectare (1.21 acres)	0.03 hectare (0.08 acre)
4	1.72 hectares (4.3 acres)	0.28 hectare (0.7 acre)
Total	2.88 hectares (6.75 acres)	0.82 hectare (2.04 acres)

In addition, there will be short-term impacts during construction.

Proposed drainage improvements planned in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative will improve the overall quality of the drainage into the wetlands.

In regard to indirect and cumulative impacts of the project as it relates to the growth in the project area, Flathead County has adopted the *Flathead County Master Plan*

Update which includes protection of wetlands and water quality. The County may implement the plan through zoning or other regulations.

4.10.3 Wetland Functions Impacted

The functions impacted for each wetland are provided in Table 4-6. Also included in this table is the percent of wetland filled which is another factor in determining the functions impacted.

Table 4-6
Wetland Functions Impacted

Parameters	Wetland #1	Wetland #2	Wetland #3	Wetland #4
Wetland Size	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Habitat Diversity	Moderate	Low	High	Moderate
Food Chain Support	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
T&E/Species Habitat	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
MNHP Species Habitat	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low
General Fish & Wildlife Habitat	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Flood Control and Storage	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
Sediment Filtration	High	High	High	High
Erosion Control	None	Moderate	Low	None
Nutrient Cycling	Moderate	High	High	Moderate
Groundwater Discharge/Recharge	High	Moderate	High	High
Uniqueness	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Recreation/Education Potential	High	Moderate	High	High
MDT Wetland Rating	II	II	II	II
Percent of Wetland Filled	59%	89%	6%	16%

4.10.3.1 Functional Impacts Descriptions

Site #1

Functions impacted at Wetland Site #1 are moderate. This is a well formed and diverse wetland with an MDT rating of II. Although it is relatively small in size, the vegetation is well zoned from the upland to small patches of open water. This wetland provides moderate or high functionality in many categories, including diversity, wildlife habitat, sediment filtration and recreation/education potential. Additionally, a large percentage of the wetland will be filled (59%). However, the encroachment is from only one side, thus, the Preferred Alternative does not split the wetland leaving the remainder in two small isolated pieces. Habitat and many of the other functions will still occur in the remaining wetland areas.

The existing roadway detains the surface flows of water and perhaps groundwater as well. Regrading and installation of a culvert as part of the Preferred Alternative may drain the entire wetland and remove all of the functions.

Site #2

Functions impacted at Wetland Site #2 are moderate to high based on the large percentage of wetland area to be impacted (89%). Site #2 is linear and narrow due to the physical constraints of the canyon. This wetland has an MDT rating of II. Removal of 89% of this wetland will hinder the "corridor" effects for habitat and flood conveyance/storage currently supplied by this wetland/riparian zone.

Site #3

Functions impacted at Wetland Site #3 are moderate. This wetland site is relatively important and has an MDT rating of II. Only 6% of the total area will be impacted. The impact is moderate to low if the prescribed mitigation is implemented. If the mitigation, which entails removal of the original culvert and restoration of the riparian vegetation, is not implemented then not only does the physical footprint of the new roadway need to be considered but the additional space between the old alignment and the new alignment which will become isolated. Any habitat value for this isolated piece will also be diminished. Functions impacted under this "island" scenario will be higher, potentially moderate to high.

Site #4

Functions impacted at Wetland Site #4 are low. Although this is a highly rated wetland (MDT rating of II), the minor amount of physical impact (only 16.0% of total area) held to a specific peripheral location reduces the overall impact to functions for the wetland. The remaining wetland areas should continue to function as they do currently.

4.10.4 Practicable Alternatives

Wetland #1: The alternatives which would avoid or minimize fill in this wetland include the No-Build Alternative, Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative, Non-Secondary Road to 48 kph (30 mph) Design, and Modification A. The No-Build

Alternative does not meet purpose and need for the project. The Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative and the Non-Secondary Road to 48 kph (30 mph) Design do not meet purpose and need for the project and are not eligible for federal or state funding. Modification A was not advanced for the following reasons:

- Increased impacts to prime farmland.
- The splitting of a parcel.
- Landowner objections.

Wetland #2: Alternatives which would avoid or minimize fill in this wetland include an alignment shift to the east, the Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative, and the No-Build Alternative. The alignment adjacent to Wetland #2 is substantially constrained by the canyon topography, and an alignment further east would result in slope or rock cutting. The Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative does not meet purpose and need for the project and is not eligible for federal or state funding. The No-Build Alternative does not meet purpose and need for the project.

Wetland #3: Alternatives which avoid or minimize fill in this wetland include bridging over the wetland, the No-Build Alternative, the Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative, and Modification B. Bridging is not considered a practicable alternative due to its greater cost (approximately three times the cost of a section of fill) and its greater safety hazard due to icing in the winter. The No-Build Alternative does not meet the purpose and need of this project. The Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative does not meet purpose and need and is not eligible for state or federal funding. Modification B was not advanced for the following reasons:

- Increased impacts to residential areas (noise, visual).
- The steep grade of the alignment would require substantial cut and fill.

Wetland #4: The alternatives which would avoid fill in this wetland are the No-Build alternative, the Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative, the Non-Secondary Road to 48 kph (30 mph) Design, and Modification C. The No-Build alternative does not meet purpose and need for the project. The Pave Existing Surface Only Alternative and the Non-Secondary Road to 48 kph (30 mph) Design do not meet purpose and need for this project and are not eligible for state or federal funding. Modification C was not advanced for the following reasons:

- Right-of-way would be required from 4 additional properties, resulting in landowner hardship and increased project cost.
- Three driveways would be relocated.

- Visual impact from a nearly 12 meter (40 foot) vertical cut and the removal of a stand of mature coniferous trees.
- A substantial increase in construction costs.

4.10.5 Wetlands Mitigation

Foys Canyon Road has been designed to avoid if possible, then to minimize disturbance and impacts to identified wetlands. However, since some wetlands are immediately adjacent to the existing roadway, complete avoidance of wetlands is not possible.

The overall mitigation goal must be no net loss in wetland area or quality. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1508.20) provides regulations for sequencing of mitigation in the following order of priority:

- Avoidance of wetlands. Avoiding the impacts altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
- Minimization of Impacts. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
- Repair, rehabilitation, restoration. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.
- Preservation and maintenance. Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
- Replacement. Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resource or environments.

Replacement wetlands (either created or restored) can only be used if there is no practical alternative to the discharge of dredged or fill material in a wetland which will have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem and without other significant adverse environmental consequences that do not involve discharges into the Waters of the United States.

Permits for placing fill in wetlands must be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act, amended.

The COE will determine, as part of the Section 404 Permit, whether compensatory replacement wetlands are required. If replacement wetlands are required for

mitigation of unavoidable permanent impacts to wetlands, a mitigation plan will be prepared.

MDT policy states that when avoidance is not possible, on-site mitigation will be given priority. In the event that replacement or enhancement is not possible due to construction, maintenance, safety, or other constraints, off-site mitigation will be considered.

General Mitigation Guidelines

The detailed mitigation plan will be developed in close coordination with the US COE, EPA, and the USFWS. The mitigation plan will follow the US COE *Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal Guidelines* and will be finalized prior to the issuance of the 404 permit. MDT is the responsible entity for funding and implementing the mitigation plan. Wetland mitigation is part of the project cost.

Success criteria for wetlands mitigation will consider the following:

a. Percent vegetative cover within the mitigation wetlands should be equal to or greater than the percent vegetative cover of the lost wetlands within a five-year period.

b. Vegetative species composition and diversity should closely approximate the composition and diversity of lost wetlands. One method for doing this could be by comparison of plant numbers and vegetative species lists at the lost wetlands and the mitigated wetlands.

Corrective action will be taken if criteria established for wetland mitigation success at the time of Section 404 permit application are not being met.

Minimization and Restoration During Design and Construction

Where wetland losses are unavoidable, wetland losses will be minimized by implementing conservation measures in roadway design and construction.

Conservation measures that will be considered include:

- Fill/cut slopes adjacent to wetland areas will be provided with erosion control silt fencing.

- Minimize vegetation removal.
- Revegetate all exposed areas to MDT standards to reduce erosion and sedimentation.
- Revegetate areas with desirable ground covers to inhibit invasion of noxious weeds and for aesthetic purposes.
- Coordinate weed control, seeding, and fertilization with the Flathead County Weed Control authority and MDT.
- Flag or fence wetland areas during construction to avoid unnecessary disturbance due to construction activities.
- Provide bank stabilization and erosion control to meet standards defined by the *MDT Highway Construction Standard Erosion Control Plan.*
- Wetland delineation boundaries will be incorporated into design plans.

Based upon the above considerations, it is determined there is no practicable alternative to the proposed construction in wetlands and that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use.

4.11 Wildlife / Threatened and Endangered Species

Information pertaining to endangered and threatened wildlife, fish, and vegetative species was obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP); the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP); the Montana Rivers Information System (MDFWP 1993); interviews with local area residents; a review of available literature relevant to the area; and a field survey conducted on October 2, 1995.

4.11.1 Existing Conditions

Nine species within Montana have been identified as either threatened or endangered by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. These species are listed in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7
Threatened or Endangered Species

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status
Canis lupis	gray wolf	endangered
Falco peregrinus	peregrine falcon	endangered
Grus americana	whooping crane	endangered
Mustela nigripes	black-footed ferret	endangered
Sterna albifrons	Interior least tern	endangered
Ursus arctos horribilis	grizzly bear	threatened
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	bald eagle	threatened
Charadrius melodus	piping plover	threatened
Howellia aquatilis	water howellia (plant species)	threatened

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended, 1988), the term "endangered species" is defined as a species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range; and "threatened species" are likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Only the peregrine falcon (endangered), and the bald eagle (threatened) are in need of consideration for this proposed project. The other species are either not endemic to the project area, or have been absent from the project area for several decades.

- **Peregrine falcon** - There are no known nesting locations for the peregrine falcon within the general area. Peregrine foraging use is infrequent and likely to be transitory within the immediate study area.

- **Bald eagle** - Bald eagles commonly occur in the general area as migrants and winter residents, with one recorded pair nesting approximately 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) east of the study area. The raptors can be expected to forage in the Foys Canyon Road study area vicinity.

No sensitive plant species were observed during the survey, nor are any listed or known to occur by USFWS or MDFWP personnel. There are no visible or documented resident locations for sensitive wildlife species within the study area. Patrick Creek is suspected of supporting the Westslope cutthroat trout, a sensitive fish species of concern. A cursory survey by MDFWP personnel in late November 1995 revealed the presence of brook trout within Patrick Creek. This sampling was too limited to determine the presence or absence of the more sensitive cutthroat trout.

The Foys Canyon Road study area contains a generous array of vegetative communities that serve as wildlife habitat for a variety of species. Coniferous stands intersperse with open grassland upon adjacent slopes. Riparian habitats associated with Birch and Patrick Creeks are comprised of such deciduous shrubs and saplings as red-osier dogwood, thin-leaved alder, mountain maple, water birch, quaking aspen, and black cottonwood.

The following is an abbreviated list of wildlife species that are likely to occur in the study area vicinity:

- A substantial population of raptors, including bald eagles, peregrine falcon, osprey, large buteo hawks, American kestrels, and merlins;
- Upland game birds such as the ruffed grouse and eastern turkey;
- Neo-tropical (song) birds;
- Various waterfowl;
- Ungulates, including white-tailed deer, with possible Rocky Mountain elk and transitory moose;
- Transitory and rare occurrences of large carnivores, including coyote, bobcat, red fox, mountain lion, black bear, gray wolf, and grizzly bear;
- A limited population of non-native brook trout and possible occurrence of the Westslope cutthroat trout (State sensitive species).

Mule deer are considered by area residents to be fairly uncommon, as are larger fur-bearing mammals.

4.11.2 Wildlife/Threatened and Endangered Species Impacts

The No-Build alternative will result in no impacts to wildlife or threatened or endangered species.

Implementation of the Preferred Alternative is not likely to adversely effect the endangered peregrine falcon, the threatened bald eagle, or their associated habitats. This determination is based on the infrequent use of the study area by the peregrine falcon and the relatively minor habitat loss for the bald eagle foraging in the study area. It is also considered to have no effect upon the remaining threatened and endangered species in this portion of the state because they are not endemic or have been absent from the project area for several decades.

With the potential for permanent loss of some riparian cover along portions of Birch Creek, long-term displacement of songbirds and small mammals can be expected as a result of the Preferred Alternative. Construction of this alternative within wet-site habitats immediately adjacent to the roadway may cause reductions in small, localized populations of amphibians and reptiles.

4.11.3 Wildlife/Threatened and Endangered Species Mitigation

Mitigation measures which will be implemented to minimize effects to the peregrine falcon, the bald eagle, and other raptors include the following:

- Any necessary electric transmission/distribution line relocations shall be constructed and raptor-proofed in accordance with the *Raptor Research Report No. 4*. Raptor-proofing is a policy currently being applied by the Montana Department of Transportation.
- Avoid stands of mature cottonwoods during construction.

The following measures will be taken to mitigate impacts upon wildlife and fisheries resulting from the Preferred Alternative:

- Removal of vehicle-killed deer from the roadway by county road personnel.
- Perpetuation of existing fish passages within the potentially-affected reaches of Patrick Creek.
- Revegetate all areas disturbed by construction. Revegetate roadway clear zones using unpalatable species to discourage wildlife attraction to the road.
- Use available techniques for sedimentation control during construction, including:
  - Sediment fencing,
  - Detention ponds,
  - Immediate revegetation, and
  - Netting or other mechanical retention devices.

4.12 Floodplains

4.12.1 Existing Conditions

There are two surface waterways within the study area, Patrick Creek and its tributary, Birch Creek. A 100-year floodplain has been delineated for Patrick Creek. Patrick

Creek originates in the mountains of the Flathead National Forest immediately west of the study area, and has a total watershed of approximately 50 square kilometers (19 square miles). The existing roadway crosses Patrick Creek in two locations within the study area and is partially inundated by the 100-year floodplain for Patrick Creek. Floodplain boundaries were determined from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood boundary and floodway maps for Flathead County, Montana.

Figure 4-8 shows the extent of the floodplains delineated by FEMA for Patrick Creek, the approximate floodplain limits for Birch Creek, and the existing and proposed road alignments.

Birch Creek originates in the Flathead National Forest to the west of the study area. It parallels the proposed alignment for the beginning of the project to its confluence with Patrick Creek. Birch Creek is a perennial stream with intermittent characteristics. It crosses the existing roadway in two locations within Foys Canyon immediately upstream of the confluence with Patrick Creek.

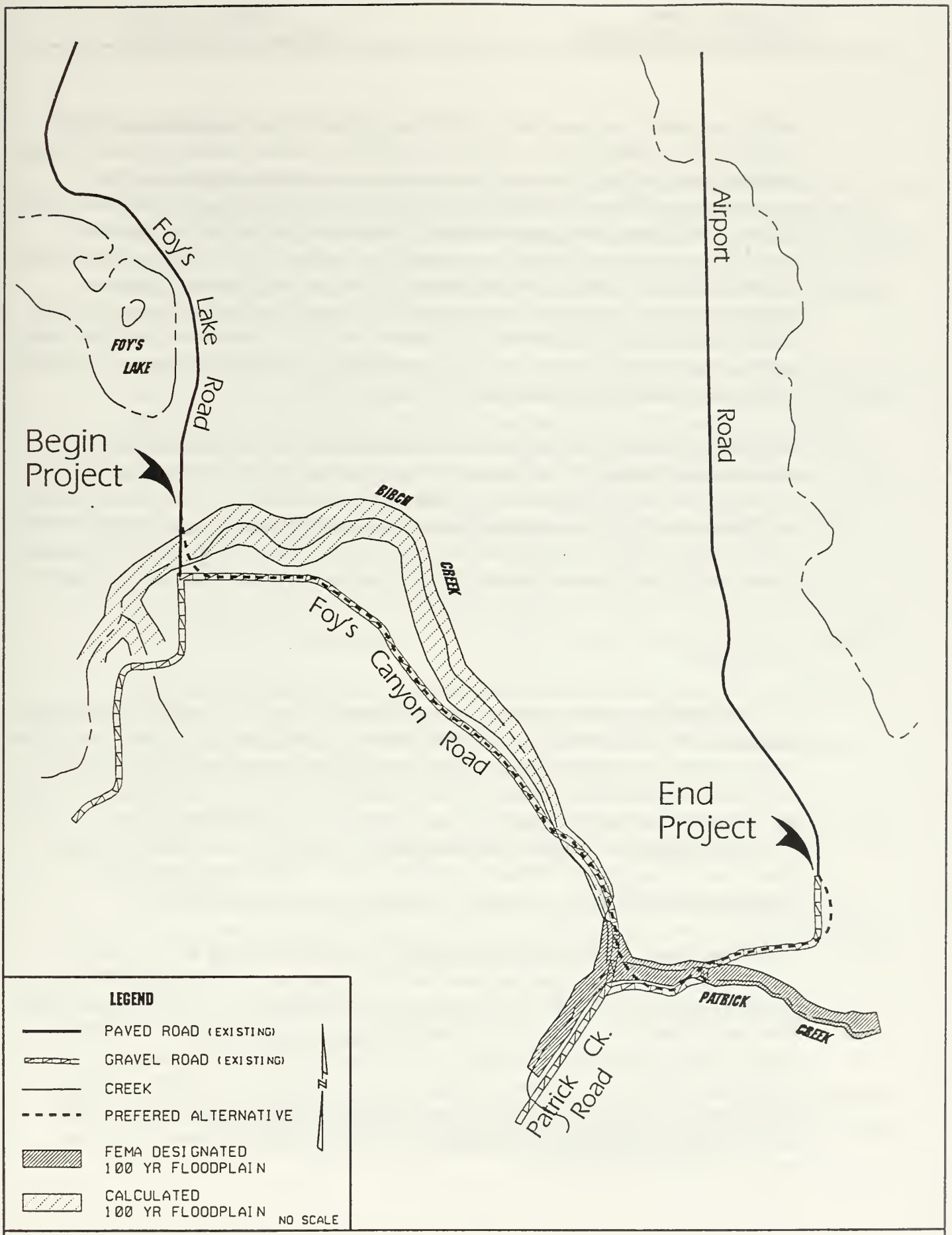
FEMA did not delineate a 100-year floodplain for Birch Creek. The approximate limits of this floodplain were determined using data collected from field observations, historical flooding patterns, USGS topographic maps, preliminary design cross-sections, and known hydrological features. Since the floodplain for Birch Creek has not been delineated, it was estimated to consist of the channel and overbank areas. The floodplain width of Birch Creek is estimated to range between 1 meter (3.3 feet) and 15 meters (49.2 feet). The narrower portions of the floodplain are through the contained portions of Foys Canyon. The fact that Foys Canyon Road has not historically been threatened by flooding supports an estimated relatively narrow 100-year floodplain width along Birch Creek within Foys Canyon.

This evaluation considers the impacts of the proposed construction of Foys Canyon Road on the 100-year floodplain of both waterways.

4.12.2 Floodplain Impacts

Patrick Creek

The Preferred Alternative crosses the Patrick Creek floodplain near the confluence of Birch Creek and Patrick Creek. The floodplain at the point of crossing is approximately 150 meters (500 feet) wide. A new 1,650 millimeters by 1,000 millimeters (66 inches by 40 inches) reinforced concrete arch pipe is proposed at this location to convey Patrick Creek under the proposed roadway. The pipe crossing



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

FLOODPLAINS
Figure 4-8

will be protected from scour with riprap edge protection, and is sized to convey the 100-year storm with a maximum 0.15-meter (0.5-foot) elevation change of the 100-year water surface profile upstream of the crossing. A second crossing is proposed approximately 650 meters (2,100 feet) downstream of the confluence with Birch Creek. At the inlet of the crossing, approximately 120 meters (400 feet) of realignment of Patrick Creek is planned along the proposed north edge of the roadway embankment. A twin 1,300 millimeters by 800 millimeters (52 inches by 32 inches) reinforced concrete arch pipe is proposed at the end of the channel realignment to again convey Patrick Creek under the Preferred Alternative. Both the channel and pipe have been sized to convey the 100-year storm with a maximum raise in the 100-year water surface profile upstream of the crossing of 0.15 meters (0.5 feet).

Construction within the floodplain includes the placing of roadway embankment, roadway construction, the installation of pipe crossings, waterway rechannelization, and riprap revetment. The drainage features are sized, however, to adequately convey the 100-year storm without substantial changes to the floodplain. Due to the increased roadway width, and the realignment of Foys Canyon Road, an estimated 0.54 hectares (1.34 acres) of the 100-year floodplain will be impacted by the Preferred Alternative.

Birch Creek

The Preferred Alternative construction is adjacent to Birch Creek within Foys Canyon for approximately 820 meters (2,739 feet) above the confluence of Patrick Creek. Due to the increased roadway width of 12.6 meters (42 feet), an estimated 0.10 hectares (0.25 acres) of existing floodplain will be occupied by the Preferred Alternative. With the Preferred Alternative, a new roadside channel with riprap lining will be constructed along the east side of the roadway to convey the entire 100-year flow of Birch Creek. The proposed channel for Birch Creek within Foys Canyon is a trapezoidal channel with a 1.2-meter (4-foot) bottom and 4:1 side slopes.

The proposed construction of a new roadside channel with riprap lining within Foys Canyon will affect the natural and beneficial floodplain values of the floodplain associated with Birch Creek. The construction is designed to carry the 100-year storm event fully within the confines of the new rip-rapped channel. In effect, this will reduce natural and aesthetic floodplain values that may have been associated with Birch Creek within Foys Canyon. This includes some impacts to wildlife resources, plants, and overall aesthetic values. Due to the intermittent nature of Birch Creek, there is little or no fish passage through Foys Canyon, therefore, there will be no impacts to fish in Birch Creek.

Summary

Due to the increased road width of 12.6 meters (42 feet), which includes the placement of roadway embankment, and the realignment of Foys Canyon Road, the Preferred Alternative will occupy a total of approximately .64 hectares (1.58 acres) of the existing 100-year floodplains for Patrick and Birch Creeks. Since the proposed crossings are designed to convey the 100-year storm and the roadway surface is elevated above the 100-year floodplain, the new driving surface is removed from the floodplain.

By raising Foys Canyon Road out of the 100-year floodplain, the risk of flooding of the road becomes virtually negligible. Consequently, the probability of accidents or road closure due to an inundated or flooded road decreases and overall driver safety increases. The Preferred Alternative is designed to meet the requirements of local and state floodplain regulations, which limit the changes in the 100-year water surface to 0.15 meter (0.5 foot) for the existing water surface profile. The probability of increased flooding to developable lands is limited to a 0.15-meter (0.5-foot) level.

Construction of the Preferred Alternative will neither increase nor decrease any support for development in the base floodplains. Access to the floodplains is already provided by the existing roadway; this will not change with the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative is consistent with local, state and federal floodplain and water resource management programs. Impacts to the floodplain have been minimized by following current floodplain regulations. All practical measures to minimize harm to floodplains have been incorporated.

Analysis of the floodplain impacts to both Birch and Patrick Creeks has been done to determine if a significant encroachment will occur. This analysis shows that:

- There is not a significant potential for interruption or termination of a transportation facility and, in fact, the Preferred Alternative reduces risk to the traveling public, including providers of emergency services.

- The Preferred Alternative does not result in direct support of likely base floodplain development.

- Although the conversion of Birch Creek to a newly-constructed, rip-rapped channel will negatively affect some natural and beneficial floodplain values, this is not considered a significant encroachment because:

- Revegetation of the area along the top of the channel will occur over time, thus minimizing any long-term natural impacts.
- The flood-carrying capacity of this new channel is substantially improved and will thus decrease risk to surrounding properties.

The No-Build alternative has no impacts to natural and beneficial floodplain values, and no support of probable incompatible floodplain development. There are, however, ongoing potential flooding risks to the traveling public.

4.12.3 Floodplain Mitigation

Mitigation that will be provided to minimize impact to floodplains includes:

1. Use of standard MDT erosion control techniques to minimize impact to natural and beneficial floodplain values during construction.

2. Coordination with Flathead County related to any floodplain encroachment.

4.13 Cultural Resources

4.13.1 Existing Conditions

A Cultural Resource Inventory was conducted in 1985 and updated in October 1995. Five sites (24FH193, 24FH194, 24FH196, 24FH199 and 24FH202) were identified and recommended as ineligible to the National Register of Historic Places. No eligible sites were identified or recommended. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with this recommendation. (See SHPO correspondence in Appendix B.)

4.13.2 Cultural Resources Impacts

No impacts to known cultural resources will occur as a result of the No-Build alternative.

No impacts to known cultural resources will occur due to implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

4.13.3 Cultural Resources Mitigation

Prior to any project construction, the Flathead Culture Committee of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation will be notified so that they may monitor the ground-disturbing work on site. In addition, if any cultural resources are found during construction, work shall stop and the Montana Department of Transportation archaeologist or historian will be contacted, who will then consult with both the Flathead and Kootenai Culture Committees.

4.14 Hazardous Materials

4.14.1 Existing Conditions

Information regarding the presence of hazardous materials or incidents was requested from appropriate local, state and federal agencies, as well as field investigations conducted in October of 1995.

For the purposes of this assessment, hazardous materials are defined as products or wastes regulated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the State of Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

In Montana, Federal Comprehensive Emergency Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and underground storage tank (UST) site inventories are administered and maintained by the MDEQ. The EPA maintains a National Priority List (NPL) and non-NPL of sites within the state that have been investigated and documented.

In addition to the appropriate state and federal regulatory agencies, local land owners, the Flathead County Parks and Recreation Supervisor, and the Director of Disaster and Emergency Services for Flathead County were contacted. The results of the combined search yielded evidence of no known hazardous materials sites within the study area.

4.14.2 Hazardous Materials Impacts

The No-Build alternative will have no impacts on hazardous materials sites.

Construction of the Preferred Alternative should impact no known hazardous materials sites. It will, however, improve overall safety conditions which will minimize the potential for spills of hazardous materials.

4.15 Visual

The Foys Canyon Road study area is located roughly 3.6 kilometers (2 miles) south of Kalispell. Contrary to its name, the topography of the immediate vicinity is a compilation of modest conifered hills whose lower reaches are typified by meadowed footslopes presently used for irrigated haying and grazing practices. The land form also contains two creeks, Birch and Patrick.

While the nearby city of Kalispell has an urban character that features residential, commercial and industrial development, the unincorporated portions of Flathead County still maintain a rural quality. The study area is characterized by development that is predominantly low-density residential and relatively unobtrusive. The visual character of this area will change over time as agriculture, forests and open spaces give way to residential development. The study area and surrounding Flathead Valley is bordered by the Swan Mountain Range on the east, the Whitefish Range on the north, and the Salish Mountain Range on the west (see Figures 4-9 and 4-10).

4.15.1 Existing Conditions

Landscape units are those visible areas of distinct visual character which contain similar landscape elements that are different than other distinct areas. These landscape units are mapped in Figure 4-11.

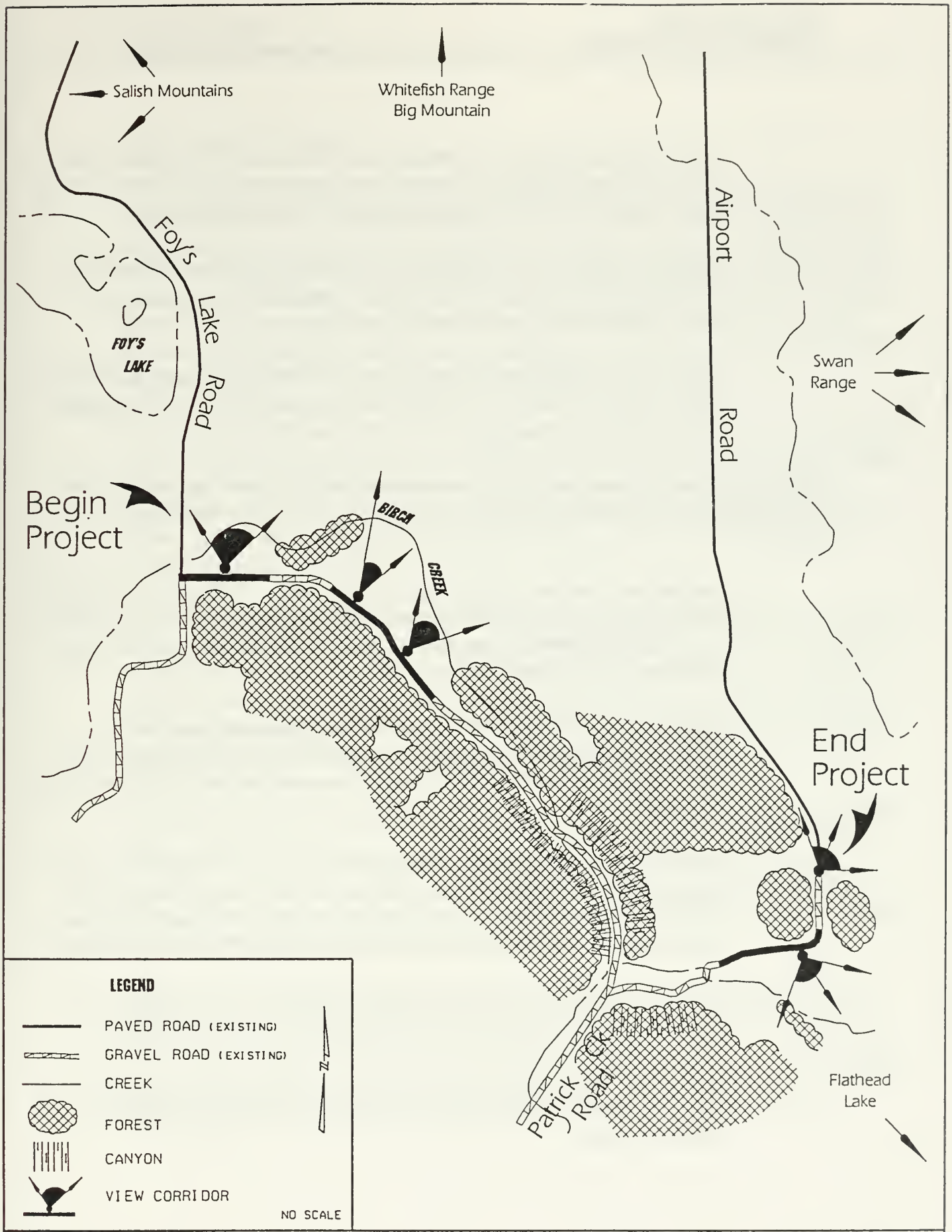
Background landscape units are all within the Flathead National Forest with mountain peaks, ranging from 1,372 to over 1,982 meters (4,528 to over 6,541 feet). Background landscape units include:

Mid Foys Canyon Road looking southeast

Mid Foys Canyon Road looking north - northeast

East Foys Canyon Road looking east (Swan Mountain Range)

West Foys Canyon Road looking north - northwest



FOY'S CANYON ROAD

VISUAL ANALYSIS
Figure 4-11

- **Swan Mountain Range**. This range lies to the east of the Flathead Valley and is a dominant feature of several views from the roadway. This is a steep range with seasonal white-capped peaks and forested mountains.

- **Whitefish Range**. This range lies to the north of the Valley and features rounded mountain tops with the Big Mountain Ski Resort, a prominent feature visible from the east end of the roadway.

- **Salish Mountain Range**. The study area lies within the eastern edge of the Salish Mountain Range. This range features rounded mountain groupings which are mostly forested.

Foreground landscape units are those immediately visible from Foys Canyon Road. These areas describe the local character of the area. Foreground landscape units include:

- **Agriculture / pasture**. These areas are open, flat to rolling terrain, including horse pastures. Views of the background units are most visible across these areas. Most agriculture / pasture areas within the study area now support low-density, single-family houses.

- **Riparian.** Small creeks and rivers in the study area are bordered by deciduous and evergreen vegetation. Riparian areas often support a wide variety of wildlife and help to define the river corridor even if the river itself is not visible.

- **Forest**. Both the north and south sides of Foys Canyon Road are bordered by medium-density forest. These areas are characterized by pine, spruce, larch, and fir trees with the occasional stand of birch. Housing development is beginning to encroach into the forested areas along Foys Canyon Road.

- **Wetlands.** Well-defined wetlands appear throughout the study area. In some places the wetland abuts, and is contained by, the existing road.

- **Residential**. Development is characterized by low-density, single-family homes. Residential land units are characterized by homes, subdivision roads and outbuildings.

Study Area Description

This description begins at the west end of the proposed project and moves east. The background view from the western entrance is characterized by the Whitefish Range (Big Mountain) to the north and the Salish Mountains in the mid-ground view to the west. Looking north, it is also possible to see Foys Lake, although it is not a dominant feature of the landscape. Views of these mountains are seen over relatively flat open spaces. The Foys Community Center is located in the southwestern corner of the intersection of Foys Lake and Foys Canyon Roads. Wetland Site #1 is located inside the first curve where the road begins to head south.

Moving east, medium-density forests begin to dominate the south side of Foys Canyon Road. The underlying form is that of rolling hills. The north side of the road remains fairly open with gently rolling pastures, open spaces, and low-density residential development. It is over these spaces that the Swan Mountain Range is occasionally visible. These visual characteristics continue as the road works its way southeast towards Foys Canyon proper.

Foys Canyon begins roughly half-way through the project and continues to the junction of Foys Canyon Road and Patrick Creek Road. Where the grade allows, the canyon is forested and views are limited to the immediate foreground. The canyon walls are vertical in places where Foys Canyon Road begins to travel due south. This section of road is mostly shaded and views are dominated by granite rock and evergreen forest. Wetland Site #2 is located between the road and the canyon wall on the south side.

The road opens considerably as it exits the canyon and begins to head east. This final section is mainly open on the north with sporadic groves of trees and residential development. The end of the project roadway offers eastern views of the Swan Mountains. Patrick Creek, which supports riparian growth and animal habitat, runs through this section and crosses Foys Canyon Road. Wetland Sites #3 and #4 are also located in this last portion of the proposed project.

Generally, the character of the study area can be described as low-lying agriculture / pasture / residential development surrounded by mountain ranges and forest land. Driving the existing Foys Canyon Road offers a variety of pleasant views from pastoral to panoramic. However, the visual quality of this immediate area is not static, and will change as development continues and natural features give way to housing and landscaping.

4.15.2 Visual Impacts

Visual impacts associated with this project can be described in terms of views from the roadway and views of the roadway. Visual impacts were evaluated based on the predicted response of viewers to any changes. Known concerns about visual impacts are:

1. Concern about change to the existing visual character of the area.

2. Concern about addition of new paved surface to the landscape (both positive in terms of a reduction in dust and negative in terms of overall change in rural character).

There will continue to be visual impacts associated with dust created by the existing gravel surface road with the No-Build alternative.

Visual impacts as a result of the Preferred Alternative include:

1. Short-term construction-related impacts, including dust and debris, stockpiling of excavated material and removed vegetation, and the presence of construction equipment and material.

2. Expansion of roadway width. The motorist's view of the road with the foreground element of broader pavement will be different from that provided by the existing road. As shown in Figures 2-4 and 2-5, the Preferred Alternative will increase roadway width from approximately 6.0 meters (20 feet) to a paved width of 8.4 meters (28 feet). This change will be perceived as a noticeable difference in visual character.

3. Introduction of a paved surface. A black-top smooth surface will replace the uneven, earth-colored gravel surface. Dust associated with the existing surface will no longer be visible.

4. Cut and fill sections. Noticeable visual impact will occur in areas where the expanded roadway does not fit well with existing topography. The majority of Foys Canyon Road is generally flat, so there will be minimal conflicts with existing topography. There are four locations where excavations made by the Preferred Alternative will visually alter the adjoining landscape. Relative to the bulk of the proposed construction, the sites detailed below will require substantial earth removal:

- Where Foys Canyon Road runs virtually east/west, both sides of the road will require excavation.
- Excavation will take place on the north side of the road as it enters the north end of Foys Canyon.
- Beginning at roughly the middle of Foys Canyon and extending southwest to the canyon's end, both sides of the road will require excavation.
- As Foys Canyon Road turns due north to meet Airport Road, a short section will require excavation on both sides.

5. Expanded right-of-way including the clear zone. There are some locations where there will be a change in visual character associated with the expanded right-of-way or clear zone. This will be most apparent in the forested locations at the east end of the project where Foys Canyon Road turns north, and throughout the mid-section of the project where Foys Canyon Road runs northwest to southeast.

   Mature vegetation will be removed in some locations, resulting in a loss of the sense of enclosure provided by large trees. Some of this vegetation has already been removed in the area just east of the canyon.

6. New alignment segments. The Preferred Alternative moves away from the existing alignment in several areas. The new alignment will traverse through some pastures and stands of mature trees. This will change the visual character of the area.

4.16 Construction Impacts

The No-Build alternative will have no construction-related effects.

There are several impacts associated with the construction of the Preferred Alternative. The construction-related impacts include:

- **Noise and Vibration**. The operation of various types of machinery, such as heavy earth moving equipment, paving equipment, power tools, pile drivers, and trucks, in close proximity to residences will create an undesirable noise condition. Impacts from vibration are also likely during the construction period.

- **Fugitive Dust.** The operation of heavy equipment on exposed soils may result in the release of fugitive dust into the air.

- **Erosion and Sedimentation.** Runoff from areas of exposed soils may affect water quality of Patrick and Birch Creeks. Sedimentation may occur when eroded soils collect in areas below the construction site.

- **Water Quality.** Concrete construction within the river channel creates an opportunity for the release of contaminants to the watershed. Petroleum materials can be spilled during the operation and maintenance of construction equipment.

- **Visual.** Stockpiles of earth materials, stacks of construction materials, and parked equipment may cause a temporary visual impact to the residents near the locations of construction activities.

- **Access.** Local access to intersecting roads and to residences will be maintained during construction. However, limited access and minor detours will be necessary at certain locations during this period.

4.16.1 Construction Mitigation

Construction impacts will be mitigated through implementation of control measures during construction. These measures include:

- Limit noise-generating construction activities to occur between the hours of 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM near residential areas to minimize noise impacts.

- Require the use of appropriate dust suppression measures to minimize dust impact associated with the construction activities.

- Require erosion control methods, such as temporary and permanent seeding and mulching, within a reasonable time after the soil is disrupted.

- Require sedimentation control methods, such as check dam, silt fences, and sedimentation basins along drainage routes and adjacent to sensitive areas.

- Require that the contractor implement an approved water quality control plan, so that appropriate measures are in place in the event of an accidental spill.

- Designate a suitable construction staging area, and require that the contractor store materials and equipment within that area to minimize the visual impact.

- Develop construction staging and traffic control plans that minimize the disruption to traffic and access.

- Provide adequate public notice and maintain coordination with area residents to keep the public apprised of the construction progress and to warn of closures and detours.

4.17 Permits Required

The following permits or coordination will be required for the Preferred Alternative and will be obtained prior to any relevant disturbance:

- Section 404 Permit. The MDT must obtain a Clean Water Act: Section 404 Permit from the Corps of Engineers.

- Section 401 Water Quality Certification: The MDEQ Water Quality Division must certify that any discharges into state waters will comply with certain water quality standards before federal permits or licenses can be granted.

  Floodplain Development Permit: A floodplain development permit from Flathead County will be required for road construction and placement of fill in floodplains.

- 124 Stream Protection Act: This permit is needed from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to maintain the quality of streams and fisheries affected by roadway construction.

5.0 Comments and Coordination

The Foys Canyon Road Project has included a substantial amount of public and agency input. Appendix A includes meeting minutes for meetings held, copies of the newsletters and handouts. Appendix B includes letters of correspondence from cooperating agencies involved with this project.

5.1 Public Involvement Activities

The following public involvement activities were conducted:

- Two general public meetings.
- Two newsletters or handouts.
- Several meetings or contacts with agencies or individuals.
- Active solicitation of letters or telephone calls.

General public workshops were held on the following dates:

- November 15, 1995
- February 7, 1996

The First Public Workshop (on November 15, 1995) was attended by 50 people. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project and obtain input on the alternatives and issues. Public issues which were brought up at this meeting included questions about the need for the project, concerns about possible project impacts, and concerns that the current roadway is unsafe. Problems with the existing road included dangerous curves, signage, and dust. Concerns about traffic and high speeds were also raised. Concerns about possible project impacts included effect to rural quality of life, wetland impacts, floodplain impacts, wildlife impacts and visual impacts.

The Second Public Meeting (on February 7, 1996) was attended by approximately 35 people. Public issues addressed at this meeting included questions about the need for the project, concern that the current road is unsafe and needs to be improved (dust, potholes, and dangerous curves were mentioned), concern that design should minimize impacts to property owners, wildlife, farmlands, floodplains, and wetlands, and concern about increased traffic/speeds on the road was expressed.

Meetings have been held or contacts have been made with the following agencies:

- Flathead County Regional Development Organization
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Flathead County Commissioners
- Flathead Road and Bridge Department
- Montana Department of Transportation

Numerous (over 45) comment letters, comment sheets or telephone calls have also been received about this project. Issues raised included: questioning the need for the project, concern that the roadway is unsafe, concern that any improvements made should minimize impacts to property owners and the environment, and concern about increased traffic/speeds.

5.2 Remaining Public Involvement

A Notice of Availability of the EA and the planned date for the Public Hearing will be announced in *The Daily Interlake* newspaper and will be mailed to people on the project mailing list at least 14 days in advance of the Hearing.

At the Public Hearing, the general public will be given the opportunity to provide official comment on the project. Written comments, to be included as an official part of the record, will be accepted for 30 days following the Notice of Availability.

This environmental assessment was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The state statute can be found in section 75-1-201, et seq., MCA. The regulations are found in ARM 18.2.201 et seq.

6.0 List of Preparers

The following individuals had responsibility for preparing this document:

Name	Project Responsibility	Education/Experience
Mike Worrall, PE	Civil Engineer	BS, Civil Engineering. Thirteen years of experience in roadway planning and design.
Jeremy Keene, E.I.T.	Civil Engineer	BS, Civil Engineering. Three years of experience in planning, design, and construction of transportation facilities.
Kathy Harris, PE	Traffic Engineer	BS, Civil Engineering. Thirteen years of experience in planning, design, and construction of transportation facilities.
Jeanette Lostracco, AICP	Project Manager	BA, Geography; Masters of Business Administration. Seventeen years of experience in environmental analysis.
Gina McAfee, AICP	Environmental Analysis	BS, Landscape Architecture. Twenty years of experience in environmental analysis.
Quint Redmond	Environmental Analysis	BS, Geology; MS, Urban & Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture. Five years of experience in natural resource analysis.
Scott Richman, AICP	Environmental Analysis	BA, Environmental Design. 5 years of experience in environmental analysis.
Jared Moore	Environmental Analysis	BA, Geography. Nine years of experience in environmental analysis.
Andrew Gibson	Environmental Analysis	BA, Business Administration; MS, Urban & Regional Planning. One year of experience in environmental analysis.
Robert Harris, Turnstone Biological	Biological Resource Report	BS, Wildlife; BS, Fisheries. 20 years of biological analysis.
Kathy McKay, Tracks of the Past	Cultural Resource Report	MA, American History. Five years of experience in cultural resource inventories and assessments.

Name	Project Responsibility	Education/Experience
Ginger Thomas, Ginger Thomas Consulting	Biological Resource Report	BA, Geography; MS, Wildlife Biology. 13 years of biological analysis.
Julia Pruett, Carpenter Dunlap, Assoc.	Graphics	BA, Fine Arts. 14 years of CADD and graphic experience.

Appendix A

Meeting Minutes, Newsletters

Meeting Minutes
Foy's Canyon Road
First Public Workshop

Wednesday, November 15, 1995
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Outlaw Inn, Remington Room
1701 Highway 93 South
Kalispell, MT 59901

The First Public Workshop for Foy's Canyon Road was held in Kalispell, November 15, 1995, at the Outlaw Inn, Remington Room. 50 people attended the Workshop (sign in sheets attached). The workshop was open-meeting style, no formal presentation was given. Project information was available to the public on the sign in table (listed below). Comments were received from the public on 5 x 8 cards which were immediately displayed in the comments section wall area for the public to view and/or comment on. All officials responsible for the project were available throughout the evening to answer questions, receive comments, and talk with the public about any concerns they may have regarding the project.

Project officials present:

Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess (Denver)
Gina McAfee, Carter & Burgess (Denver)
Mike Worrall, Carter & Burgess (Missoula)
Kathy Harris, Carter & Burgess (Helena)
Jeremy Keene, Carter & Burgess (Missoula)
Stefanie Jakober, Carter & Burgess (Missoula)
Joe Murphy, Carter & Burgess (Missoula)
John Marron, Montana Department of Transportation (Missoula)
Dave Dreher, Montana Department of Transportation (Missoula)
Gordon Stockstad, Montana Department of Transportation (Helena)
Bill Squires, Montana Department of Transportation (Helena)
Dale Paulson, FHWA

The following information was available to the public on the sign-in table:

Agenda for the evening (attached) which explained in detail the process for the meeting as well as information on how to provide input at the meeting;

Foy's Canyon Road Public Workshop Handout (attached) explaining the purpose of the meeting, the project process, a map of the study area, an explanation of the need

for the project, contents of a NEPA document, names, addresses and phone numbers for comments, and a project schedule.

Foy's Canyon Road Newsletter (attached)

Comment Sheet (attached)

The seven wall displays were as follows:

1) Study Introduction (visual cards were displayed in 6 rows)

Row 1: Purpose of Meeting:

Provide a description of the process
Describe transportation needs
Obtain input on MDT Design
Determine if changes to this should be explored
Obtain Input on environmental issues

Row 2: Project Process

Define purpose and need
Define alternatives
Assess impact of alternatives
Prepare NEPA document
Obtain agency and public comment
Select preferred alternatives

Row 3: Content of NEPA Document

Define purpose and need for project
Describe alternatives (no build; build to federal standards; other)
Land use impacts (existing land use change; induced development)
Farmland Impacts (displacement of prime farmland)
Social impacts (impacts on school districts, recreation areas, churches, police & fire protection)
Relocation impacts (right-of-way; 40 of 46 parcels have been purchased for right-of-way)
Economic impacts (effects on development)

Row 4: Endangered Species:

Closest known bald eagle nest is 3-miles away
Historic & archeological (survey was conducted and no historical archeological sites were identified)
Section 4(f) - (impacts to parks on historic properties)
Hazardous materials (such as leaking underground storage tanks, dumps, etc.)
Visual impacts (changes to visual character of the land)
Construction impacts

Row 5: Transportation Impacts

Pedestrian & bicycles
Traffic increases

Air Quality Impacts
Noise Impacts

Reduced noise
Change from existing conditions

Water Resources

Till in drainages
Water quality impacts

Wetlands

Fill in wetlands

Wildlife & Fisheries

Hawk, elk, white-tailed deer, red-tree squirrel, stellar's jay, snowshoe hare

Floodplain Impacts

Row 6: Public Involvement Opportunities

Public Workshops (Nov. 1995, Jan 1996, Feb. 1996)
Newsletter (set to people in mailing list)
Public Hearing (Spring 1996)
Telephone Calls/Letters (Jeanette Lostracco & Gordon Stockstad)

2) Project Needs:

Map - 1985 through 1994 Accident Concentrations
Map - Traffic Data
Determined Needs:

Reduce Accidents (head on, sideswipe, truck)

Accidents per million (Graph showing state average at 1.88 & Foy's Canyon average at 11.08)

Reduce Maintenance Costs ($8500/year to gravel surface)
Accommodate anticipated growth in area

Average daily traffic (Graph showing the year 1994 at 310 & the year 2015 at 950)
Increased recreation access to Patrick Creek area
Upgrade connection with Airport Road (visual drawing)
Improve inadequate sight distance (visual drawing)
Improve open area for recovery zone (visual drawing)

3) Environmental Needs

Map - Noise Monitoring Locations
School Bus Stops
Photo Display - Existing Visual Character of Foy's Canyon Road

Wall Display Listing the Known Environmental Issues:
Change in visual character
Potential increase in traffic speeds
Potential wetlands impacts (visual drawing)
Noise impacts (individual residences & church
Parks (visual drawing)
Herron Park
Foy's Center
Potential for Right-of-way needs
Others? (Unknown at this time)

4) Future Use Plans

Map - Master Plan Map - Flathead County, Montana, Year 2000
Map - Kalispell City County Planning Jurisdiction - Master Plan Map, Year 2010.

5) Montana Department of Transportation Design

Aerial Photo Display of the roadway design prepared by MDT, shown as a black line alignment along the existing road.

6) Project Schedule

Blow up of Newsletter Project Schedule Graph
Card Display of Project Schedule:
Data Collection
Define alternatives (Oct. - Jan.)
Impact Assessment (Dec. - Feb.)
Prepare NEPA Document
Public Hearing (Feb. - April)
Prepare Final Decision Document (May - June)

7) Comments

Air Quality/Dust

The dust is so thick that you can't see the front of the truck.

Dust is a major problem

Dust is big problem

Dust lays in the canyon all night

Dust is hazardous to us living just off roadway - if smoke from log burning is prohibited, why not dust?

People probably just want the dust gone or the pot holes gone.

Dust is horrible

Dust is dangerous. When it is very dusty it is hard to see and is unsafe.

Current MDT design is best. This needs to be constructed. Blind curves and dust need to be eliminated.

Dusty and bumpy conditions exist.

Dust is a problem. Just pave the road so there is no dust.

Dust is a problem but the rough roads are not a problem.

Would like to see reduced dust - it is very dusty in the summer.

Dust is killing us. Would like to see the road built as designed.

Dust is a problem in valleys. Dust is a major problem. Landowners have been oiling the road in places.

Economic/Funding:

Why is this project being started again - spending even more money on a road that goes nowhere?

Need to use federal dollars to fund the project.

There is no way the county will ever have enough money to do this project.

How much money has been spent to date?

Concern that it will be a costly project because of the narrow canyon.

Funding priority should go to other roads like U.S. 93.

This is all a waste of money.

Thinks money should go to another roadway such as Big Mountain.

How much has this road cost up to November 1995? Total?

Who was responsible for this project and the waste of tax dollars?

When does the project become irrevocable by the state, county, etc.?

Who is accountable for the $200K spent? Why were we lied to up to last minute?

Maintenance costs should be compared to engineering costs.

Very recently this process was shelved after $300,000/loss. (The state says that the county wants the road and the county commissioners say state is blackmailing them by saying county has to foot the loss.)

Why are we planning to spend $500K here?

Doesn't think Foy's Lake Road should be a high priority. The money should be spent somewhere else.

What will happened if the road isn't built? What will MDT do with the right-of-way that was purchased?

How much has been spent for the design and other work done for this project? Taxpayers need to know this.

Don't give back the money - move it forward.

How much would maintenance on a paved road cost? Repaving/overlay cost is about $14K per mile and last for 5-7 years.

Construction:

When does the construction happen?

Traffic/Speed:

People travel 50-60 mph now on the road. They can't go much faster on a paved road.

Concerned that paving will increase speed - kids use Foy's Lake, Foy's Canyon and Airport Roads as a loop for races.

Concerned that it will be super highway with speeders after it is paved.

There are a lot of accidents because of high speeds - 50-60 mph.

Concerned about speeds above 35 mph.

Traffic/Volume:

Put March 23, 1995, videotape in record. It indicates the low road usage.

Concerned that the improvements will increase emergency access.
Traffic volumes don't make sense - why so many on Airport Road and so few on Foy's Canyon Road?

Improvements will not directly increase traffic volumes.

Concerned that the planning document show the necessity of the proposed highway with only 300 cars per day when other county secondary roads that are not under consideration carry daily traffic loads of 2600 (Whitefish Stage Road) cars per day and 4000 (Big Mountain Road) cars per day

Will there be traffic diversion as a result of the improvements? Feels the project will improve emergency vehicle response time.

Traffic/Safety:

Concerned because a school bus that slid backwards down the canyon.

The roadway needs to be improved for school bus safety.

I want the road black topped and to straighten out the worst curves.

Existing roadway is slick at creek crossings, especially the first curve (south of the S-curve)

Document should show accident cluster sites.

Roadbed itself north of the church is so soft people get stuck - need a 4-wheel drive vehicle on the road.

Tight turns just north of church are a problem - taking turns out would be good.

Canyon is curvy and blind especially at Patrick Creek corner. S-curve across Patrick Creek is somewhat dangerous.

Every winter we have had over-turned vehicles in our yard.

The corner just south of Orchard Ridge has a lot of accidents.

The road needs to be constructed. Blind curves and dust need to be eliminated.

I have been in Orchard Ridge for seven years and have seen four rollovers on the road.

Consider mildly cutting off curves to increase safety on the road. The safety needs to be improved.

What are the accident statistics for secondary roads?

The church corner has a lot of accidents

Safety is important - a bus with 15 children slid back in canyon and almost turned over.

Concerned about accidents at church corner. Has witnessed accidents in several other places also.

The road can be a dangerous road - blind curves.

Concerned about safety of wildlife and kids.

Estimate that 80% of the accidents are not reported

Concerned that speed increases will kill deer and other wildlife

Should make sure the document includes illustration/analysis of accident " cluster sites"

Concerned that improvements will increase speed resulting in much more traffic, i.e., logging trucks

Experienced lots of accidents - near head-ons and lots of near misses.

Stop sign at Patrick Creek Road is needed

School bus almost slipped and skidded off the road.

Water comes up on the road in the canyon section of the road in the spring.

There are lots of unrecorded accidents on the road.

Need to straighten curves for safety and accommodate increased traffic due to the residential growth.

We believe that the traffic pattern change due to the significant change in the width of the road will create a significant impact on adjacent lot holders.

Curves need to be straightened, but try to minimize impact to property owners.

Curves of Patrick Creek Road are the worst for school bus. Combination of hills & ice is bad.

Concerned because he drives school bus route. Looking forward to seeing it improved because he was almost sideswiped several times.

Numerous unreported accidents and slipping off of the road.

I see numerous accidents per year at Orchard Ridge North. Probably average one accident per week.

If there is a concern about speed, then post some reduced speed limits. None are posted now.

Concerned about the school bus treatment at Patrick Creek - make Patrick Creek a 90 degree intersection (concerned about kids)

Most of the Orchard Ridge traffic goes to Foy's Lake Road

Concerned that improvements will result in increase in traffic in the middle.

Should add a stop sign to Patrick Creek Road intersection. (Sketch A)

Can't see past logging trucks. Have been run off the road a few times.

Road is too dangerous and too narrow now.

On-going maintenance is a problem - lots of pot holes.

Environmental (Wildlife, Wetlands & Aesthetics):

The meadow near Patrick Creek junction is a nice area. It would be a shame for the road to go through there.

Concerned that improvements will change character from a country road to a major road (it should retain a natural state)

Stream bed alteration should be disclosed in the document for the 124 permit.

Concerned that speed increases will kill deer and other wildlife

The wildlife should be preserved (it is a game preserve)

Concerned about impact to wetlands. You should not fill these in.

We object to the significant impact on human environment and ask for alternative to the 120 feet wide 55 mph right-of-way.

Should make sure that you really evaluate alternatives to wetlands impact.

FEMA has not done a floodplain study on these river. (Hydrology)

Why wasn't the NEPA process followed from 1984?

Concerned about Lone Pine Wildlife Refuge which is on the north side.

Want to know if the entire wetland areas will be destroyed or just part of them? Need to try and keep some undisturbed wetlands.

Ponds were built in early 1900's at Kessler Ranch. Ponds don't function as well now and are weed filled. They were built for irrigation.

Avoidance of wetlands should be the 1st alternative (by law). It is not good to eliminate wetlands - okay if it is replaced.

Up-canyon - groundwater/springs on the road causes grade problems.

MDT should seek alternatives to significant impacts in taking 1.8 acres of prime farmland and to conduct a soils and prime farmland assessment as none has presently been done.

Social Concerns/Area growth:

Concerned that paving the road will bring increased growth to the area.

County commissioners probably thought this area would receive a lot of growth in 1985-86

The project proposes to relocate the roadway from the south edge of Patrick Creek floodplain to the center of that floodplain (same for Birch Creek). Analyze those ecologically critical areas such as floodplains and utilize the requirements of 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)(5)

MDOT should provide specific discussion of project modification to avoid and minimize discharges to streams and aquatic sites and to provide detailed mitigation plan to compensate for unavoidable wetlands impacts.

All encroachments on waterways need to be analyzed for impacts and the least damaging practical alternative for discharge of fill in aquatic locations selected.

Concern regarding whether we will be doing an individual 404 permit and applying redbook Chapter 11.

Concerned about safety of wildlife.

Witnessed several black bears in the area.

Concerned that wetlands ponds have been drying up. They had more water in them in 1964.

Concern that wetlands, floodway, and floodplains need to be assessed in the spring not late fall and winter when things are dried up.

MDT should seek alternative to their proposed maximum taking of prime farmland.

Classification as secondary highway

Is there any criteria to correlate volumes with secondary classification?

What are the minimum vehicle counts for secondary system?

Priority for classification of secondary roads doesn't make sense. Why this road?

Department of Transportation should have secondary roadway criteria? How did they make the selection?

What are the accident statistics for secondary roads?

Why is this a secondary road? Arbitrary standards given.

Design:

Current MDT design is best. This needs to be constructed. Blind curves and dust need to be eliminated.

Suggested turn north of trees at intersection (see sketch B) and tie after first straight line alignment.

Would like the road built as designed.

Consider T-intersection at Foy's Lake and Foy's Canyon Roads.

Want the road built as originally designed.

Make the road wide enough for a bike path.

Build the road like it was designed in the first place - too crooked and too steep. With the traffic, it needs to be engineered to safer standards.

People don't want to see a road designed similar to a Foy Lake or Airport Road standard.

Widen the road wide enough for bike use (similar to Somer's area)

Just do it! Build the road as designed.

Supports current MDT design. Would like to see the road built.

Concerned that access to Herron Park caretakers house is maintained. Need to work closely with MDT on design of this area.

Consider road re-alignment in swampy area and also the west end to eliminate intersection at Patrick Creek (drawing attached C)

Build the road as designed.

Why not put a stop sign on SB Foy's Canyon and let Patrick Creek road go through (no stop).

Why not miss the meadow and keep road on existing alignment?

Is MCA Section 1000 considered reconstruction and resurfacing - as an alternative see section 1007? Instead of new construction use same alignment.

Curves need to be straightened, but try to minimize impact to property owners.

Curves of Patrick Creek Road are the worst for school bus. Combination of hills & ice is bad.

Concerned about the school bus treatment at Patrick Creek - make Patrick Creek a 90 degree intersection (concerned about kids)

Consider T-intersections at Patrick Creek and Foy's Lake intersections.

Have not seen people bypassing Kalispell. Does not necessarily believe the road needs to be as wide as on both ends.

Should try to more of less stay on the same alignment with improvements.

Should just build the road to county standards - not federal standards.

Consider alignment north of hill which is north of Storlis property (between the home and the hill)

Misc.

Birch Creek goes up north of first curve of Canyon Road. What is the source of water? Three springs.

We support improving the road. It will provide smoother access to our property at Patrick Creek.

The road seems to contribute to the valley in Kalispell

Why is the '86 CE not adequate?

Will this effort be adequate?

Paving the existing road is not adequate.

There has been a petition passed to landowners to have Big Mountain/County pay to overlay - after 212 homeowners approved state proposal to straighten out.

A petition was signed that was misleading, several people want their names taken off.

I signed a petition and would like my name off of it.

May you could just focus the work on the curves in the middle of project.

Did the commissioners want to remove the request for improvements? In 1991?

The sooner the better - you need to get the road going.

This needs to be constructed. Blind curves and dust need to be eliminated.

Suggested straightening curve in front of church and two curves near ponds. Would donate land if project were limited this way.

Agree that logging debris needs to be cleaned up.

Surprised the project is the priority.

What initiated this re-study - why now?

Just do It! Build the road as designed.

Leave the road as is - pave at most.

If it is not rebuilt, then it needs to be fixed - focus more on marshy areas and tight curves.

Will county and state continue to juggle responsibilities as they have over the last 10 years?

Petition passed to landowners to have Big Mountain/County pay to overlay -- after 22 homeowners approved the state proposal to straighten it out.

Just get the road done!

Blacktop the existing road - take out the worst curves and leave it that way.

Why can't the county pave the road to Orchard Ridge and a mile on Airport Rd?

It would be most dangerous to pave the road as is. Need to fix the road.

There are several curves that are to tight to pave as they exist.

MCA statutes 603218 and 603217 - Reconstruction Trust Program needs to be investigated: Look at alternatives that are "reconstruction" not new construction.

Several comments: Just don't want it paved!

Gravel roads aren't necessarily bad.

Lived in Kalispell 26 years and owns 110 acres on Foy's Canyon Road. Supports road improvements strongly.

Logging debris should be removed - it is a mess visually.

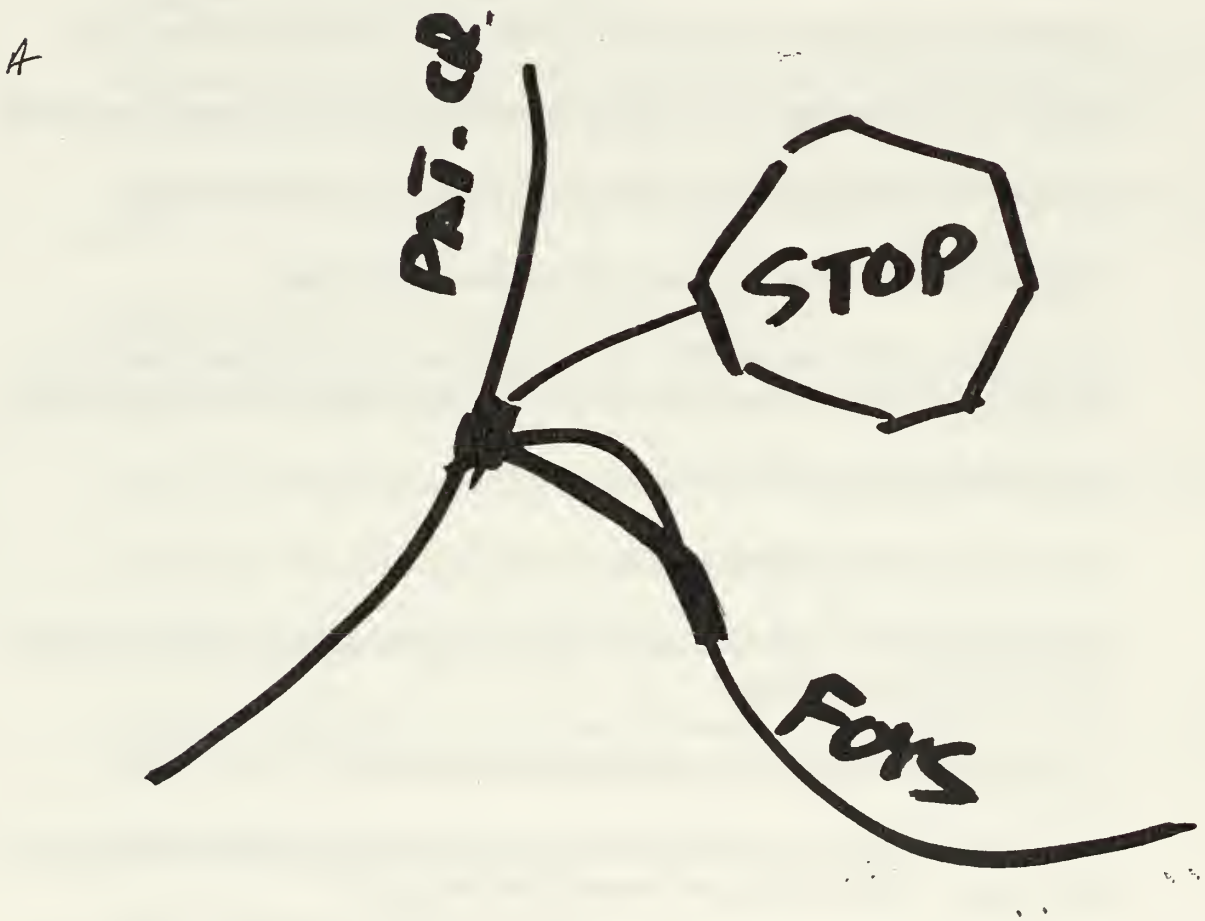
Foy's Community Center would like to have additional parking if roadway curves away from it. Would like to get ownership of the land.

Concern about existing road abandonment at church. Previously kids had been attracted there as "hangout".

Will natural gas be run up the road?

foy1127m.1jl

The following alternative alignment sketch ideas were also received at the workshop:



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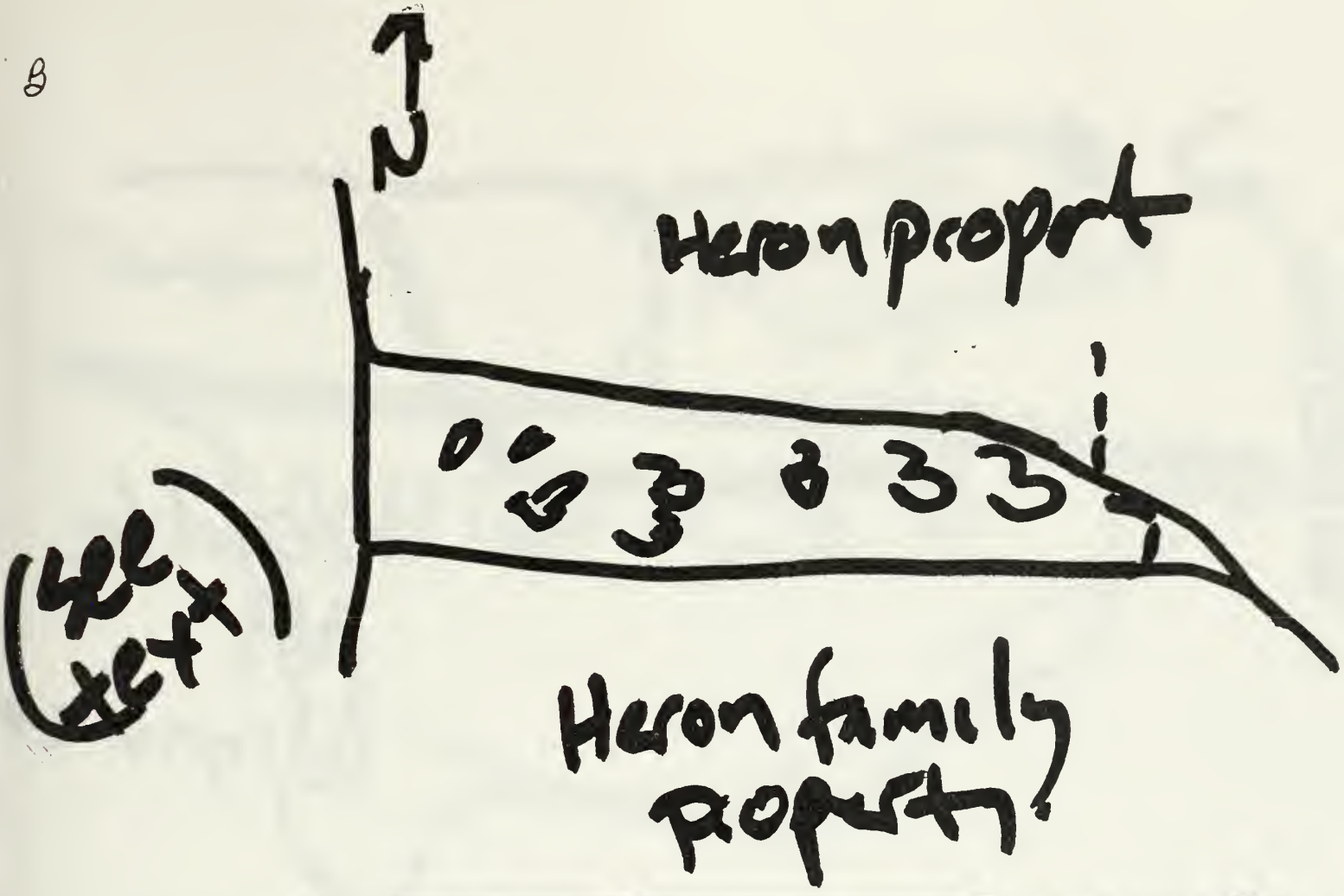
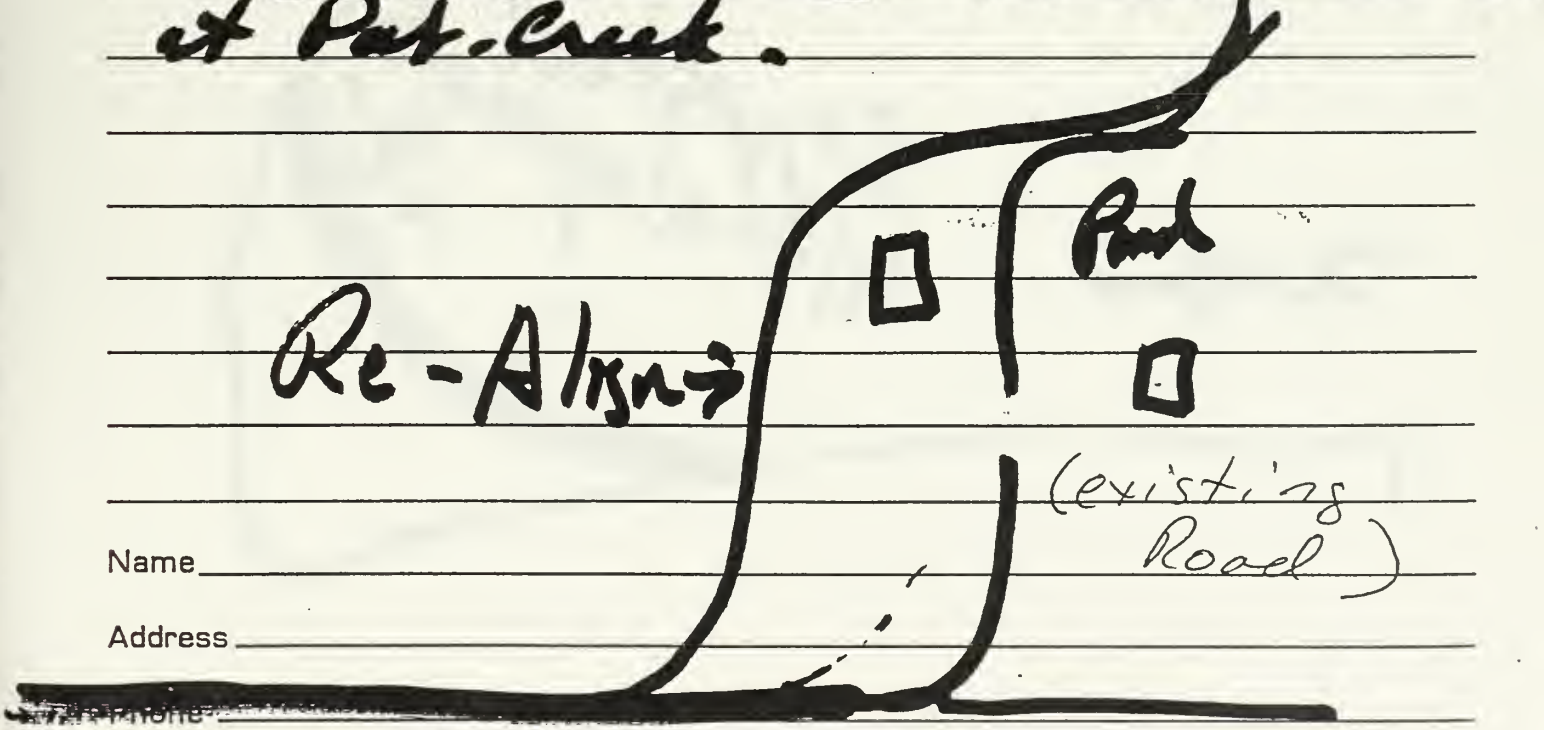


eliminate intersection at Pat. Creek.



Name

Address

Phone

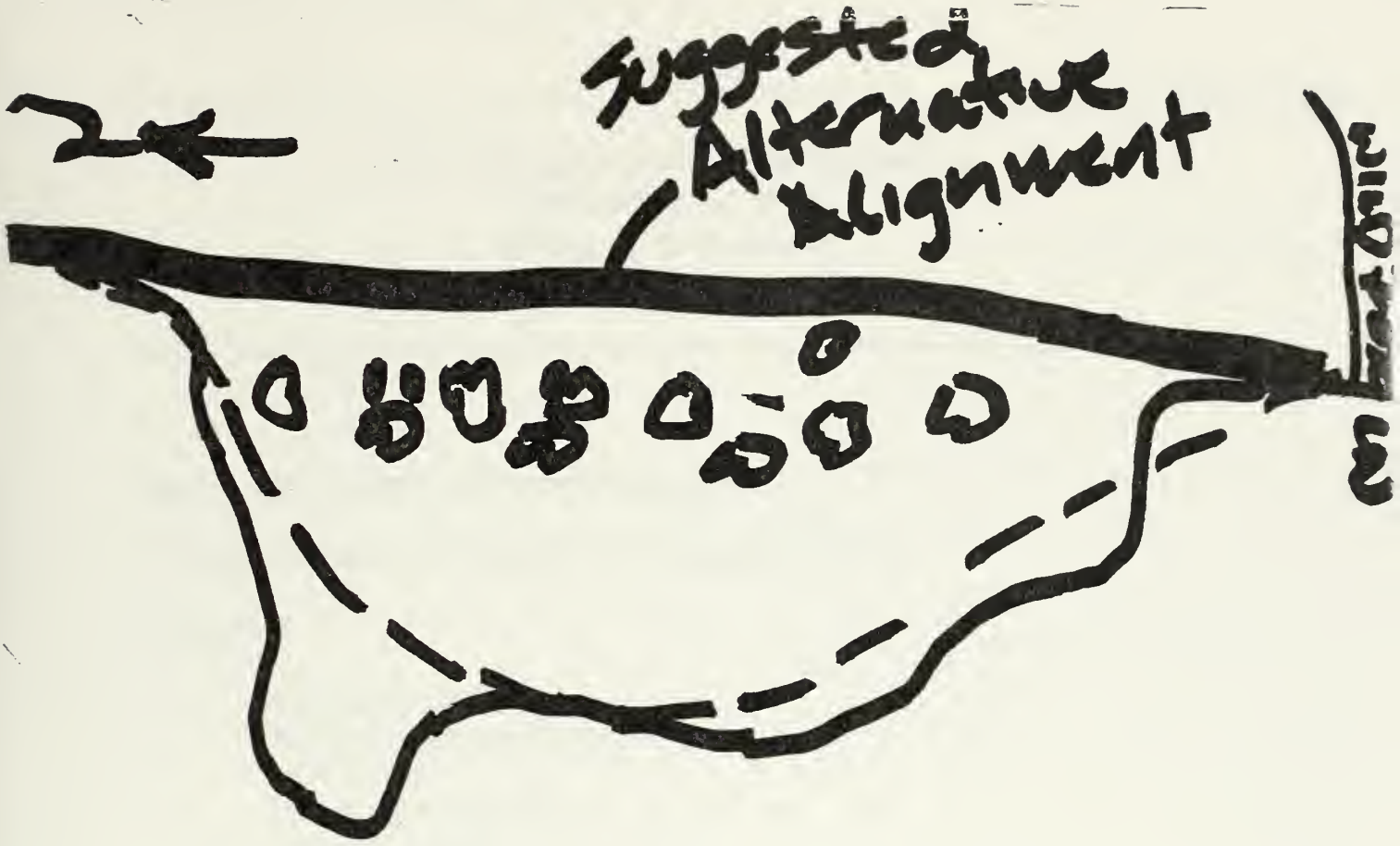
(above information is optional)

By Lake Rd

Heron Park

Possible
Alt
Alignment

Suggested
Alt alignment
00'
00'


Suggested
Alternative
Alignment

AGENDA

Foy's Canyon Road Public Workshop
November 15, 1995
5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Outlaw Inn - Kalispell

Open house Format (No Formal Presentation)

- ❑ Review graphics and information throughout the room
- ❑ Stations:
  - Introduction to Study
  - Known Environmental Issues
  - MDT Design
  - Future Land Use Plans
  - Project Schedule
  - Comments

How to Provide Input at the Meeting

- ❑ Project team members have name tags - give them your comments or ask them questions.
- ❑ Comment sheets - fill out and put in the comment box.
- ❑ Comment sheets - take home to complete and mail in.

Public Workshop Handout

Contents of a NEPA Document

Impacts on each of the following will be analyzed:

- Land Use
- Prime and Unique Farmland
- Social/Economic
- Relocation (Right-of-Way)
- Noise
- Air Quality
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Wildlife and Fisheries
- Floodplain
- Endangered Species
- Historic and Archaeological
- Section 4(f) (impacts to parks or historic sites)
- Hazardous Materials
- Visual Resources
- Construction Impacts

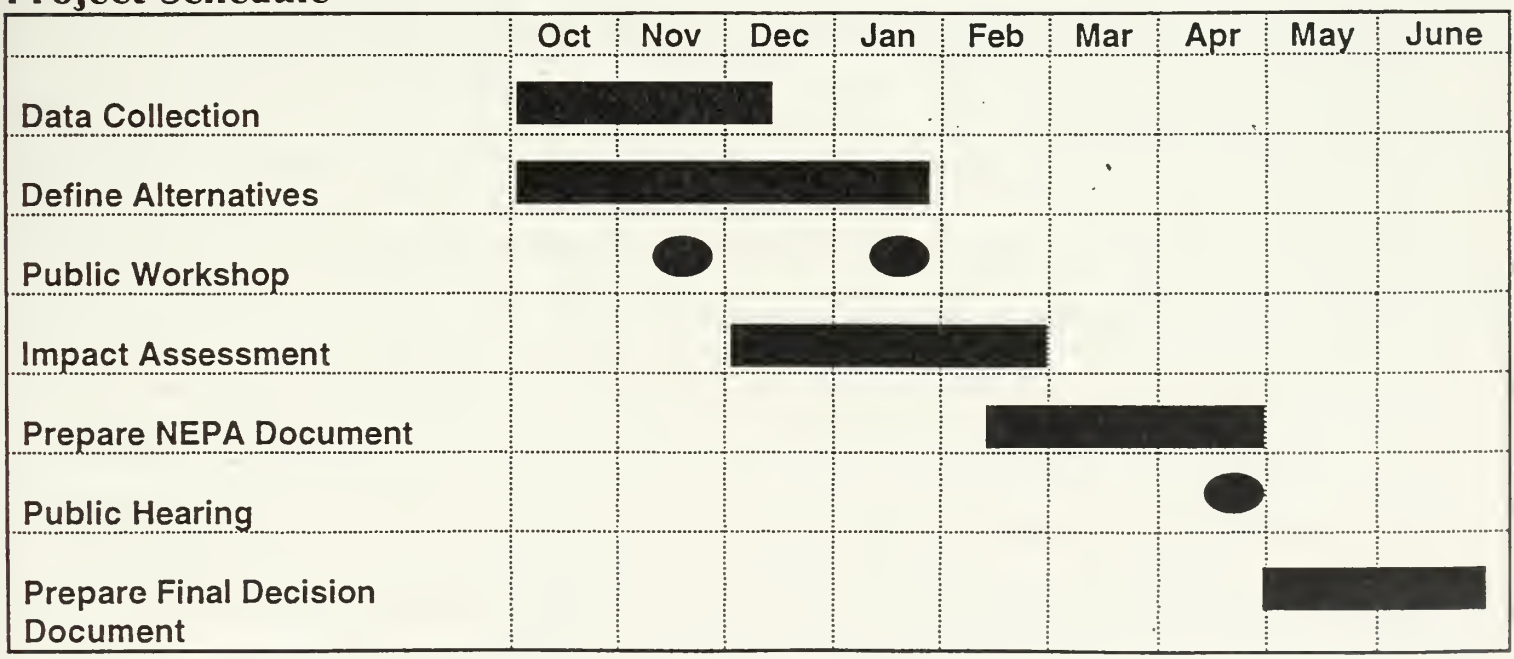
Comments?

If you have additional comments or questions, please feel free to call or write:

Jeanette Lostracco
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
125 W. Spruce St.
Missoula, MT 59802
(406) 721-1471
(303) 820-4808

Gordon Stockstad
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Ave.
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-7223

Project Schedule



Foy's Canyon Road

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the Foy's Canyon Road project:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

(above information is optional)

Foy's Canyon Road

Newsletter #1 November 1995

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Environmental Process Initiated

The Flathead County Commissioners have selected and prioritized Foy's Canyon Road for secondary roadway improvements. In response to the Commissioner's prioritization, the Montana Department of Transportation has hired Carter & Burgess, Inc. to initiate the process for assessing impacts of the proposed improvements.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and document will examine environmental impacts of the proposed improvements. If appropriate, modifications to the design discussed with the public at various meetings over the past several years will also be examined as part of this process.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Get Involved!

An important part of this study is a public involvement program to inform citizens of the environmental process, progress, and results, and to provide an opportunity for residents to express their concerns and ask questions.

This newsletter is the first for the Foy's Canyon Road project and announces the first of three public meetings. The first workshop is scheduled for:

Wednesday, November 15, 5:30 - 8:00 P.M.
in the Remington Room of the **Outlaw Inn***
1701 Highway 93 South, Kalispell

The purpose of the workshop is to receive public comments and questions regarding proposed improvements to Foy's Canyon Road. The workshop will be held in an open house format so that, you will have an opportunity to discuss concerns and issues individually with project team members. No formal presentations will be given, you are welcome to attend anytime between 5:30 and 8:00 P.M.

A second workshop is planned for early 1996 to discuss alternatives and initial results of the environmental analysis and to receive public coment on the alternatives. A public hearing is planned for spring 1996 to receive public comment on the NEPA document and the preferred alternative.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

More Information?

For more information or to be placed on the mailing list, contact:

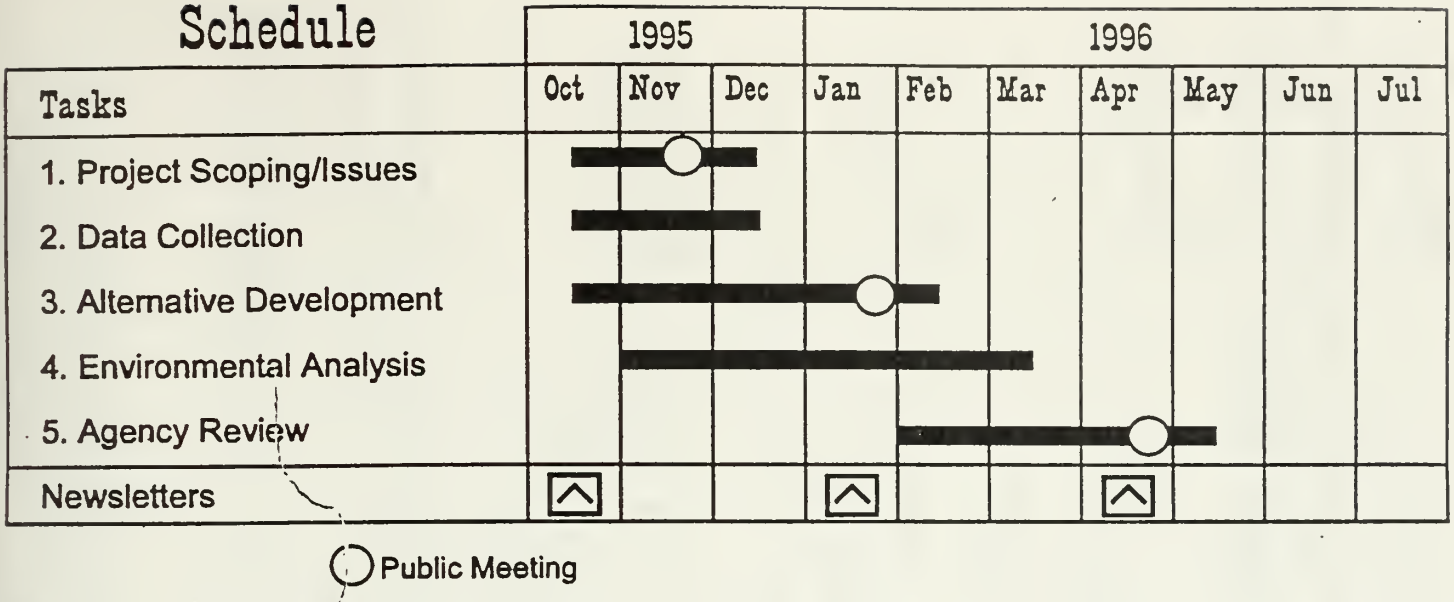
Jeanette Lostracco
Carter & Burgess
125 West Spruce
Missoula, MT 59802
721-1471 or (303) 820-4808

OR

Gordon Stockstad
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
444-7223

** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Outlaw Inn is accessible to disabled persons. For more information or for those who require accommodations for disabilities, call Stephanie Jackober at 721-1471.*

Schedule



○ Public Meeting

Foy's Canyon Road Environmental Process

First Public Workshop

Wednesday, November 15, 1995

5:30 - 8:00 P.M.

Outlaw Inn ♦ Remington Room

1701 Highway 93 South ♦ Kalispell

Carter & Burgess
125 West Spruce
Missoula, MT 59802

Stamp

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
November 15, 1995

SIGN-IN

Mary Gutzwiller
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City, State, Zip — Phone

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City, State, Zip — Phona

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
November 15, 1995

SIGN-IN

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Wes Wiggins
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Bill + Sheli Shower
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Rick Hull - Daily Inter Lake
Name (please print)

Mailing Address P.O. Box 7610
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Tom Parsons, FRDO
Name (please print)

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John & Penny Armstrong
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Will Beyer
Name (please print)

Mailing Address 500 Fir Terrace
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Bob Norwood 758 5800
Name (please print)

Mailing Address 221 Century Road
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Dana M. Gardner
Name (please print)

Mailing Address PO. 943
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Carey Nystul
Name (please print)

Mailing Address PO Box 366
City, State, Zip Kalispell MT 59903 257-7997 Phone

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
November 15, 1995

SIGN-IN

Marsha Shepard
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ROMILDA SHAWBACK
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City, State, Zip — Phone

MINUTES
FOY' S CANYON ROAD
SECOND PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Wednesday, February 7, 1996
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Outlaw Inn, Remington Room
1701 Highway 93 South
Kalispell, MT 59901

The Second Public Workshop for Foy's Canyon Road was held in Kalispell, February 7, 1996, at the Outlaw Inn, Remington Room. Forty (40) people attended the Workshop (sign in sheets attached). The workshop was identical in format to the First Public Workshop - open-meeting style, no formal presentation was given. Project information was available to the public on the sign in table (listed below). Comments were received from the public on 5 x 8 cards which were immediately displayed in the comments section wall area for the public to view and/or comment on. All officials responsible for the project were available throughout the evening to answer questions, receive comments, and talk with the public about any concerns they may have regarding the project:

Project officials present:

- Jeanette Lostracco, Carter & Burgess (Denver)
- Mike Worrall, Carter & Burgess (Missoula)
- Kathy Harris, Carter & Burgess (Helena)
- Jeremy Keene, Carter & Burgess (Missoula)
- Dave Dreher, Montana Department of Transportation (Missoula)
- Gordon Stockstad, Montana Department of Transportation (Helena)
- Bill Squires, Montana Department of Transportation (Helena)
- Dale Paulson, FHWA
- Julia Pruett, Carpenter/Dunlap
- Larry Brazda, Montana Department of Transportation (Kalispell)
- Mark Traxler, Montana Department of Transportation, Env. Services
- Jeff Ryan, Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Section
- Annell Fillinger, AM Tech Services

The following Information was available to the public on the sign-in table:

- Agenda for the evening (attached) which explained in detail the format for the meeting as well as information on how to provide input at the meeting;

The 1st & 2nd Foy's Canyon Road Newsletters (attached)

Comment Sheet (attached)

The seven wall displays were as follows:

Section 1: Alternatives

(5 photo's of the current roadway with alternatives marked + written explanation detailing modification of roadway accompanied each photo)

No Build Alternative (advanced)
Pave existing surface (not advanced)
Non-Secondary Roadway w/30 mph design (not advanced)

Photo 1: Secondary Roadway with Design Exception
Secondary Roadway with design Exceptions A&B (not advanced)

Photo 2: Secondary Roadway with Modification D
Modification D - Milepost 7.0 - 7.5 (not advanced)

Photo 3: Secondary Roadway with Modification C
Modification C - Milepost 6.7 - 7.0 (advanced)

Photo 4: Secondary Roadway with Modification B
Modification B Milepost 6.0 - 7.0 (not advanced)

Photo 5: Secondary Roadway with Modification A
Modification A - Milepost 3.8 - 4.5 (advanced)

Section 2: 5 Project Maps

Map #1- Proposed Alternatives
Map #2 - Historical Daily Traffic Counts
Map #3 - High Accident Locations
Map #4 - 1985 - 94 Accident Concentrations
Map #5 - Traffic data

Row of Visual Cards accompanying maps

Row 1:
Project Discussion
Lone Pine - State Game preserve is privately owned therefore not 4(f)
FRDO - Projects - 6-1/2%/yr growth rate to the year 2015
Cultural Inventory taken 10/96 - no eligible sites
Road improvements likely to accelerate area residential developments

Row 2:
Purpose & Need
Safety Problem

Accident Rate Info (graph)
Accident Severity Info (graph)
Accident Locations (map)

Row 4:
System Linkage
Improvements will connect two roads which have been improved
Map of improved section & unimproved section
Problems with current situation
- Driver expectancy problems
- Higher accidents
- Greater potential for driver error

Row 5:
Traffic volumes
Historical traffic growth (graph)
Milepost locations
Projected traffic (graph)

Row 6:
Accident Info: adjacent roads (graph)
Accident type Info (graph)

Row 7:
Roadway Deficiencies
Narrow Lanes & No. Shoulders
- No passing opportunities
- Few pullouts for vehicle breakdown
- No space for bicycles or pedestrians

Steep, winding conditions with poor sign distances
Inadequate open areas to serve as a recovery zone for errant vehicles
Maintenance problems
- insufficient shoulder widths for maintenance, vehicles & operations
- shading and icing due to proximity of trees
- drainage problems

Section 3: Environmental Issues
2 Photos - Flood plains & Existing Wetlands

Section 4:
Photo - Existing Visual Character
Photo - MDT Design
3 Secondary roadway design
- Secondary roadway with a 40 mph design standard that meets Flathead County

Section 3: Environmental Issues

2 Photos - Flood plains & Existing Wetlands

Section 4:

Photo - Existing Visual Character

Photo - MDT Design

3 Secondary roadway design

- Secondary roadway with a 40 mph design standard that meets Flathead County and state design requirements
- Results in improved traffic surface, provision of sight distances, and vertical grades all less than 7%
- Widened and flattened side slopes provide an emergency recovery area for out-of-control vehicles
- Results in impacts of wetlands

Section 5: Display of visual cards

Row 1- Project Process

Define purpose and needs
Define alternatives
Assess impacts of alternatives
Prepare NEPA Documents
Obtain agency and public comments
Select preferred alternatives

Row 2- Public involvement

Public workshops - Nov 1995 & Jan/Feb. 1996
Newsletter - sent to people on mailing list
Public hearing - Spring 1996
Telephone calls/letters - Jeanette Lostracco & Gordon Stockstad

Row 3 - Project Schedule

Data collect
Define alternative: Oct - Jan
Impact Assessment: Dec - Feb
Prepare NEPA Document
Public Hearing: Feb - April
Prepare final decision document: May - June

Row 4 - Determine Needs

Reduce accidents (head on/sideswipe/truck)
Accidents per million vehicle miles (graph)
Reduce maintenance Costs ($8500/hr due to gravel surface)

Accommodate anticipated growth
Graph - average daily traffic
Increased recreation-access to Patrick Creek area
Upgrade connection with Airport Road and Foy's Lake
Reduce road dust
Improve inadequate sight distance
Improve open area for recovery zone

Row 5 - Known environmental issues
Change in visual character
Potential increase in traffic speeds
Potential wetlands impact
Noise impacts - individual residences and church
Parks - Herron Park, Foys Center
Potential for right-of-way needs
Others?

Row 6 - Contents of NEPA Doc.
Define purpose and need
Describe alternatives - no build/build/other
Land use impacts (existing land use change/induce development)
Farmland impacts (displacement of prime farmland)
Local impacts (school districts, recreation areas, churches, police & fire protection)
Relocation impacts (right-of-way/40 of 46 parcels have been purchased
Economic impacts (effects on development)

Row 7 - Transportation impacts
Pedestrian & bicycle
Traffic increase
Air quality impacts
Noise impacts (predicted noise change from existing)
Water resources impacts (fill in drainages/water quality impacts)
Wetlands impacts (fill in wetlands/avoid alts.)
Wildlife & fisheries impacts (hawks, woodpecker, elk, white-tailed deer, red tree squirrel, stellars jay, snow shoe hare))
Floodplain impacts

Row 8 - Endangered species
Closest known bald eagle nest 3 miles
Historic and archeological (a survey was conducted - no historical/archeological sites identified)

Section 4f (impacts to Parks or historic properties)
Hazardous materials (such as leaking underground storage tanks, pumps, etc.)
Visual impacts (changes to visual character)
Construction impact

Section 6: Project Schedule

Blow up of Newsletter Project Schedule Graph
Card Display of Project Schedule:
Data Collection
Define alternatives (Oct - Jan)
Impact Assessment (Dec - Feb)
Prepare NEPA Document
Public Hearing (Feb - April)
Prepare Final Decision Document (May - June)

Section 7: Comments

Air Quality/Dust

- Air Pollution - road is worse than potential manufacturing
- 404B1 appl'n needs to be attached to EA (overlay road) show graphically

Dust

- Costs a lot to reduce dust and maintain gravel. Oiling road creates grime on cars.
- Dust abatement needs to be added to the purpose and need.
- Dust is a big problem
- Dust is a problem
- Dust is too extreme to jog or walk near the road. Dust is like fog in winter.

Economic/Funding:

- If federal funds can be used to build a road that impacts resources and communities less - why can't this be built?
- Need to get right-of-way purchased <u>now</u> before land prices go up - then wait for funding to build road.
- The property taxes contributed by Orchard Ridge alone should give them some credible consideration
- No cost of money spent to 1996
- Total Cost ?

Construction:

- Needs improvements - but not too wide
- Pave only to Orchard Ridge and to Shelter Valley

- Presence of springs in roadway will cause more expense in construction.

Traffic/Speed:

- Kids will use improved road to race
- Concern - higher speed will result in severe accidents
- Improvements - Do not improve roadway speed, improve corners only.
- Steep track - Kids are racing (potentially between two RR crossings)
- Concerned with increased speeds. Will attract bikes, pedestrians which will conflict with higher speeds.
- Will be nice for bike/joggers etc. but are concerned about speeds.
- High school kids have keggers up in this area and drive fast and crazy.
- Concerned about speed.
- Kids may come up to race
- Concerned that kids will race around loop.
- People will drive faster than the posted speed limit (40 mph)
- The people who are concerned with speeding increases with improvements think the project would serve as a bypass, Kalispell bypass will serve this need better.

Traffic/Volume:

- Improved Foy's Canyon Road would create loop route for hikers/bikers. We support this.
- Bikers will be attracted to areas
- Not many people use this road. People moving here from out of town expect roads to be built to the same standards as the place they left.

Traffic/Safety:

- Potentially more pedestrian and bike accidents if paved
- Speed limit signs are not out there (they have been requested)
- Busses take up 3/4 of existing road.
- More pedestrians and bikes will use road (if improved)
- Higher deaths on Airport Road and Foy's lake due to improved roads.
- Not bigger road, just safer.
- Individual accident experience - I avoid canyon in the winter.
- Live on Patrick Creek Road - need improvements to create an improved safety condition for bikers, pedestrians, and horses.
- There has not been a fatal accident on this road.
- Historically, accidents have been minor on the Foy's Canyon section. Major accidents occur on paved sections.
- Have requested account data - has not been received - also emergency vehicle access.

Environmental (Wildlife, Wetlands & Aesthetics):

- Stop sign needed to avoid wetland (on Foy's Canyon @ Patrick Creek).
- Design into floodplain should require design modification.
- Flood plains - not correct @ Shelter Valley (Shelter View).
- Devar Gardner may have an enhancement or give us credit for wetland he is building behind his house. Visit with Devar on potential mitigation site.
- Save the tree (near Gardner's house) on roadway.
- Just south of wetland by Herron Park, perhaps shift west to avoid houses - will work well with Alternative A (Map drawn).
- Avoid impacting rock outcroppings in narrow section of canyon.
- Patrick Creek meadow - maintain wetland and minimize impacts.
- What is alternative to taking most possible wetlands? What alternatives have been analyzed to avoid wetlands and why have they been dropped?
- Road should be outside floodplain (prefer maintain existing alignment).
- 404 analysis wetland - needed at Patrick Creek and Birch Creek.
- What is state-of-art for floodplain avoidance?
- Check with Devar Gardner - Gardner Auction 752-7682
- No design to avoid floodplain shown.
- No build would avoid most wetland. Keep extreme curve and steep slope and add stop sign at Patrick Creek Road.

Social Concerns/Area growth:

- Area attracts teenagers who hangout and drink.
- Road should be outside floodplain (prefer maintaining the existing alignment).
- Improving road will encourage development and county will not be able to provide services, schools, fire, police, etc. County needs funds to provide this.
- Roadway needs to be improved but to a reduced standard. Improved road will encourage speeding, increased development and traffic and property values.
- Improve the areas that have the potential for high growth. Leave the canyon section unimproved.

Classification as secondary highway

- Should have stated "classification" of roadway in 2nd newsletter.
- Why traffic volumes qualify secondary classification?
- Favor the road, but question the secondary road standard necessity.
- Why is this road on secondary system? Federal/state does it meet criteria for secondary?
- Why was this road put on secondary system?
- Should not be on federal or state secondary system.
- We should do a study - to see it meets secondary criteria (as part of this process).

- Does not meet secondary road criteria.
- Design:
- Suggest a retaining wall opposite Storli's barn to be able to pull road.
- Through the meadow @ Orchard Ridge avoid ugly cut slopes into hillside.
- Needs improvements - but not too wide.
- Need X-draw just east of Orchard Ridge.
- Perhaps move C a little further north to stay out of the creek. (Map drawn)
- Build as originally engineered.
- Suggest trying to keep close to existing alignment and pavement. But corners need to be straightened out.
- Want original MDT design that money was already spent on.
- Still think we should pave the road the way it is.
- Provide connecting road (Foy's Canyon) should = Foy's Lake & Airport).
- New modifications are not an improvement on the original design. Original design is a good design.
- Stay closer to existing roadway to avoid new right-of-way purchases. Sweeping curves should be reduced to avoid new right-of-way needs.
- Reynolds -- concerned about removing trees, why won't the road move to the west to avoid property?

Alternatives

- Alternative 3A has the least impacts.
- Prefer modification D, less impacts to new right-of-way.
- Modification D would destroy value of property - topography is bad for this alternative.
- No alternative brought forward to mitigate Storli farm impacts (it's been eliminated).
- 2nd newsletter should have stated what alternatives were for what mitigation purposes - newsletter does not reflect adequate.
- Like Alternative A.
- Secondary roadway design would be preferable to 3D.
- Alternative A will help make it possible to shift west.
- Just south of wetland by Herron, perhaps shift west to avoid house. Will work well with Alternative A.
- Alternative A - support. It will miss wetland.
- Alternative A - oppose keep on existing alignment.
- Alternative A makes sense if right-of-way costs are not excessive.
- Supports Modification C - less impact to houses along existing road.
- People in Herron Trust don't want Alt A (preliminary feedback).
- Does not like Act. C (D. Gardner) - Does like Alt. A.

- Alternative 3A goes though the nature conservancy? There also maybe a new house on this alignment.
- Alternative C - support it. It would minimize wetland impact.
- Like Alternative A.
- Like Alternative C.
- Alternative A is the best one since it avoids wide cuts through the hill.
- Herron Trust has concerns with Alternative A now. Loss of farm ground is a problem. Will be more visual impact to pasture.
- Alternative A - good - avoids houses.
- Do It! (The project) - Alt. A & C will save money.
- Both modifications A & C are a vast improvement and should be advanced - It will improve safety including school bus safety.

Misc.

- Disagree with dropping of T-intersection.
- Why should money be spent for other than paving the existing road?
- Don't like- pave existing road as it's a ditch.
- What is criteria for putting this road on priority list to begin with?
- Consistent terminology (traffic)
- Like the project all in all.
- Horses are a concern - they typically use ditches.
- Road needs to be paved.
- Potholes are a problem.
- 1st workshop was held during hunting season.
- Angry at County Commissioners for wanting to eliminate this project. This is an important project.
- Leave as is. Minimize improvements. Just pave existing road.
- Pave road in its present location.
- Pave road definitely.
- County should have paved Foy's Canyon themselves and put another more important road on the priority list.
- Would like to see it improved to standards at both ends. It is a hazard as is.
- Would like to sees what is being proposed. Paved to new standards.
- Request farmland impact and mitigation analysis - focus on Storli farm.
- Just do it!
- Other questions have not gotten response...(written to MDT)
- Don't let vocal minority stop project.
- Quit messing around. Do it!
- Lots of survey done - why no action?
- Winnifred Storli has not received a response to her last letter.

- JoAnne & Mark Miller, P.O. Box 1724, Kalispell, MT 59903-1724. They would like aerial photograph of Foy's Canyon Roadway (same as were presented at Public Workshop) - they live at 3120 Airport Road
- Through meadow - splits farm land into unusable pieces.
- Suggest that road improved to Orchard Ridge and to Patrick Creek but leave Canyon alone.
- Proposal not advanced - I was interested particularly in the down sealed option.
- 404 permit application should be prepared concurrently with the NEPA document
- No drainage on existing road.
- Which parcels remain to be purchased?
- What happens to abandoned right-of-way.
- More information should be in the newsletter.
- Map on newsletter is misleading.
- Aerials are misleading - show width of slopes.
- Build the road.
- Worst part of road - near church - blind curves (avoid route).

pubmtg2.min

AGENDA

Foy's Canyon Road Public Workshop
February 7, 1996
5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Outlaw Inn - Kalispell

Open House Format (No Formal Presentation)

- ❑ Review graphics and information throughout the room

- ❑ Station Information:

  - Introduction to Study
  - Purpose and Need
  - Comments from November 15, Public Workshop and Correspondence
  - Questions Raised by the Public and Responses
  - Known Environmental Issues
  - Traffic Data
  - Future Land Use Plans
  - Roadway Improvement Alternatives
  - Project Schedule
  - Comments

How to Provide Input at the Meeting

- ❑ Project team members have name tags - give them your comments or ask them questions.

- ❑ Comment sheets (at the front table) - fill out and put in the comment box.

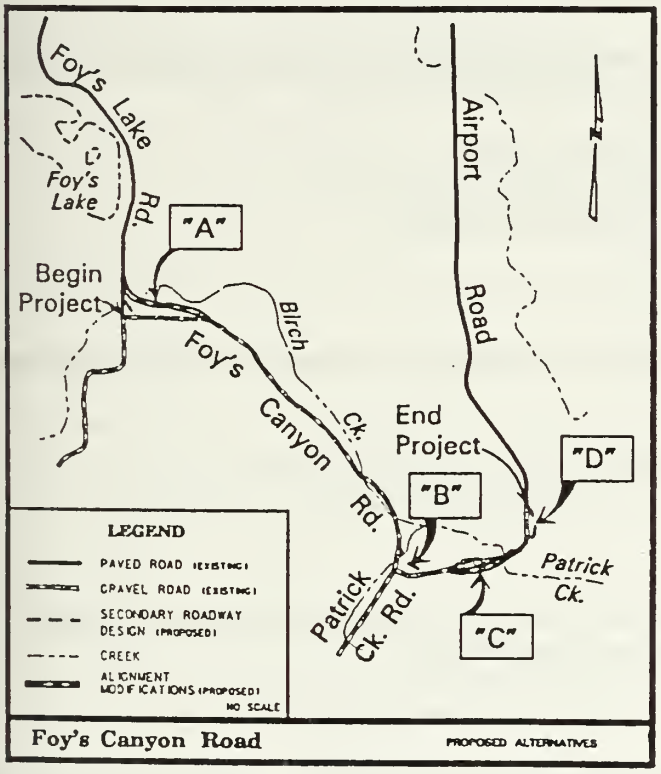
- ❑ Comment sheets - take home to fill out and mail in.

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop #2
February 7, 1996
Handout

A number of alternatives for improving Foy's Canyon Road were initially developed and considered during the design process at the first public workshop held on November 15, 1995.

The alternatives recommended to be advanced for further analysis include the **No-Build Alternative**, and **Secondary Roadway Design** with modifications **A** and **C**. The "build" alternatives are displayed on the map located below. Descriptions including advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, the reasons for either advancing or not advancing the alternative, are on the bottom of this page and the reverse side of this handout.



Foy's Canyon Road
Proposed Alternatives

ALTERNATIVES 1-5

1. NO-BUILD (Advanced)

- No changes would be made to reduce the potential for accidents or to increase off-road features.
- Roadway dust would not be reduced, and maintenance needs would remain the same.

2. PAVE EXISTING SURFACE (Not Advanced)

- Provides an asphalt surface for the existing roadway with no changes in ROW, curves, and off-road features.
- No changes would be made to reduce the potential for accidents or to increase off-road safety features.
- Possible underground springs in canyon roadway section would significantly affect operating conditions and maintenance needs if they occur. Maintenance needs would be reduced if the springs do not appear.
- Not advanced because it would not meet purpose and need for the project.

3. PROPOSED SECONDARY ROADWAY DESIGN (Advanced)

- Secondary roadway with a 40 mph design standard that meets Flathead County and State design requirements.
- Results in improved travel surface, provision of sight distance, vertical grades all less than 7%, and reduction in accidents.
- Widened and flattened side slopes provide an emergency recovery area for out-of-control vehicles.
- Results in impacts to wetlands; results in reduction in maintenance.

3A Modification A, Milepost 3.8-4.5 (Advanced)

- Proposed alignment shifts north to traverse the open field in an easterly direction for about 1/4 mile at approximate milepost 3.5, then curves southward to rejoin the proposed alignment at approximate milepost 4.4.
- Alignment is not a high accident zone, and would be more distant from the Foy's Community Center.
- Results in potentially reduced wetland impact, reduced vertical grades and earthwork requirements.
- Results in impacts to farmlands.

3B Modification B, Milepost 6.0-7.0 (Not Advanced)

- Proposed alignment shifts north to traverse the hillside above Patrick Creek between milepost 6.25 and 6.8, and rejoins the proposed alignment between milepost 6.9 and 7.0 - near Wild Rose Trail.
- Results in potentially reduced wetlands impact.
- Traverses a slope exceeding 20% where the alignment follows the hillside.
- Results in noise, visual, and other roadway-related impacts to Wild Rose Trail residents.
- Not advanced because of impacts to residential area and steep grade of alignment.

3C Modification C, Milepost 6.7-7.0 (Advanced)

- Proposed alignment shifts easterly at the existing S-curves and rejoins the proposed alignment at approximate milepost 7.0.
- Results in potentially reduced wetlands impact.
- Although located in the high accident zone, the alignment should improve existing safety conditions.

3D Modification D, Milepost 7.0-7.5 (Not Advanced)

- Proposed alignment shifts northwesterly, further up the hillside above the existing roadway and rejoins the proposed alignment at approximate milepost 7.5 before the large stand of coniferous trees.
- Results in severe physical impacts to residential properties, including potential need to impact a structure.
- Not advanced because of severe impacts to residents.

4. PROPOSED SECONDARY ROADWAY WITH DESIGN EXCEPTIONS A and B (Not Advanced)

- Neither a proposed horizontal curve design exception at the project beginning (A) between the north-south Foy's Lake Road and the east-west Foy's Canyon Road, nor a modified traffic control at the Patrick Creek Road intersection (B) would provide a consistent roadway for the traveling public, and neither design exception would meet driver expectancy, thus increasing the potential for accidents in this area.
- Engineering recommendation would not support design exceptions A or B because their need is not justified.
- Not advanced because of safety problems - does not meet purpose and need.

5. NON-SECONDARY ROAD - 30 MPH DESIGN (Not Advanced)

- This modification to the existing roadway would reduce roadway dust and maintenance needs.
- 30 mph design may reduce the potential for accidents.
- 30 mph design is not compatible with the roads on either end (Foy's Lake and Airport Roads).
- Not advanced because it does not meet purpose and need, and is not eligible for federal or state funding.

Foy's Canyon Road

COMMENT SHEET

I have the following comments or questions about the Foy's Canyon Road project:

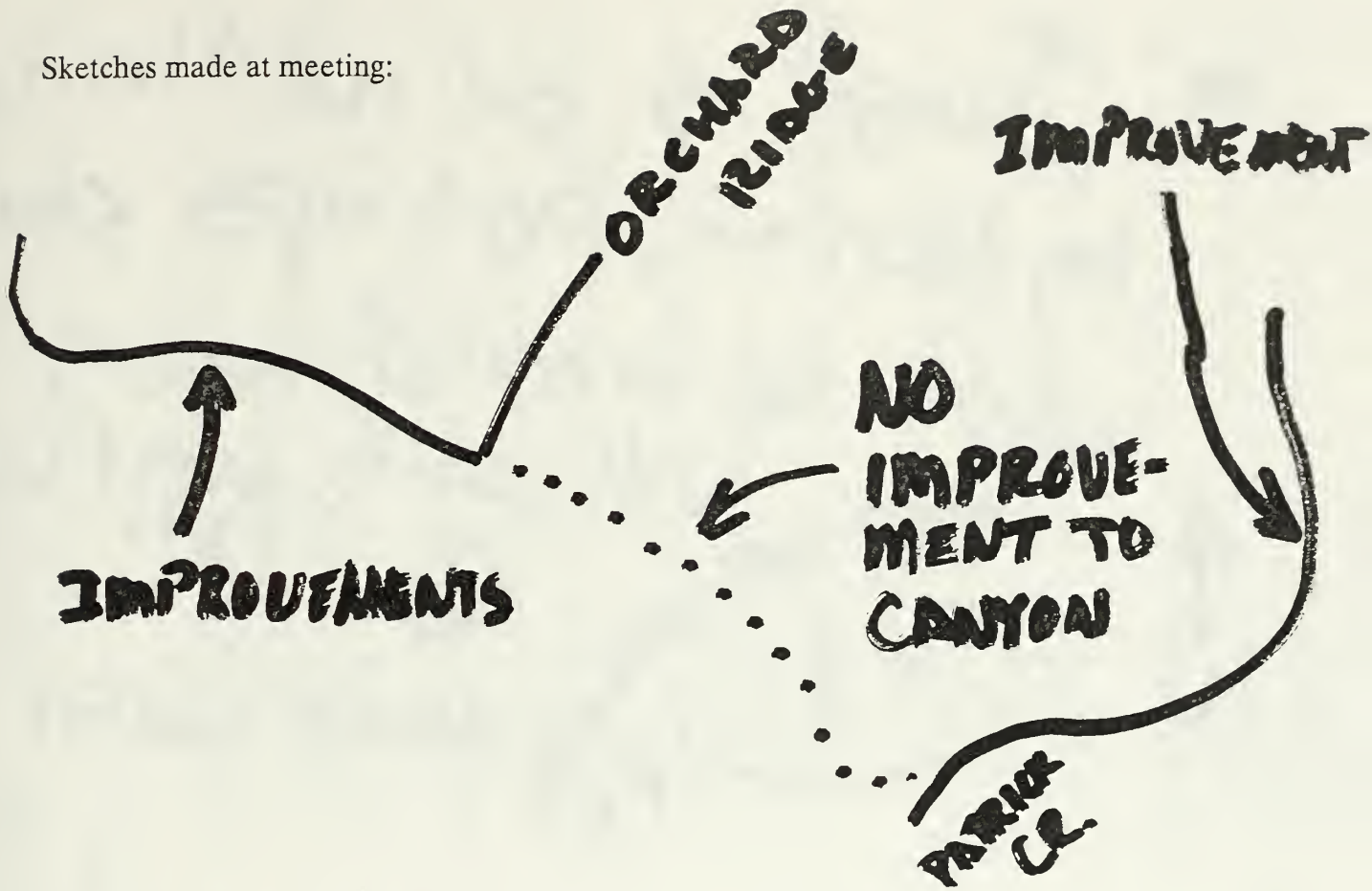
Name _____

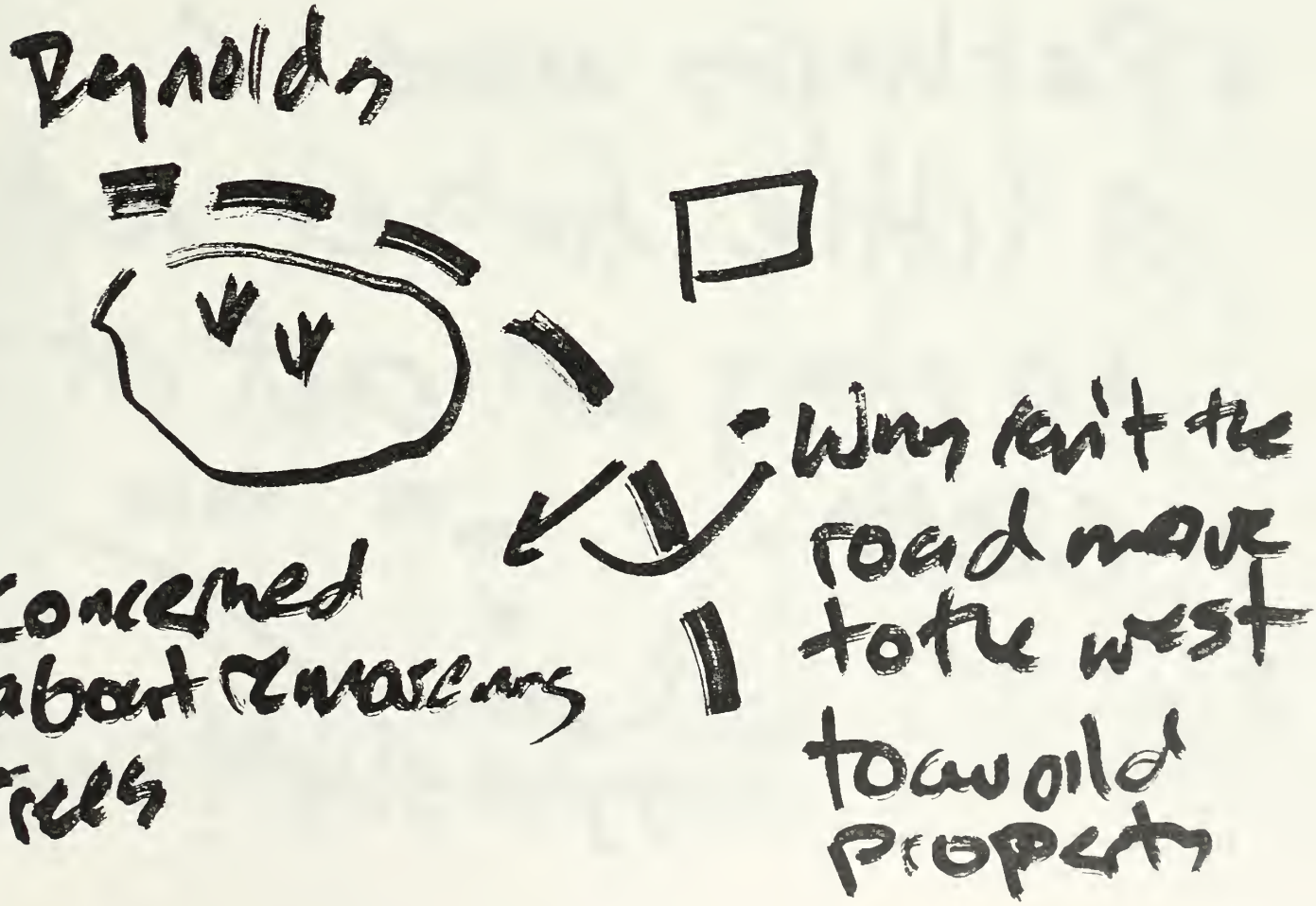
Address _____

Phone _____

(above information is optional)

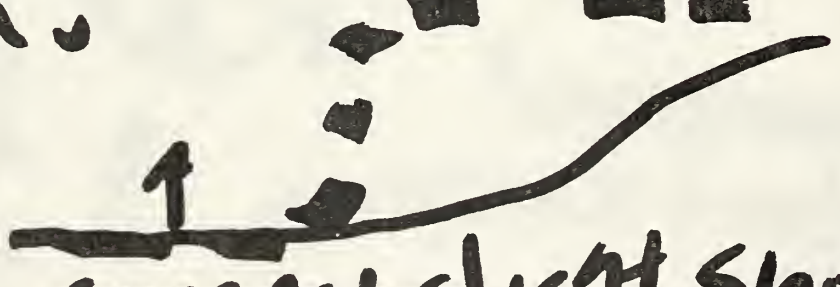
Sketches made at meeting:





- Just s. of wetland by Herron, perhaps shift west to avoid hous will work well w/ "A".

- Perhaps move C a little further north to stay out of the creek.



suggest slight shift.

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
February 7, 1996

SIGN-IN

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♦ Lee Reynolds
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KALISPELL MT 59904 — 257-5133
City, State, Zip — Phone

♦ Sharlon L. Willows, C.L.A.
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♦ Alan Olson (put on mailing list)
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Mailing Address
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City, State, Zip — Phone

♦ Ross Hadley (put on
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♦ Name (please print)
Mailing Address
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Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
February 7, 1996

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(on list)
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City, State, Zip — Phone

Name (please print)
Mailing Address
City, State, Zip — Phone

Tom Jentz
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City, State, Zip Kalispell
758-5980
Phone

Anthony A. Bucchel
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752-5835
City, State, Zip — Phone

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
February 7, 1996

SIGN-IN

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Pam Ellason
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[illegible] 755-7376
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Winnifred Storli
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Mailing Address

City, State, Zip Phone

Per Storli
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City, State, Zip Phone

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City, State, Zip Phone

Bruce I. Stewart
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330 Orchard Ridge
Mailing Address
Kalispell Mont. 59901 257-0156
City, State, Zip Phone

Foy's Canyon Road

Public Workshop
February 7, 1996

SIGN-IN

people attended
40 3?

◆ Name (please print): Dawan M Gardner (use both addresses)
Mailing Address: P.O. 943 / 3095 Airport Rd.
City, State, Zip: Kalispell Mt. Phone: 752-7682

◆ Name (please print): Sarah M. Gardner
Mailing Address: 3095 Airport Rd
City, State, Zip: Kal. MT 59901 Phone: 752-6377

◆ Name (please print): Vicky Gardner
Mailing Address: 3095 Airport Rd.
City, State, Zip: Kalispell, mt Phone: 752-7703

◆ Name (please print): Rick Hall
Mailing Address: Daily Inter Lake
City, State, Zip: Kalispell Phone:

◆ Name (please print): Jackie + Dick Chowning
Mailing Address: 3080 Airport Rd
City, State, Zip: Kalispell Phone: 756-7987

◆ Name (please print): Marsha Shepard
Mailing Address: 919-6th Ave. East
City, State, Zip: Kalispell, MT 59901 Phone: 755-9465

◆ Name (please print): JOHN HOLEZ
Mailing Address: 100 BRANDY LN
City, State, Zip: Phone: 755-8911

◆ Name (please print): Pat Holetz
Mailing Address: 100 Brandy Ln
City, State, Zip: Kalispell Mt. 59901 Phone: 755-8911

◆ Name (please print):
Mailing Address:
City, State, Zip: Phone:

◆ Name (please print):
Mailing Address:
City, State, Zip: Phone:

Foy's Canyon Road

Newsletter #2 January 1996

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS CONTINUES

The first public workshop for this project was held on November 15, 1995. Several comments were received at this workshop, including:

- ☐ Minimize impacts to wetlands, streams, floodplains.
- ☐ Minimize impacts to property owners.
- ☐ The road is currently dangerous--make it safer.
- ☐ Proceed with proposed improvements.
- ☐ The road does not need to be improved.
- ☐ Dust is a problem.

Several alternatives were developed and all improvement alternatives were evaluated, taking into account public comments received and other factors. As a result of this evaluation, the following alternatives are being advanced for further consideration in the Environmental Assessment (also see map on reverse side):

- ☐ No-Build
- ☐ Secondary Roadway
- ☐ Secondary Roadway with Modification A at Milepost 3.8-4.5
- ☐ Secondary Roadway with Modification C at Milepost 6.7-7

STAY INVOLVED

The second of three public workshops for the Foy's Canyon Road project is scheduled for:

Wednesday, February 7, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
In the Remington Room of the Outlaw Inn *
1701 Highway 93 South, Kalispell

The purpose of this second workshop is to discuss the improvement alternatives being advanced, initial results of the environmental analysis, and to receive public comments on the alternatives. A public hearing is planned for Spring 1996 to receive public comment on the NEPA document and the preferred alternative.

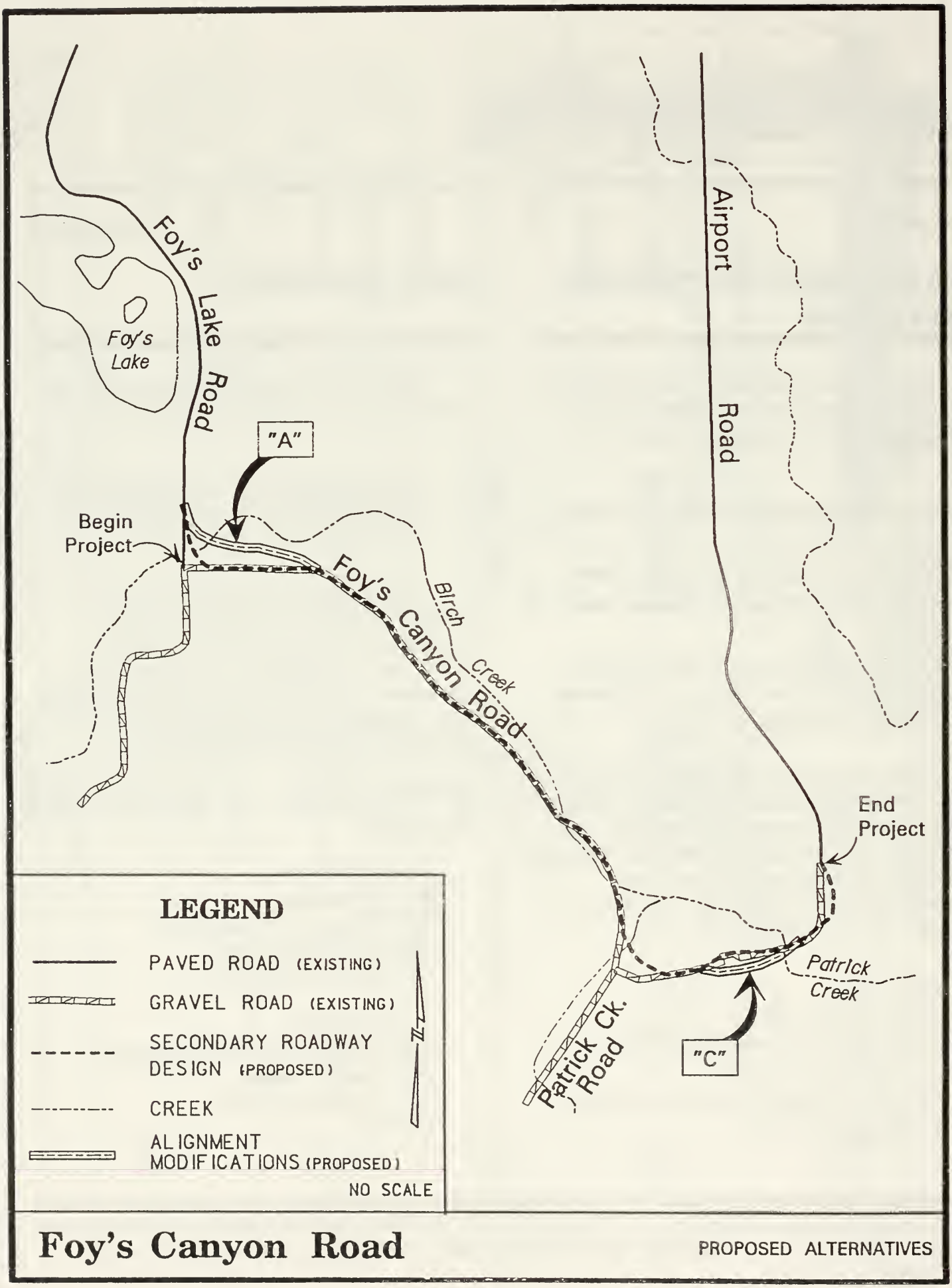
For more information or to be placed on the mailing list, contact:

Jeanette Lostracco
Carter & Burgess
113 W. Front Street, Suite 105
Missoula, Montana 59802
721-1471 or 303-820-4808

or

Gordon Stockstad
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620
444-7223

* In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Outlaw Inn is accessible to disabled persons. For more information or for those who require accommodations for disabilities, call Stefanie Jakober at 721-1471.


Foy's Lake Road
Foy's Lake
"A"
Begin Project
Foy's Canyon Road
Birch Creek
Airport Road
End Project
Patrick Creek
Patrick Ck. Road
"C"
LEGEND
PAVED ROAD (EXISTING)
GRAVEL ROAD (EXISTING)
SECONDARY ROADWAY DESIGN (PROPOSED)
CREEK
ALIGNMENT MODIFICATIONS (PROPOSED)
NO SCALE
N
Foy's Canyon Road
PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

This article was reprinted from the Montana Department of Transportation Planning Newsline - January 1996 to provide information regarding secondary roads.

What Are Secondary Roads?

The "Secondary Highway System" includes those highways that have been functionally classified by the department as either minor arterial or major collector and have been selected by the Montana Transportation Commission, in co-operation with the Board of County Commissioners, to be placed on the Secondary Highway System.

Who Is The Program Managed By?

Secondary Roads Engineer - Gary Larson (406-444-6110)

Where Does The Money Come From?

Federal Aid is divided into two categories: the National Highway System (NHS) and the Surface Transportation Program (STP). Funding for the Secondary Road Program is suballocated from STP funds. Funding is 86.58% federal with a 13.42% state match. 1995 Federal Fiscal Year funding was approximately $15 million statewide.

How Is The Money Distributed?

According to Montana law, funds are apportioned to the 56 counties based on the following 4 factors: (Each factor is a ratio of that county to the total).

- County land area
- Rural population
- Rural road mileage
- The value of all rural lands

What Highways Are Eligible?

Highways must be classified as "Secondary Highway" (See "What are Secondary Roads?")

What Improvements Are Eligible?

Any improvement to the roadway which improves the structure of the road is eligible for Secondary funding. Maintenance activity is not eligible. Eligible improvements include reconstruction, overlays, bridge rehabilitation or reconstruction, pipe replacement, improved railroad crossing surfaces, and epoxy striping.

Who Sets The Project Priorities?

County commissioners establish priorities based on available funds. All priorities are documented via a completed SR-1 form which details route, milepost, scope of work, and county concurrence.

What Is The Review & Approval Process?

Each project is reviewed by MDT's District Engineer as well as the Secondary Roads Engineer. All projects are then included in the "Statewide Transportation Improvement Program" and subjected to public review. As custodian of Montana transportation system, the Montana Transportation Commission must ultimately approve all proposed improvements to the Secondary Highway System. Final approval occurs in July or August of each year.

What Is The Programming Process?

Following an internal review, MDT's Fiscal Programming Section submits a program request to the Federal Highway Administration. FHWA reviews and than commits federal participation.

Who Does Project Design, Development And Construction?

MDT allows each county the option of a consultant design or MDT design. MDT encourages counties to retain consultants for such projects. After the decision is made, preliminary engineering activities begin and ultimately the project is constructed.

Carter & Burgess
113 W. Front Street, Suite 105
Missoula, Montana 59802

The second of the three public workshops for the Foy's Canyon Road Project is scheduled for:

Wednesday, February 7, 5:30-8:00 p.m.
In The Remington Room of the Outlaw Inn
1701 Highway 93 South, Kalispell

Foy's Canyon Road

Newsletter #1 November 1995

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Environmental Process Initiated

The Flathead County Commissioners have selected and prioritized Foy's Canyon Road for secondary roadway improvements. In response to the Commissioner's prioritization, the Montana Department of Transportation has hired Carter & Burgess, Inc. to initiate the process for assessing impacts of the proposed improvements.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and document will examine environmental impacts of the proposed improvements. If appropriate, modifications to the design discussed with the public at various meetings over the past several years will also be examined as part of this process.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Get Involved!

An important part of this study is a public involvement program to inform citizens of the environmental process, progress, and results, and to provide an opportunity for residents to express their concerns and ask questions.

This newsletter is the first for the Foy's Canyon Road project and announces the first of three public meetings. The first workshop is scheduled for:

Wednesday, November 15, 5:30 - 8:00 P.M.
in the Remington Room of the **Outlaw Inn***
1701 Highway 93 South, Kalispell

The purpose of the workshop is to receive public comments and questions regarding proposed improvements to Foy's Canyon Road. The workshop will be held in an open house format so that, you will have an opportunity to discuss concerns and issues individually with project team members. No formal presentations will be given, you are welcome to attend anytime between 5:30 and 8:00 P.M.

A second workshop is planned for early 1996 to discuss alternatives and initial results of the environmental analysis and to receive public coment on the alternatives. A public hearing is planned for spring 1996 to receive public comment on the NEPA document and the preferred alternative.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

More Information?

For more information or to be placed on the mailing list, contact:

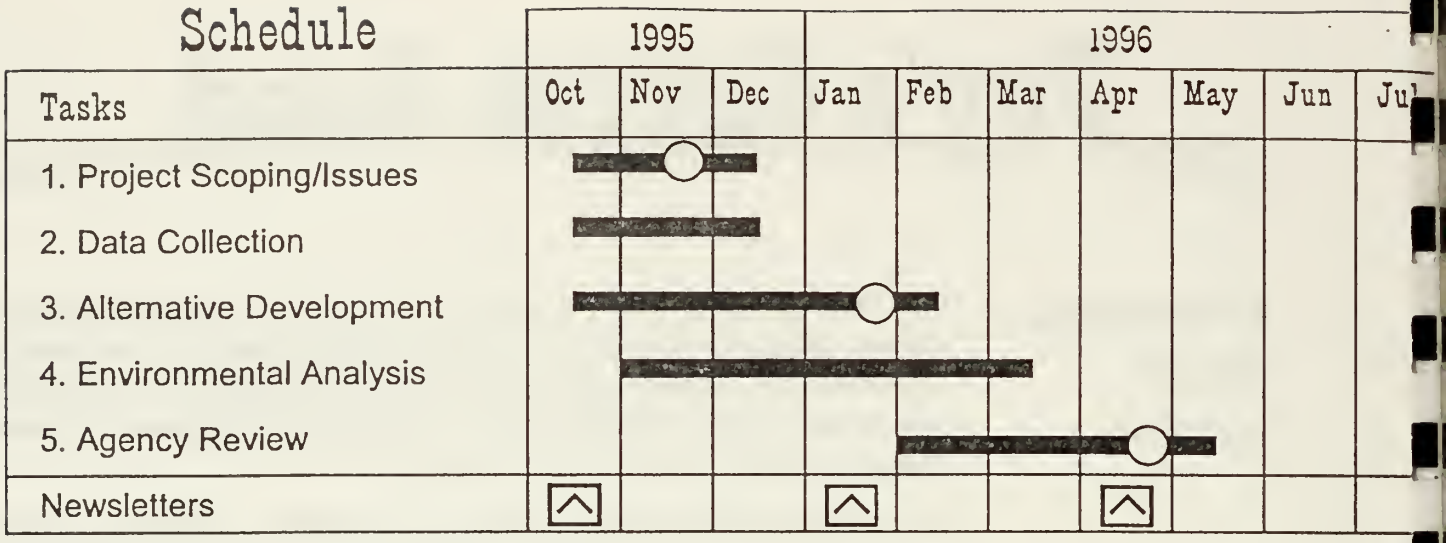
Jeanette Lostracco
Carter & Burgess
125 West Spruce
Missoula, MT 59802
721-1471 or (303) 820-4808

OR

Gordon Stockstad
Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
444-7223

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Outlaw Inn is accessible to disabled persons. For more information or for those who require accommodations for disabilities, call Stephanie Jackober at 721-1471.

Schedule



Foy's Canyon Road Environmental Process

First Public Workshop

Wednesday, November 15, 1995

5:30 - 8:00 P.M.

Outlaw Inn ♦ Remington Room

1701 Highway 93 South ♦ Kalispell

Carter & Burgess
125 West Spruce
Missoula, MT 59802

Stamp

Appendix B

Agency Correspondence

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
80 LOWER VALLEY ROAD
KALISPELL, MONTANA 59901 PHONE: 752-4242

TO: ANDREW GIBSON
CARTER BURGESS
216 16TH ST MALL
DENVER COLORADO 80202

NOVEMBER 9,1995

DEAR MR GIBSON,

AS PER YOUR REQUEST I HAVE STUDIED THE LOCATION FOR THE PROPOSED HIGHWAY PROJECT AS SHOWN ON THE MAP YOU PROVIDED ME. EXISTING SOILS INFORMATION INDICATES THAT PRIME FARMLANDS DO EXIST IN THE PROJECT AREA. PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED A MAP WITH PRIME FARMLAND OUTLINED FOR THIS AREA.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL.

SINCERELY,

RICH PETERSEN
RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST

USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service
Kalispell Soil Survey
30 Lower Valley Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

Memo to: Andrew Gibson, Carter-Burgess
Memo from: Gregory L. Snell
Soil Sclentist Specialist
Subject: Foys Canyon Road - Prime Farmland
Date: March 29, 1996

I visited the proposed route of the Foys Canyon Road yesterday. The delineation observed in November was accurate, but not within the proposed right-of-way. The areas that appeared to be topographically suitable for prime farmland are either too wet, too frosty, or lack the water-holding capacity to qualify for prime farmland. This area is currently unsurveyed but formal soils information will be available within two years.

OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL # of pages ▶ 1

To Andrew Gibson	From Greg Snell
Dept./Agency Carter Burgess	Phone # 406-752-4731
Fax # 1303 820 2401	Fax # 406-758-2220

NSN 7540-01-317-7368 5099-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Montana Department
of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

November 22, 1995

Paul Putz
State Historic Preservation Office
1410 8th Avenue
P.O. box 201202
Helena, MT 59620-1202

CONCUR
MONTANA SHPO
DATE 6 Dec 95 SIGNED

Subject: RS 503-1(4)4
Foys Canyon Road
Control No. 0733

Enclosed is the cultural resource report, CRABS and site forms for the above project. Heritage Research Center of Missoula conducted the original cultural resource survey in 1985. Five sites (24FH193, 24FH194, 24FH196, 24FH199 and 24FH202) were recommended as ineligible to the National Register; your office agreed with those recommendations. Because a decade had passed since the original survey, Kathy McKay re-evaluated the five previously recorded sites and inventoried two additional properties. For one site (24FH768), the owner requested that the site form be kept confidential; it is included as a separate enclosure. McKay recommends, and we agree, that the five previously recorded sites are still ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. She has also recommended (and we agree) that both 24FH197 and 24FH768 are ineligible for the National Register. We request your concurrence.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 444-6258.

Jon Axline

Jon Axline, Historian
Environmental Services

Enclosures

cc: James Weaver, P.E., Missoula District Administrator
Carl Peil, P.E., Preconstruction Bureau
Joel Marshik, P.E., Environmental Services
Gordon Stockstad, Resources Section
Jeanette Lostracco, Carter-Burgess w/attachment
Tony Incashola, Flathead Culture Committee "
Patricia Hewankorn, Kootenai Culture Committee "

Flathead County
Board of Commissioners

(406) 758-5503

Howard W. Gipe
Sharon L. Stratton
Robert W. Watne

April 12, 1996

Mr. Scott Richmond
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

RE: Foys Canyon Road Project

Dear Mr. Richmond:

In response to your questions regarding the Foys Canyon Road project, please be advised we will not make any recommendations for alternatives. However, we will consider the final recommendations of the consultants and the Montana Department of Transportation.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA

Sharon L. Stratton, Chairman

Robert W. Watne, Member

Howard W. Gipe, Member

FCBC:ecn

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1420 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620

March 1, 1996

Jeanette Lostracco, AICP
Project Manager
Carter & Burgess, Inc.
216 - 16th Street Mall
Denver, Colorado 80202

Re: RS 503- 1(4)4
Control No. 0733
Foy's Canyon Road (SW of Kalispell)

Dear Jeanette:

We have reviewed the above-mentioned proposed project area and would like to bring to your attention the existence of Lone Pine State Park near or in the project boundary of the proposed project. The project report you provided identified Flathead County Herron property as being adjacent to the project and that it will not be impacted by the proposed project.

Both of these properties are protected by Section 6(f) of the LWCF Act. If any part of the Lone Pine SP property will be affected by the project, we will need to work with National Park Service to mitigate the impacts.

Let me know if you feel there may be any potential impacts, you can contact me at 406-444-3750. Also, please keep Dan Vincent, our Region 1 Supervisor in Kalispell informed as the project develops.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen McDonald

MARY ELLEN McDONALD
Program Officer
Resource & Recreation Bureau
Parks Division

cc: Region 1 Supervisor
Bob Norwood, Flathead County

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Region One, 490 N. Meridian
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 752-5501
FAX: (406) 257-0349
Ref: MD025.96
November 21, 1995

Ginger Thomas Consulting
502 Livingston Avenue
Missoula, MT 59801

Dear Ginger:

On November 20, we conducted a quick survey of Patrick Creek at the upper road crossing. Using a backpack electrofishing unit, we sampled roughly 100-150 meters of stream. This effort was in response to your request for fisheries information. Although this survey did shed some light on the fisheries component, I must stress that this quick look should not be considered a complete survey of the drainage. A more extensive survey is needed to determine presence or absence of trout species in Patrick Creek.

We collected 29 eastern brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and observed a number of other trout which we were unable to capture. As you are aware the streambanks are a brush jungle, making netting fish difficult. Captured brook trout ranged in size from 62 to 152 mm in total length. The resident trout appeared to be fairly abundant, although no density estimate was attempted. We did not capture any westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*), although the survey was not extensive and did not determine absence.

I hope this information is helpful. If I uncover more fisheries information, I will pass it along. If you have questions, please call.

Sincerely,

Mark Deleray
Fisheries Biologist

/ss