

# OR 140: Ritter Road – Deer Run Road (Bly Mountain) Project

Last updated: July 23, 2009

## Project Location

The project is located approximately 25 miles east of Klamath Falls on OR 140 between Mileposts 25.17 and 34.43 (see Vicinity Map).

## Project Purpose

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve operational conditions on a 9.4-mile segment of OR 140 between Ritter Road and Deer Run Road. The primary purpose is to improve safety and ensure the roadway can continue to serve as a lifeline route to area residents and road users. In addition, the purpose includes upgrading OR 140 in this area to address truck length restrictions.



A narrow, icy roadway common in this section of OR 140.

## Background

OR 140 is heavily used by the trucking industry to transport goods and services, particularly the transport of hay, logs and other forest products. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the South Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation and the trucking industry would like to see improvements to OR 140 because of its economic importance to the southern part of the State. It is an important economic transportation link between Jackson, Klamath and Lake Counties.

## Why this Project is Needed

Currently the highway cannot effectively function as a Statewide Freight Route due to its substandard horizontal and vertical alignment that restricts truck lengths. The substandard alignment reduces overall mobility and safety in this corridor. Trucks longer than 65 feet are not permitted on this stretch of OR 140.

The existing pavement condition rating for this segment of highway is poor, with poor drainage contributing to sub-grade failure. The pavement is rutting, raveling, and cracking, and has many patched areas. This section of OR 140 has exceeded its design life. As a result, this section of highway is costly to maintain with an average annual estimated maintenance cost of \$55,000.

There are a number of other problems that need to be corrected in this section of OR 140. There are sight distance problems at the OR 140/Bly Mountain Cutoff intersection. Other safety concerns include: narrow travel lanes, substandard shoulder width, icy surface conditions in winter at several shaded locations, rocks regularly falling onto the roadway from some cut slopes, and roadside hazards (e.g., rocks protruding adjacent to the road) that increase crash potential.

This section of highway is experiencing a large number of crashes relative to other segments of the highway and similar highways statewide. From 2003 through 2006, there were a total 30 crashes, which resulted in 2 fatalities and 18 injuries. The crashes were predominantly vehicles hitting fixed objects, such as trees or rocks, off the roadway. Grades and curves were the primary reasons for these off-roadway crashes. The existing Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on this highway segment is approximately 1,000, with trucks representing about 25% of that traffic.

## What is being Proposed

To address the problems along this section of OR 140, the following actions are being proposed:

- Straighten curves and widen the roadway, including shoulders.
- Repave the entire 9.4 mile segment of highway.
- Remove obstacles in the clear zone, which is the area beyond the edge of the highway that allows a driver to stop safely or regain control of a vehicle that leaves the roadway.
- Install new or upgrade existing guardrails.
- Upgrade existing signage to meeting current standards.

These changes will eliminate the length restriction, provide better sight distance, and improve the overall safety of this section of OR 140.

## Environmental Analysis

A number of natural resources, including wetlands, fish and wildlife, and cultural/historic resources found in the project area will be analyzed. The project crosses private lands, state park lands, and federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service. To help address these issues, the project team includes representatives from Klamath County, BLM, Forest Service and Oregon State Parks.

An environmental assessment has begun that will look at two alternatives: No-Build and Build. The Build alternative for this project will primarily involve widening the roadway and correcting many curves along the existing alignment. Minor design options may be considered. The No-Build alternative would not make any changes to the current highway (status quo), and is used as a means of comparison to the Build alternative.

The public will have a chance to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment when it is released in the fall of 2009.

## How to Get Involved

If you would like to be added to the project mailing list, be notified of upcoming meetings, or provide comments, visit our [Public Comment and Interest Page](#).

## Project Timeline

Environmental Assessment (EA) released	Fall 2009
Hearing	Fall 2009
Final EA and Decision	Winter 2009/2010
Design	2010/2011
Contract Bid Let	2012
Construction	2012/2013

## Contacts

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