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of Engineers
Walla Walla District

Joint News Release

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Idaho Department of Lands hold joint public hearing on Sand Creek Byway, Aug. 12

Walla Walla, Wash., -- Officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District and the Idaho Department of Lands will hold a joint public hearing on Idaho Transportation Department's proposed U.S. Highway 95 Sand Creek Byway.

The hearing will be held at 6 p.m. Aug. 12, in the commons area at the Sandpoint High School, 410 South Division Avenue, in Sandpoint, Idaho. All interested parties are invited to attend.

The purpose of the hearing is to solicit public comment on the project. This will assist the Corps and the Idaho Department of Lands in reviewing the applications for permits to construct the Byway project.

The Byway project is being proposed by Idaho Transportation Department to improve traffic flow through the city of Sandpoint by constructing a realigned two-lane U.S. Highway 95 roadway with an auxiliary southbound lane and a new interchange at U.S. Highway 2.

Other components of the project include a bicycle pathway, shoreline extension (fill pad) to provide a buttress for the highway embankment between Bridge and Cedar Streets and landscaping. Rock will be placed along the bank of Sand Creek to stabilize and protect the bank and pathway from erosion.

Three habitat enhancement areas will provide seasonal habitat along the creek for pathway users and wildlife, and serve to mitigate for the loss of open water area in Sand Creek.

According to Barbara Bengé, a regulatory specialist with the Corps' Walla Walla District, the Department of the Army permit will be evaluated under the authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

"The Corps is interested mainly on comments concerning impacts to navigation and aquatic resources and will leave local landuse planning issues to local agencies," said Bengé.

Idaho Department of Lands is reviewing their application under the Lake Protection Act and is interested in the protection of property, navigation, fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, recreation, aesthetics, and water quality weighed against the benefits to be derived from the proposed project.

The meeting will begin with introductions and the applicant will briefly describe the proposed activity followed by a period for the public to provide both written and verbal comments.

Everyone will be requested to sign an attendance card as they enter the room if they wish to speak. Speakers will be called on in the following order: elected officials, organizations, individuals, and government officials. Only testimony that directly relates to the proposal will be accepted. There will be no cross examination during the hearing. Written comments on the Sand Creek Byway will be accepted until Aug. 23.

For more information, contact Bengé at (509) 527-7153 or Jim Brady, Idaho Department of Lands at (208) 666-8607.

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