



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division
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Sterling, VA 20166

**Environmental Assessment for the Big Spring Bridge Project
Public Scoping—Comments Accepted Until May 30, 2014**



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Missouri



Scoping Newsletter
Public Comment Period Open Until May 30, 2014

Environmental Assessment for the Big Spring Bridge Project

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is initiating an Environmental Assessment for the improvement of the Big Spring Bridge in Carter County, Missouri. The existing glulam timber bridge was constructed in 1977, and has deteriorated over time. Big Spring Bridge provides access to the Big Spring area, which includes the Big Spring, a campground, a picnic area, a dining lodge, trails and housekeeping cabins. Big Spring is the largest spring in Missouri.

The Environmental Assessment will analyze a range of alternatives. These alternatives include: repair of the existing bridge; replacement of the existing bridge with a similar type of timber bridge; and, replacement of the existing bridge with a different type of bridge, such as concrete.



Project History

The Big Spring Bridge across the Big Spring was originally constructed in 1977. The bridge is a timber glulam bridge. Glulam is a glued laminated timber comprised of a number of layers of timber bonded together with adhesives. The timber has decayed over time.



The timber bridge deck is covered with asphalt pavement. Water drains through the asphalt and becomes trapped against the timber deck surface, promoting decay.

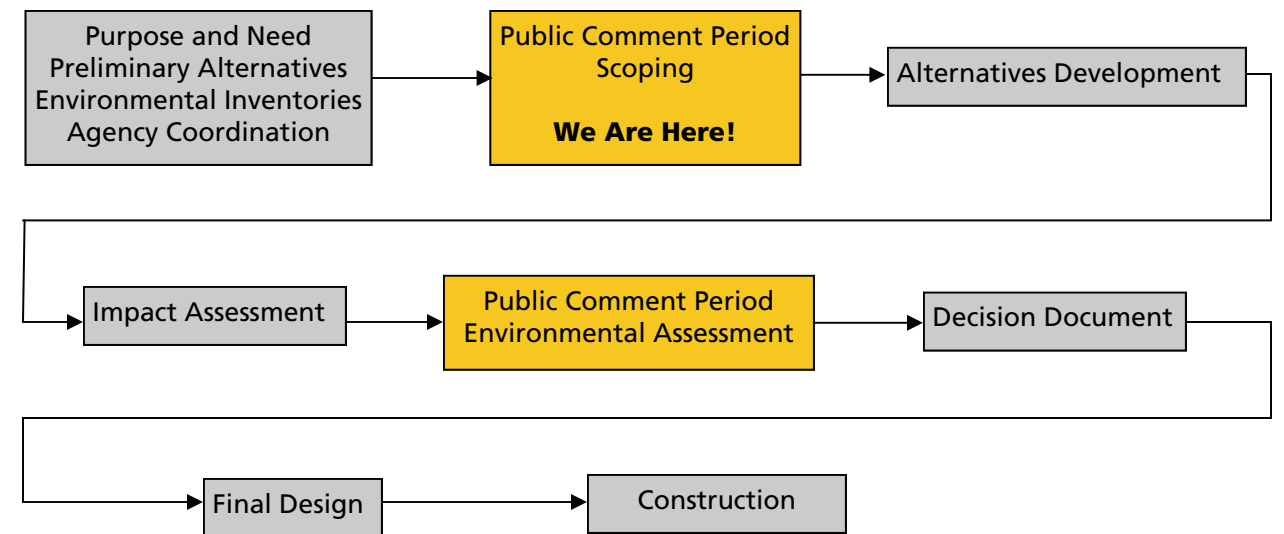
The deck panel overhangs have experienced extensive decay. The decay extends throughout the overhangs, and vegetation growth is present in some locations.



There has been a loss of backfill material at the north and south abutments. The loss of backfill creates sinkholes in the approach roadways.

NEPA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration to consider potential environmental consequences of transportation improvements, and to document the analysis and make the information available to the public. Public input is an important element in the project's initial scoping process to help identify potential courses of action to address the project's need and to identify sensitive areas in the study area.



The Environmental Assessment will present a range of alternatives. These alternatives will include possible ways to repair or replace the bridge, along with the no action alternative. The environmental impacts resulting from the alternatives will be analyzed. The analysis will consider impacts to the natural, cultural, and social environment.

Public Scoping Comment Period

Written comments may be submitted by mail and by submission through the park's Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Click on the "Big Spring Bridge Project" link to view the scoping information and submit your comments. Comments can also be mailed to: Lisa Landers, Federal Highway Administration, 21400 Ridgetop Circle, Sterling, VA, 20166. To ensure that your comments are included in the process, all comments must be entered or postmarked by May 30, 2014.