



# NINEPIPE CORRIDOR FEASIBILITY STUDY

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is developing a feasibility study of the US Highway 93 (US 93) Ninepipe corridor. The existing road is narrow, lacks shoulders, is experiencing increasing traffic volumes, and has a history of severe crashes. Previous environmental documentation determined that reconstruction of the corridor is needed to improve traffic flow, bicycle/pedestrian accommodations, and the connectivity and safety of the transportation system. The study will be a collaborative process between MDT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), resource agencies, stakeholders, and the public.

In 1996, MDT completed a [\*Final Environmental Impact Statement \(FEIS\) and Section 4\(f\) Evaluation\*](#) for the portion of US 93 between Evaro and Polson, MT. The Record of Decision (ROD) did not provide specific design details, so FHWA, MDT, and the CSKT agreed to prepare a supplemental environmental study to further explore possible alignments and study the effects of highway improvements on wetlands and wildlife in the corridor. In 2008, MDT, FHWA, and CSKT completed a [\*Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement \(SEIS\) and a Section 4\(f\) Evaluation\*](#) for the Ninepipe/Ronan section (Reference Point [RP] 37.1 to 48.3). The SEIS/ROD identified a preferred alternative for the corridor consisting of a two-lane roadway, wildlife crossing structures, and a separated bicycle/pedestrian path within the Ninepipe segment connecting to a divided four-lane segment north of Brooke Lane and a passing lane segment south of Gunlock Road.

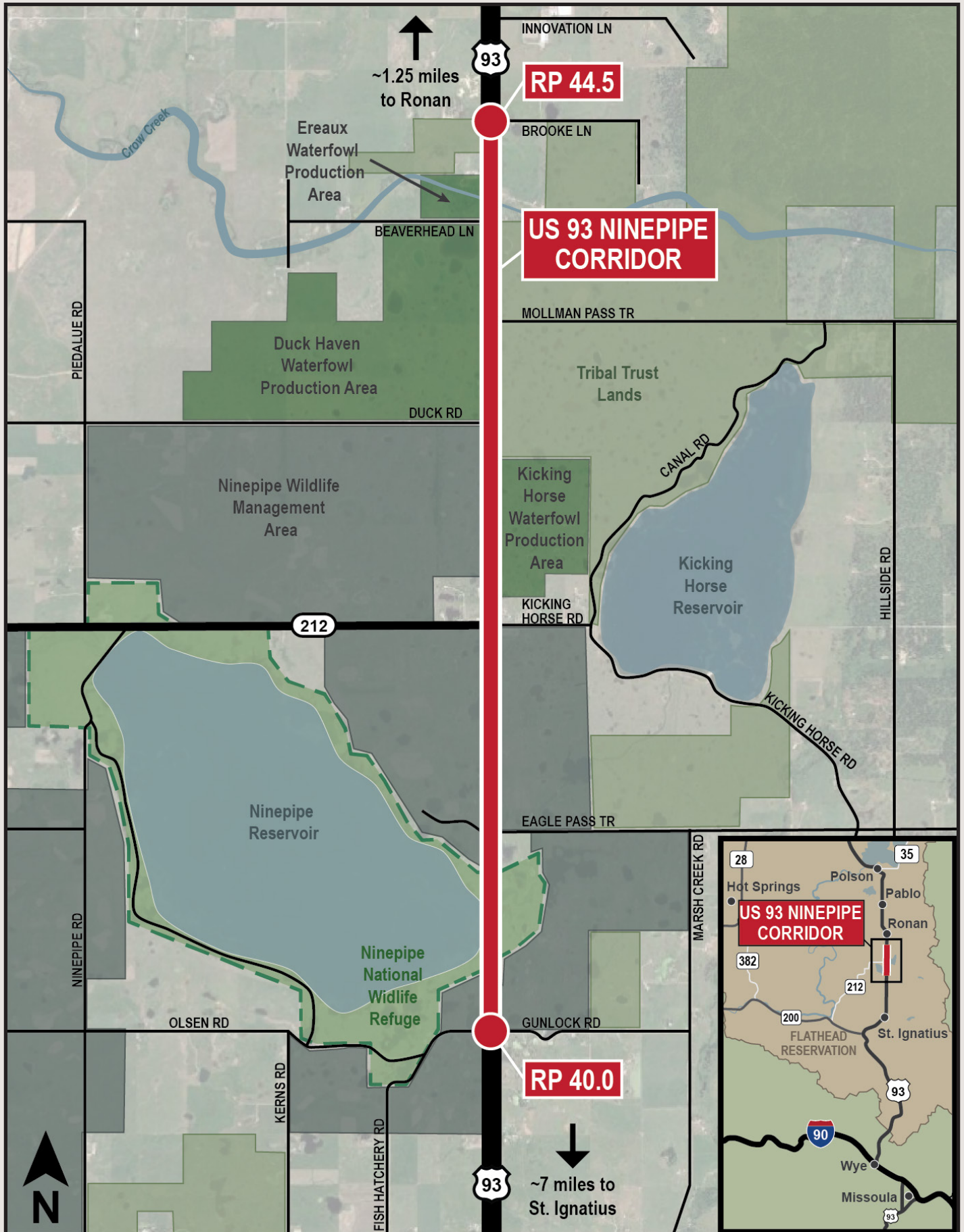
## WHAT IS THE STUDY PURPOSE?

Since completion of these previous efforts, MDT has proceeded to develop projects in stretches of US 93 adjacent to the Ninepipe segment and has encountered multiple challenges relating to constructability, impacts, and costs.

The intent of the *US 93 Ninepipe Corridor Feasibility Study* is to proactively address these challenges by identifying potential constraints and considering the viability of the preferred alternative previously identified in the 2008 SEIS before a project is nominated.

# WHERE IS THE STUDY AREA?

The study is focused on the US 93 corridor between Gunlock Road (at RP 40.0) and Brooke Lane (at RP 44.5).



# WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS?

Multiple constraints within the Ninepipe corridor may affect the feasibility of a future reconstruction project.



Cultural/Historic Resources



Wildlife Activity



Wetlands and Surface Water Bodies



Construction Costs



Soils, Groundwater Levels, and Geotechnical Conditions

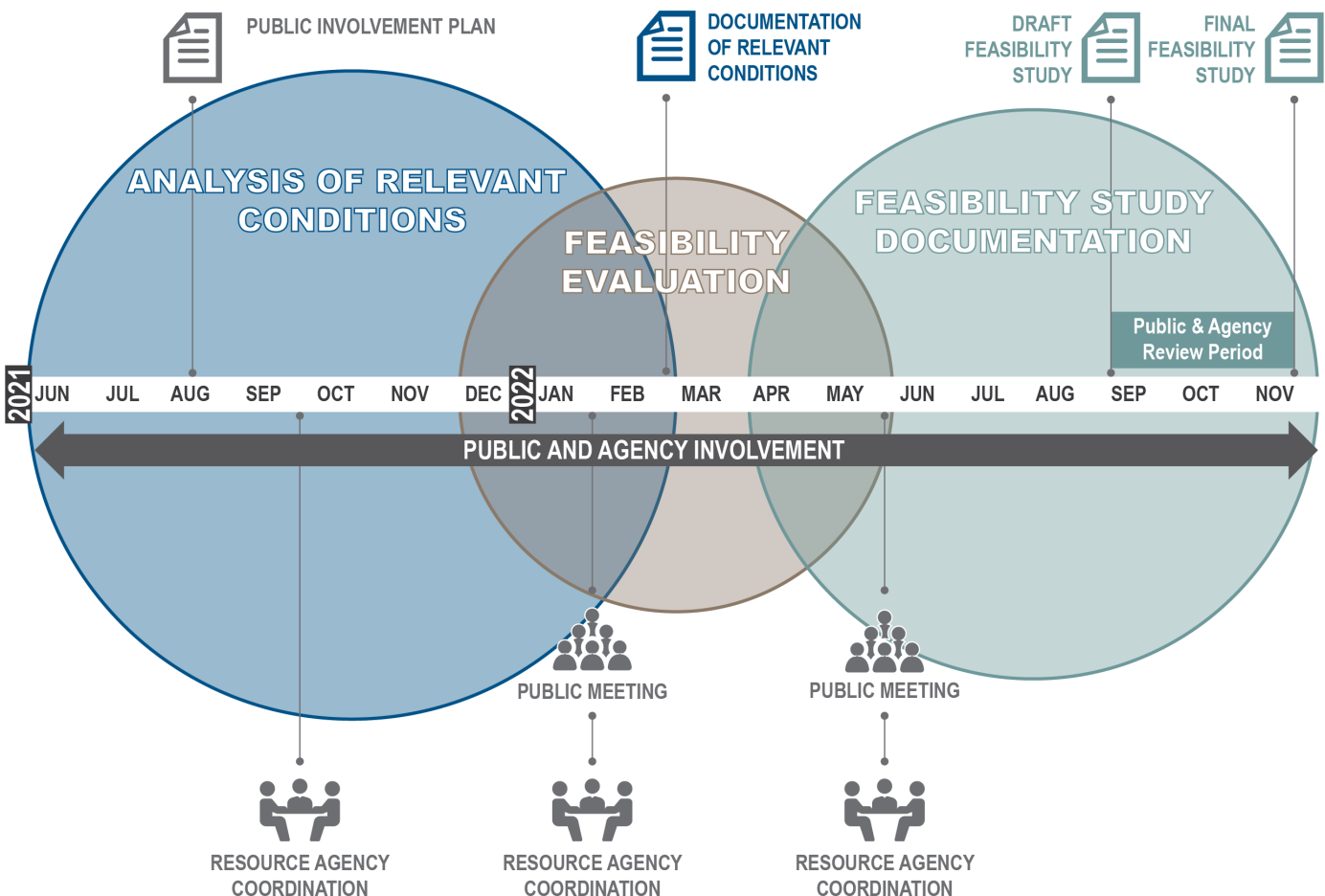


Right-of-Way and Adjacent Property Boundaries

## SCHEDULE

The US 93 Ninepipe Corridor Feasibility Study will involve three primary phases.

- **PHASE 1:** Analysis of relevant conditions is currently underway to conduct research and gather field data relating to geotechnical constraints, hydraulic considerations, wetland impacts, wildlife movements, cultural influences, and traffic conditions.
- **PHASE 2:** The feasibility evaluation will occur in early 2022 to consider costs, impacts, and construction feasibility relating to roadway and bicycle/pedestrian path alignments and wildlife crossings.
- **PHASE 3:** Feasibility study documentation will be developed in late 2022, with a final report anticipated by November 2022.
- **THROUGHOUT:** Public, stakeholder, and resource agency outreach will be conducted during the entire process.





# QUESTIONS?

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## CONTACT



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## VISIT

<https://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/US93Ninepipe/>

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