

# US 50 Expressway Project – Red Hills State Park

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## **PROJECT BACKGROUND:**

IDOT proposes to widen to four lanes, approximately 27 miles of US 50 from west of Illinois Route 130 near Olney to east of Illinois Route 1, near Lawrenceville. This will include reconstructing the south entrance to the Red Hills State Park and building a new entrance to the north part of the park.

While IDOT already owns property along the existing corridor, the new four lane roadway is being realigned to the south to avoid the habitat of the Four-Toed Salamander, *Hemidactylum scutatum*, a state threatened species. This realignment will require IDOT to impact Red Hills State Park property.

## **WHY ARE WE HAVING THIS MEETING?**

Red Hills State Park is under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). As such, it is subject to protection under Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act of 1966. This Act states: "*Public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment concerning the effects on the protected activities, features, or attributes of the property must be provided.*" IDOT is seeking public comments on the effects that proposed improvements to US 50 will have. IDOT intends to seek a Section 4(f) "*de minimis*" impact finding from the Federal Highway Administration based on a determination that the project will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities that qualify Red Hills State Park for protection under Section 4(f).

## **HOW WILL THE PARK BE IMPACTED?**

Park property will be impacted on the south side of US 50 from the west park property line to approximately 1000' east of the main park entrance. The strip of park property needed for construction will vary in width from 0 feet to 138 feet and will total approximately 7.6 acres. This impact to the south would be compensated with a swap of parcels of land on the north side of US 50. The excess right of way on the north side will be traded as well as the property acquired for the new north Park entrance and the underpass being constructed for park maintenance. The result will end with no net loss of park land. An 8-mile looped horse trail would also be impacted and relocated by the project.

## **WHEN WILL THIS PROJECT BE BUILT?**

This project is currently unfunded. The Phase I report will be completed in 2014, and when further funding becomes available, IDOT will proceed with design, land acquisition, utility relocation and construction.

## **WHERE DO I SEND MY COMMENTS?**

Comments must be submitted on or before **July 28, 2013** to:

Rodger Smith, Project Engineer  
Hutchison Engineering, Inc  
1801 West Lafayette Ave.  
P.O. Box 820  
Jacksonville, IL 62650  
[rsmith@hutchisoneng.com](mailto:rsmith@hutchisoneng.com)  
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Comments will become part of the official record and will be considered when making future project related decisions.

## **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE US 50 PROJECT?**

Please visit the project website at [www.us50project.com](http://www.us50project.com).