

## 4.0 AGENCY, PUBLIC AND TRIBAL COORDINATION AND INVOLVEMENT

### 4.1 Agency Coordination

#### 4.1.1 Scoping

A Solicitation of Views (SOV) letter was sent to various agencies asking for their input on possible issues pertaining to the project. Twenty-six responses from agencies were received to this solicitation. All agency comment letters are included in **Appendix B**. Agency comments focused on process and general issues for consideration in the region. However, the following agencies noted that their agency had no conflict or comments on the project at the time of the response:

- Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality;
- Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism;
- Federal Aviation Administration;
- Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services
- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry;
- Arkansas Commission of State Lands.

Aside from the SOV letter, two agency meetings were held - one in Little Rock, Arkansas and one in Junction City, Louisiana - at which additional comments were received. Details of these meetings, and the particular comments received at these meetings, and in response to the solicitation of views request are contained in the *Scoping Report* (URS 2003b), which is incorporated by reference into this EIS. Federal and state agencies represented at these meetings included:

- Arkansas Geological Commission
- Arkansas State Historic Preservation Officer
- US Forest Service, Kisatchie National Forest
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- US Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
- US Fish and Wildlife Agency
- North Louisiana Council of Governments
- Arkansas Natural Heritage Program
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Arkansas Soil, Water, Wildlife, and Wetlands,
- Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
- US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Federal Highway Administration

1 **Table 4.1-1** summarizes the principal agency comments from agency responses to the  
2 Project Team's solicitation of views, which were received during the Scoping period of  
3 March – April, 2003.

#### 4 **4.1.2 Corridor Selection**

5 One agency meeting was held on August 21, 2003 in Junction City, Louisiana to  
6 present the corridor evaluation process details on the five remaining corridors under  
7 consideration. Agencies represented in this meeting included:  
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- US Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
- Arkansas Geological Commission
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- Federal Highway Administration
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
- Arkansas Natural Heritage Program
- Arkansas Soil, Water, Wildlife, and Wetlands,
- US Fish and Wildlife Service

9  
10 The majority of agency comments related to the affected environment, potential  
11 regulatory issues, review procedures, and requests for additional detailed information  
12 when it becomes available. No specific preferences were provided by agencies.  
13 However, Derek Hamilton of USFWS's Lafayette Field Office and Elizabeth Guynes of  
14 the USACE, Vicksburg District provided verbal comments, questioning the comparative  
15 quality of the natural areas inside each of the five remaining corridors under  
16 consideration. Both emphasized that quality and not just quantity of wetlands and  
17 natural habitat must be considered in the selection of the single 2-mile-wide corridor for  
18 detailed alignment study. Additionally, concern was also expressed by Phillip Hollis of  
19 the Vicksburg District, USACE, that Corridors 2a and 2b may require an alignment  
20 through the Kisatchie National Forest parcel east of the Bayou Dorcheat crossing for  
21 these corridors. Details on the Corridor Selection open houses and the particular  
22 comments received at these meetings are contained in the *Corridor Selection Public  
23 and Agency Presentation and Comment Summary* (URS 2003e), which is incorporated  
24 by reference into this EIS.  
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**Table 4.1-1  
Summary of Agency Principal Issue Comments**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Arkansas Commissioner of State Lands	3/25/03	No reservations about the project or the construction of this section of Interstate 69.
Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality	4/17/03	Do not foresee any potential environmental impacts relative to the project at this time.
Arkansas Department of Health	4/1/03	Buffer zones for existing public water supply wells (100-foot radius) are not to be encroached upon.
Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism	4/11/03	Records do not indicate a conflict with this project.
Arkansas Geology Commission	3/25/03	Of particular concern are undeveloped lignite reserves between Emerson and Atlanta in Columbia County, numerous oil fields along the southern borders of Columbia and Union Counties, and municipal water wells.
Department of Health and Human Services	3/18/03	No specific comment at this time. List of potential public health concerns for consideration if they are appropriate.
Department of the Army, Vicksburg District, Corps of Engineers	3/17/03	Potential issues of concern include flood control, recreation, water quality, environmental compliance, wetlands and wildlife and forestry management, and operational management.
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 6	3/20/03	Contact the Floodplain Administrator of each parish and county for determinations as to whether a Floodplain Development Permit is needed for particular project sites.
Kisatchie National Forest	5/8/03	Will any of the proposed routes cross through National Forest System Lands?
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry	4/4/03	No comment at this time regarding the project.
Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism	4/11/03	Recommend a Phase I cultural resources survey be conducted for project.
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Contracts and Grants Division	3/25/03	Noted necessary permits or approvals from LDEQ or other state, local, or federal agencies. Bossier, Claiborne and Webster Parishes are classified as attainment parishes with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Permits Division	3/21/03	Encouraged investigation of requirements concerning wetland impacts, protection of groundwater, control of non-point source pollution, and stormwater permits for construction areas.
Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Office of Conservation	3/20/03	Provided access and available information regarding oil and gas exploration, production, distribution, and other data along with injection well information, surface mining, and other natural resource related data.
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development	4/14/03	Assure compliance with parish requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program.
Natural Resources Conservation Services, Arkansas	4/23/03	Concerned about the important farmland that will be involved in Columbia and Union Counties in Arkansas.
Natural Resources Conservation Services, Arkansas	4/25/03	Important to fully address all of the "Potential Issues" listed for the project.
Natural Resources Conservation Services, Louisiana	5/8/03	No objections to the proposed project, but consider the scenic streams in the area, wetlands, and any prime and unique farmland.

Agency	Date	Comments
The Department of Arkansas Heritage	3/17/03	Request additional information showing what structures will be affected and a description of the project.
US Department of Homeland Security, US Coast Guard	3/19/03	Any proposed waterway crossing of the I-69 project will need to be evaluated from the standpoint of navigation.
US Department of Homeland Security, US Coast Guard	3/25/03	Determined that the project does not cross waterways over which the Coast Guard exercises jurisdiction for bridge administration purposes. A Coast Guard bridge permit is not required.
US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service	4/3/03	Evaluate impacts of the proposed project on important fish and wildlife resources, including threatened and endangered species and their habitats, migratory birds, wetland habitats, inter-jurisdictional fishes, and National Wildlife Refuges.
US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service	4/7/03	Evaluate impacts of the proposed project on important fish and wildlife resources, including threatened and endangered species and their habitats, migratory birds, wetland habitats, inter-jurisdictional fishes, and National Wildlife Refuges.
US Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration	3/21/03	The FAA cannot identify any possible adverse effects to any facilities. If any proposed structure protrudes higher than existing structures Form 7460-1 should be filed.
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6	4/4/03	Comments are based upon the Council on Environmental Quality regulations 40 CFR (Parts 1500-1508) and authority under Section 309 of the <i>Clean Air Act</i> .
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6	4/23/03	Presented a more current scoping and streamlining package specific to the I-69 project.

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1 **4.1.3 Alternatives Development and Screening**

2 As with the Corridor Selection phase of the project, one agency meeting was held on  
3 June 3, 2004 in Junction City, Louisiana to present the four best alternatives that had  
4 been developed by the Project Team. Alternative alignments that were omitted from  
5 further consideration were also presented for discussion. Agencies represented in this  
6 meeting included:  
7

- US Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Scenic Streams Program
- Federal Highway Administration
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
- US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Agency

8  
9 Comments received at this meeting were more specific than in the Scoping and Corridor  
10 Selection phases of the project. LDWF's Scenic Stream Coordinator, Keith Casio,  
11 suggested that a crossing of Bayou Dorcheat along LA 160 should be evaluated.  
12 Because of the existence of the LA 160 crossing of Bayou Dorcheat, the addition of  
13 another crossing of Bayou Dorcheat at this location would be preferable compared to a  
14 new crossing in an area where there is presently none. Alternative 3 was revised to  
15 include this new crossing alignment. Alignment changes resulting from this agency  
16 meeting also included an improved crossing of Black Bayou by Alternative 4, which  
17 minimized wetland impacts, a modified alignment that avoided the newly constructed  
18 golf course located in The Grove residential community, and the consideration of three  
19 – instead of only one – northern terminus interchange locations. Details on the Corridor  
20 Selection open houses and the particular comments received at these meetings are  
21 contained in the *Alignment Study Public, Elected Officials and Agency Presentation and*  
22 *Comment Summary* (URS 2004b), which is incorporated by reference into this EIS. All  
23 agency comment letters are included in **Appendix B**.

24 **4.1.4 Preliminary Draft EIS**

25 Two meetings were held on March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005, to provide federal, state, and local  
26 agencies an early opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Draft EIS, which was not  
27 distributed to the public. The March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting was held in the LaDOTD District 04  
28 Headquarters conference room in Bossier City, Louisiana; and the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting  
29 was held in the AGFC Auditorium in Little Rock, Arkansas. In both meetings a summary  
30 presentation on the Preliminary Draft EIS was provided, followed by open discussion of  
31 project effects that appear to provide the most value to decision-makers in making  
32 alternative effects comparisons. Agency and other government attendees at these  
33 meetings included:  
34

- US Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Scenic Streams Program
- Federal Highway Administration
- Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- Webster Parish
- Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- US Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District
- Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
- US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Agency
- US Forest Service, Kisatchie National Forest
- Bossier Parish
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality

1  
2 More questions than comments were posed in these two meetings. The relative  
3 importance that each adverse effect will be given in the selection of a PA was  
4 discussed. Determination of a PA will be made by the FHWA, LaDOTD, AHTD,  
5 USACE, USEPA, and the USFWS following the Draft EIS commenting period. Agency  
6 consideration of the “big picture” of project effects, rather than simply consideration of  
7 their agency’s specific responsibilities, was stressed by the project team. Consideration  
8 will include both public comments and whether methods to avoid and minimize adverse  
9 effects are “practicable.” However, each commenting agency has its area of  
10 responsibility that will guide their selection of the PA. Specific preference for one of the  
11 eight EIS build alternatives was not provided by any attendee. However, in the March  
12 8<sup>th</sup> meeting attended by the LDWF’s Scenic Stream Coordinator, it was agreed that  
13 Alternative 4 minimizes adverse effects to scenic and recreational use of Bayou  
14 Dorcheat. However, Alternative 4 also adversely affects more wetlands and is the only  
15 alternative to affect a substantial amount of spring-fed streams. Agency comments on  
16 the preliminary Draft EIS received by March 11, 2005, are included in **Appendix B**.

#### 17 **4.1.5 Cooperating Agency and “NEPA/404 Merger” Facilitation**

18 Because each build alternative will adversely affect wetlands within the jurisdiction of  
19 the USACE, prior to construction, any of the build alternatives under consideration will  
20 require a permit from the USACE under Section 404 of the CWA. The USACE Section  
21 404 permit application procedure requires a project need justification and an  
22 alternatives evaluation similar to that required by NEPA. USFWS and USEPA have  
23 commenting responsibilities on wetland permit applications and their associated state  
24 water quality certifications. To avoid redundant, similar efforts, USACE, USFWS, and  
25 the USEPA were invited to cooperate with FHWA to develop and process this EIS. This  
26 cooperation is largely governed by an existing agreement among FHWA, USACE,  
27 USFWS, USEPA, and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) titled, *Federal*  
28 *Highway Administration, Region 6 Interagency NEPA and 404/110 Concurrent Process*  
29 *Agreement for Transportation Projects* (FHWA 1996). This agreement outlines a  
30 streamlined system of checks and balances governing the development and ultimate

1 selection of a preferred build alternative for any transportation project for which both a  
2 NEPA document and wetland permit application must be prepared.<sup>1</sup> This process is  
3 referred to as the “NEPA/404 Merger Agreement,” which requires that FHWA, USACE,  
4 USFWS, and USEPA agree on decisions at selected milestones, which are:

- 5
- 6 1. Definition of the purpose and needs for the project;
- 7 2. Process used and the results of the development and screening of alternatives for the  
8 project; and the
- 9 3. Preferred build alternative to be evaluated in greater detail in the Final EIS.

10  
11 The *Purpose and Need* Report (URS 2003c) was distributed to the cooperating  
12 agencies for comment in July 2003. Letters noting concurrence for milestone No. 1  
13 were received in September from the USACE and USFWS, and by the USEPA in  
14 November, 2003.

15  
16 The *Corridor Selection* Report (URS 2003g) was distributed to the cooperating agencies  
17 in October 2003. This distribution was followed by a conference call in late November  
18 to discuss questions. Letters noting concurrence on the selection of Corridor 1d as the  
19 preferred corridor for detailed alignment study were received shortly thereafter in  
20 November and December, 2003 from all cooperating agencies. This concurrence was  
21 a partial concurrence on milestone No. 2.

22  
23 Following the distribution of the *Alternatives Development and Screening* Report in May  
24 2004 (URS 2004a), a conference call was again held in late May to discuss the  
25 alternatives development and screening evaluation, with particular emphasis on the  
26 reevaluation of Corridor 2a / "Section F" (see **Section 2.2.5** of this EIS for details).  
27 Concurrence on the alternatives development and screening process and the selection  
28 of the four alternatives full evaluation in the EIS (i.e. Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4) was  
29 again provided by all cooperating agencies following this conference call – in May and  
30 June, 2004. Concurrence at this point completed the coordination and concurrence  
31 needed for milestone No. 2. Revisions to the alternatives to be fully evaluated in the EIS  
32 were re-circulated for concurrence in late September, 2004 (see **Section 2.3.3** for detail  
33 of these modifications). In October and November, 2004, concurrence letters were  
34 received by all cooperating agencies on the Project Team’s intention to fully evaluate  
35 only Alternatives 4, 4.2, 4.1 & 2, 5, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.1 & 2 in the EIS. Concurrence at this  
36 project phase represented concurrence on milestone No. 2, as revised.

37  
38 Alternative 4.3 was added in November, 2004. Because Alternative 4.3 is an additional  
39 option for resource agencies to consider - as opposed to a reduction in options or

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<sup>1</sup> While the NMFS is included in this agreement among federal agencies, the NMFS has no interests in the I-69, SIU No. 14 project as no jurisdictional resources of their concern are present in the study area. Therefore, they were not invited as a cooperating agencies and are not involved at concurrence points for this project.

1 change in known options - concurrence of cooperating agencies was deemed  
 2 unnecessary and was not sought.

3  
 4 All letters noting cooperative agency concurrence at concurrence point Nos. 1 and 2 are  
 5 provided in **Appendix B**. The final concurrence point (i.e., No. 3 – selection of a  
 6 preferred alternative) will coincide with the completion of the review and evaluation of all  
 7 public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, anticipated in spring 2005.

8 **4.1.6 Other Meetings**

9 In addition to the agency meetings held at selected milestones (i.e., Scoping, Corridor  
 10 Selection, and Alternatives Development and Screening), Project Team members met  
 11 with agency representatives on several occasions related to specific topics of concern.  
 12 Some of these meetings focused on data collection, where discussion of the project was  
 13 limited and no decisions or relevant regulatory actions were taken. Other meetings  
 14 related to coordination of actions or the solicitation of comments on particular issues.  
 15 Such select agency coordination meetings are summarized in **Table 4.1-2** below.

16  
 17 **Table 4.1-2**  
 18 **Select Small Agency Coordination**  
 19 **Meeting Attendance and Topics**

Date	Meeting With	Brief Description
01/20/04	USACE; USFWS; LDWF, LDWF Scenic Stream Coordinator; USDA; NRCS; FHWA; LaDOTD; AHTD; URS; and other project study team members	Discussion of preliminary alignments evaluation and plans for field work activities during week of January 27, 2004.
04/21/04	Kent Dussom and Christi Wilson, URS; Gary Looney, Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission; Randy Evans, Great Lakes Chemical	Coordination regarding active well sites as well as coordination regarding hydrogen sulfide producing wells. Discussed safe distance for roadway from hydrogen sulfide wells.
07/08/04	Stan Fulcher and David Kane, Louisiana Department of Economic Development; Kent Dussom and Scott Hoffeld, URS	Effects of I-69 project alignments to economic development in the region.

20 **4.2 Public and Elected Officials Involvement**

21 **4.2.1 Program Office and Telephone “Hot Line”**

22 At the initiation of the project, the Project Team rented commercial space in  
 23 Homer, Louisiana, for a local project office, which would serve as a meeting room, field  
 24 coordination office, and public information center. This project office is called the I-69,  
 25 SIU No. 14 Program office and is located at 425 West Main Street, Homer, Louisiana  
 26 71040. Homer was chosen over other locations because of its convenient location in  
 27 the project area and available, inexpensive rental space.  
 28

1 The Program Office has one full-time employee, who serves as the principal public  
2 information specialist on the project. Current project maps, a copy of all project reports,  
3 and high-speed Internet access is provided for visitors' use. The office hosts  
4 approximately 30 visitors per month, with the greatest number of visits corresponding to  
5 the public involvement opportunities. The highest number of visitors hosted in any one  
6 month was 68, following Alignment Selection Open Houses. Responses to  
7 approximately 120 website comments and questions have been handled through the  
8 Program Office.

9  
10 The Program Office also has a toll free telephone "hot-line" at (877) 886-9233. The  
11 telephone hotline provides the public with the opportunity to speak with someone on a  
12 daily basis as well as to record messages for future contact. The highest call volumes  
13 have been associated the public involvement opportunities at Scoping, Corridor  
14 Selection, and the Alternatives Development and Screening phases of the project.

#### 15 **4.2.2 Mailing List and Project Web Site**

16 At the initiation of the project in January 2003, the Project Team developed a mailing list  
17 that comprised a cross-section of community representatives living inside of the study  
18 area. This initial mailing list included approximately 500 entries but has now grown to  
19 1,710 names as of the production of this EIS. Entries include:

- 20
- 21 • 904 General Public and Community Residents;
- 22 • 540 Business Representatives;
- 23 • 241 Government Resource Representatives and Elected Officials;
- 24 • 10 Tribal Representatives; and
- 25 • 15 Media Representatives.
- 26

27 The greatest increases to this list have followed correspondence mail-outs and public  
28 involvement opportunities at Scoping, Corridor Selection, and the Alternatives  
29 Development and Screening phases of the project. Citizens and others may register on  
30 the mailing list by calling or visiting the I-69, SIU No. 14 Program Office in Homer,  
31 Louisiana, or directly registering on the I-69, SIU No. 14 project web site at  
32 [www.i69arkla.com](http://www.i69arkla.com). In addition to offering visitors an opportunity to register on the  
33 project mailing list, this Internet site provides information on the current project status;  
34 meeting dates, times and locations; and mapping. An interactive mapping tool provided  
35 on this web site allows users to focus on an area of interest using select GIS mapping  
36 data and aerial photography. Visitors may also provide comments at this site.

#### 37 **4.2.3 Newsletters / News Cards**

38 Three Newsletters have been distributed since the initiation of the project in  
39 January, 2003. Distribution numbers have grown concurrent with the mailing list  
40 discussed in **Section 4.2.2**. The first newsletter was distributed in July 2003, following

1 the Scoping Process. It included a summary report of the Scoping Process and an  
 2 explanation of Corridor Selection activities. The second mailing was a news card, which  
 3 followed the Corridor Selection public open houses. It announced the preference of  
 4 Corridor 1d for detailed alignment study. The third mailing was also a news card that  
 5 was distributed in June 2004. It announced the locations, dates, and times for the  
 6 Alignment Study Open Houses and displayed a graphic of the four alignments being  
 7 presented.

#### 8 4.2.4 Small Group Meetings

9 In addition to the structured open public meetings that were held at selected milestones  
 10 (i.e., Scoping, Corridor Selection, Alternatives Development and Screening), a number  
 11 of meetings were held with small groups of citizens and elected officials. The purposes  
 12 of these meetings varied; however, project study status and particular alignment  
 13 concerns were the two primary topics of these meetings. A listing of these meetings is  
 14 provided in **Table 4.2-1** below.  
 15

**Table 4.2-1  
 Small Group Meeting Attendees and Discussion Topics**

Date	Meeting With	Brief Description
02/26/03	Northwest Webster Industrial District, Johnnie Hill	Gathered information regarding environmental and economic development in the area
02/27/03	R. O. Machen	Gathered community and archaeological information.
04/22/03	Shirley Ford, Claiborne Parish NAACP	Provided information packets for the upcoming meeting.
05/03/03	Three Creeks Arkansas Fire Department Fundraiser	Provided brief information session and played video of public meetings.
05/7/03	Police Juries / Economic Development / North Hills Water Resources Conservation and Development Program	Gathered information about lakes development
05/27/03	Springhill Lions and Rotary Club	Provided brief information slide show displaying scoping report results and guidance on next steps.
05/27/03	Claiborne Parish Economic Develop	Discuss plans for new lakes within Claiborne Parish.
05/28/03	Magnolia Economic Develop Group	Provided brief information slide show displaying scoping report results and guidance on next steps.
05/29/03	Minden Lions Club	Provided brief information slide show displaying scoping report results and guidance on next steps.
06/27/03	Claiborne Parish Economic Development Committee – Summerfield	Discuss plans for new lakes within Claiborne Parish.
07/16/03	Bossier Parish Republican Women’s Committee, Lt. Governor’s Candidate Forum with Kurt Bennett and others	Provide update on project to candidates.
08/25/03	Claiborne Parish Police Jury’s, W. Young, C. Steele, J. Price, R. Mardis, W. Kilpatrick, P. Newell, J. Adkins, G. Coleman, S. Herring, R. Fowler, B. Bays, J. Sturgess; and URS’s Christi Wilson	Meeting in Homer to present Corridor Evaluation

**Table 4.2-1  
Small Group Meeting Attendees and Discussion Topics**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting With</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
08/27/03	Claiborne Parish Watershed Commission's A. Willis, M. Wilson, P. Fincher, B. Joslin, A. Stewart; and URS's Christi Wilson	Meeting in Homer to present Corridor Evaluation
10/23/03	I-69 Coalition, Christi Wilson	The Coalition Meeting held in Bossier City. Corridor Selection handouts, Corridor Evaluation Summary Sheet and Project Study Process Flowchart were provided. Mr. Easterly with LaDOTD provided a verbal update and briefing on our progress.
01/13/04	Kent Dussom, Christi Wilson, Cat Cox (Webster Parish), Sidney Cox, Johnny Hill	Discuss potential routings through Cotton Valley.
01/13/04	Kent Dussom, Christi Wilson, John Herrington (Mayor of Springhill)	Delivered map showing proposed corridor location.
01/13/04	Kent Dussom, Christi Wilson, Magnolia Lions Club	Presentation of Corridor Selection to Lions Club Member (including Patricia Herring from Congressman Ross's office)
01/13/04	Kent Dussom, Christi Wilson, Cotton Valley Council Meeting	Presentation of Corridor Selection to City Council and Mayor of Cotton Valley. Attended by local residents.
01/14/04	Kent Dussom, John Caruthers, J.T. Taylor, Travis Tinsley, Bruce Easterly, others from Claiborne Parish	Presentation of Corridor Selection. Claiborne Parish representatives recommended review of Corridor Selection due to lack of corridor within Claiborne Parish. Requested review of economic development regarding lakes program and review of Sparta Aquifer recharge area.
01/15/04	Kent Dussom, Christi Wilson, Bruce Easterly, Bill Robertson (Mayor of Minden), A.J. Hodges, and others	Presentation of Corridor Selection. Mayor requested that Cotton Valley oilfield impacts be reviewed and asked if another corridor would be better.
02/25/04	Piney Hills Economic Develop and Legislative Initiative (Christi Wilson)	Attended meeting and received video tape of local issues. Meeting attended by Bruce Easterly (LaDOTD).
03/4/04	Claiborne Parish Police Jury (Kent Dussom)	Made presentation of corridor selection. Fielded questions regarding corridor selection including Sparta Aquifer Recharge potential, crossings of Bayou Dorcheat, locations of oil / gas wells, economic development.
03/04/04	Claiborne Parish Officials and Kent Dussom	Coordination meeting related to Lakes Project
04/21/04	Kent Dussom & Christi Wilson, URS Gary Looney, Ark Oil and Gas Commission, Randy Evans, Great Lakes Chemical	Coordination regarding active well sites as well as coordination regarding hydrogen sulfide producing wells. Discussed safe distance for roadway from hydrogen sulfide wells.
04/21/04	Kent Dussom, URS John Maynor, XTO Facility	Operator within Cotton Valley field. Identification of most productive wells and other sites that are considered important to avoid to this operator.
04/22/04	Kent Dussom & Christi Wilson, URS Donnie Zimmerman, Marathon Oil	Operator within the Haynesville field. Identification of most productive wells and other sites that are considered important to avoid to this operator.
04/22/04	Kent Dussom & Christi Wilson / URS Mr. McCuen, Barry Johnson, Sarah Hampton, Mid Valley Pipeline	Identification of major pipeline crossings and other sites that are considered important to avoid to this operator.
04/22/04	Kent Dussom / URS David Russel, Joe McGowan, McGowan Working Partners	Operator for Schuler Field in Arkansas. Discussed alternative alignments and possibilities for mitigating impacts to the active oil well production area.

**Table 4.2-1  
Small Group Meeting Attendees and Discussion Topics**

Date	Meeting With	Brief Description
06/17/04	Meeting with R. Michaels, H. Byars, and T. Tinsley of North Hills Lakes Project; FHWA; LaDOTD; and URS	Discuss concerns of North Hills Lakes Project regarding Alternative 4 and the Corridor Selection process undertaken
10/13/04	I-69 Coalition; Christi Wilson / URS	I-69 Coalition Meeting – project updates
10/13/04	Grove Community Residents; Christi Wilson / URS	Discuss effects of Alternative 4 on Grove Residents
10/19/04	Claiborne Parish Police Juries; LaDOTD Secretary Bradbury; Christi Wilson / URS	Project updates
11/09/04	Webster Parish Police Jury; Grove Community Residents; Christi Wilson / URS	Discuss effects of Alternative 4 and its improvements to Grove Community and resolve confusion of Alt#4 and “Southern Route” of Dr. Michaels
11/11/04	Claiborne Parish Police Jury; Christi Wilson / URS	Project update.
12/01/04	Residents along LA 3008 and developer of The Grove Residential Community; Scott Hoffeld / URS	Presentation of revised Option 3 alignment for Alternative 4.
12/03/04	Elected Officials and Economic Dev Representatives of South Arkansas Area, Scott Hoffeld & Christi Wilson / URS	Conference to provide updates on progress and plans for the South Arkansas Region

1 **4.2.5 Public and Elected Officials Meetings**

2 **4.2.5.1 Scoping**

3 A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS was published on March 6, 2003 in the *Federal*  
 4 *Register*, which initiated the public Scoping comment period. Four public Scoping  
 5 meetings were held at the places and dates below:

- 6
- 7 • El Dorado, Arkansas March 25, 2003
  - 8 • Haynesville, Louisiana March 26, 2003
  - 9 • Minden, Louisiana March 27, 2003
  - 10 • Homer, Louisiana March 28, 2003.

11

12 Hourly 15-minute presentations were held between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. for the March  
 13 25-27 meetings. An open house format was used on March 28<sup>th</sup> between 8:00 a.m. and  
 14 5:00 p.m. at the I-69, SIU No. 14 Program Office in Homer. Over 220 citizens and 25  
 15 elected officials attended these four meetings. The public Scoping comment period  
 16 closed on April 28, 2003, thirty days after the last public meeting was held. While other  
 17 comments were received and considered in the development of the project scope of  
 18 work, comments noted in **Table 4.2-2** were recurrent during the Scoping period and are  
 19 therefore, considered *principal issue* comments. A photocopy of the Notice of Intent  
 20 published in the *Federal Register*, public meeting notices, sign-in sheets, as well as  
 21 each comment received during the scoping process for this project is included in the

1 *Scoping Report* (URS 2003b) for this project, which is incorporated by reference into  
 2 this EIS.

3  
 4 **Table 4.2-2**  
 5 **Summary of Public and Elected Official**  
 6 **Principal Issue Comments**

Central Theme of Principal Issue Comments	Number of Similar Comments	Primary study component where comment will be addressed
Economic Development in the Region	195	Purpose and Need; Human Environment
Financial / Job Benefits for the People	112	Purpose and Need; Human Environment
Increase in Tourism / Retirement	104	Human Environment
Connect Claiborne Parish with the rest of the area	100	Purpose and Need; Human Environment
Benefits for C and S Plastics / Access / Safety in Springhill	38	Purpose and Need
Specific Revisions to Base Mapping Data	27*	Base Mapping
Improve the Flow of People and Goods in the Region	20	Purpose and Need
Unclassified	17	Various Locations
Design / Alignment Suggestions and Safety Issues	14	Purpose and Need; Alternatives Development
Concerns over Environmental Impacts	12	Consequences Section
Cross US 79 north of Haynesville to keep chemical transport away from populated areas	9	Purpose and Need

7 *Note:* \*A total of 201 corrections to the Study Area maps were made as a result of the Scoping Process. However, only 27  
 8 individual comments associated with map corrections were documented as comments. Other comments not listed in this table were  
 9 received. Some comment forms included comments on several issues. See *Scoping Report* (URS 2003b) for a copy of actual  
 10 comments and materials presented at the Scoping Meetings.

11  
 12 While the public comments have been grouped into broad categories, there were many  
 13 comments that mentioned a particular town, parish, or county. Over half of the  
 14 comments dealing with economic development, financial / job benefits, and an increase  
 15 in tourism / recreation were part of a form letter that focused on Claiborne Parish.

16 **4.2.5.2 Corridor Selection**

17 Four open houses were held during the week of August 19, 2003 to present the five  
 18 remaining 2-mile-wide corridors under consideration to be selected as the single  
 19 2-mile-wide corridor for detailed alternative alignment study. Locations and dates of  
 20 these events were:

- 21
- 22 • Minden, Louisiana August 19, 2003
- 23 • Haynesville, Louisiana August 20, 2003
- 24 • Three Creeks, Arkansas August 21, 2003
- 25 • Homer, Louisiana August 22, 2003.
- 26

27 It is estimated that over 450 individuals attended these four meetings, with 417 persons  
 28 signing-in. Following a 10-minute introductory video, attendees were provided a copy of

1 the “Corridor Selection Handout” and directed to an area in the meeting room to review  
2 large-scale maps and ask questions of team members. The public commenting period  
3 lasted until September 5, 2003 at which time over 500 public comments had been  
4 received. The script of the video presented in these meetings and a detailed summary  
5 and a copy of each comment received during the Corridor Selection phase of the project  
6 through September 5, 2003 is included with other materials in the *Corridor Selection*  
7 *Public and Agency Presentation and Comment Summary* (URS 2003e), which is  
8 incorporated by reference into this EIS. Comments are summarized as follows:

- 9
- 10 • Approximately 552 individual comments were received
- 11 • 463 of 552 (84 percent) were from Louisiana
- 12 • 89 of 552 (16 percent) were from Arkansas
- 13 • Comments or Respondents’ references to preference were as follows:<sup>2</sup>
  - 14 - 236 of 552 (43 percent) preferred Corridor Alternative 1c;
  - 15 - 204 of 552 (37 percent) preferred Corridor Alternative 1d;
  - 16 - 197 of 552 (36 percent) preferred Corridor Alternative 1e;
  - 17 - 190 of 552 (34 percent) preferred Corridor Alternative 2b;
  - 18 - 108 of 552 (20 percent) preferred Corridor Alternative 2a;
  - 19 - 204 of 463 (44 percent) Louisiana responses preferred Corridor Alternative 1c; and
  - 20 - 55 of 89 (62 percent) Arkansas responses preferred Corridor Alternative 2a.

21

22 **Section 2.2** provides context on how these comments were used in the selection of  
23 Corridor 1d for detailed study and the reevaluation of Corridor 2a / “Section F” that was  
24 conducted.

### 25 **4.2.5.3 Alternatives Development and Screening**

26 The best four highway alignment alternatives developed and refined by the Project  
27 Team were presented to the public in a series of public open houses in June 2004.  
28 Locations and dates of these events were:

- 29
- 30 • El Dorado, Arkansas June 22, 2004
- 31 • Haynesville, Louisiana June 23, 2004
- 32 • Minden, Louisiana June 24, 2004
- 33 • Homer, Louisiana June 25, 2004.
- 34

35 While 490 individuals signed-in, it is estimated that over 500 individuals attended these  
36 four meetings. As with the Corridor Selection open houses, a short (10-minute) video

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<sup>2</sup> Some respondents noted equal preference for more than one corridor, or alternative; therefore, the total number of references to preferred corridors is greater than the number of individual comments or respondents.

1 was provided as attendees entered the open house. Following this video, attendees  
2 were provided an “Alignment Study Handout” and directed to an area in the meeting  
3 room to review large-scale maps, summary boards, and to ask questions of team  
4 members. The public commenting period lasted until July 9, 2004, at which time over  
5 1,396 comments had been received. Approximately 380 of these comments were  
6 completed by persons who received their comment forms from displays erected by a  
7 concerned citizen. This citizen urged others to respond in opposition to Corridor 1d  
8 alignments (i.e., Alternatives 1, 2 and 3) due to the required crossing of Bayou Dorcheat  
9 in the reach of the Bayou within Corridor 1d. These comments were coded with the  
10 hand-written phrase, “use one form per person” at the bottom of the instructions on the  
11 comment form.

12  
13 Additionally, some comments were provided on comment forms that had been  
14 pre-completed in favor of a particular alternative alignment. In summary, comments  
15 received in response to the June public open houses presenting Alternatives 1, 2, 3,  
16 and 4 are summarized as follows:

- 17
- 18 • 1,396 individual comments were received from the public;
- 19 • 91 percent (i.e., 1,271 of 1,396) of comments were from Louisiana residents;
- 20 • Alternative 4 was preferred by over 53 percent of all commentors, followed by  
21 Alternative 1, which was preferred by 36 percent of all commentors;
- 22 • Approximately 43 percent of all commentors preferred Corridor 1d alternatives  
23 (i.e., Alternatives 1, 2, or 3);
- 24 • 71 percent of all Louisiana comments (i.e., 907 of 1,271) were from Webster Parish  
25 residents;
- 26 • 52 percent of Webster Parish commentors preferred Alternative 4; 39 percent prefer  
27 Alternative 1;
- 28 • 79 percent of Claiborne Parish commentors preferred Alternative 4;
- 29 • 87 percent of all Arkansas commentors prefer Alternative 1;
- 30 • 58 percent of all Louisiana commentors prefer Alternative 4;
- 31 • A petition signed by 3,700 persons from the region protests a crossing of Bayou  
32 Dorcheat inside Corridor 1d due to its impacts to this scenic waterbody; and
- 33 • A petition signed by 1,100 persons from the Cotton Valley, Serepta, Shongaloo, and  
34 Springhill communities request that alternatives remain inside Corridor 1d.
- 35

36 The script of the video presented in these meetings, hand-outs, and both a detailed  
37 summary and a copy of each comment received through July 9, 2004, in response to  
38 the Alignment Study open houses held in June, 2004 is included with other materials in  
39 the *Alignment Study Public, Elected Officials and Agency Presentation and Comment*  
40 *Summary* (URS 2004b), which is incorporated by reference into this EIS.

### 4.3 Indian Tribe Consultation

In accordance with 36 CFR 800 et seq. and Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)*, FHWA has embarked on a continuing program of meaningful consultation with Indian Tribes who may consider archeological resources or landscapes within the study area to be of cultural or religious significance. Identification of tribes with which to consult was accomplished with guidance of the Arkansas SHPO (Ms. Cathie Matthews, SHPO, c/o Mr. Ken Grunewald and Mr. George McCluskey, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program) and the Louisiana SHPO (Ms. Laurel Wyckoff, SHPO, c/o Philip G. (Duke) Rivet, Division of Archaeology, Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism).

Together with SHPO review and compliance staffs recommended consultation with the following federally recognized tribes:

- Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Philadelphia, Mississippi (Mr. Ken Carleton, THPO)
- Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Durant, Oklahoma (Mr. Terry Cole, THPO)
- Jena Band of Choctaw, Jena, Louisiana (Ms. Christine Norris, Tribal Council Member)
- Chickasaw Nation, Ada, Oklahoma (Ms. Stephanie Seeley, THPO; Ms. 'Rena Duncan, Director of Cultural Preservation; Mr. Kirk Perry, Administrator of Cultural Preservation)
- Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma, Quapaw, Oklahoma (Mrs. Carrie V. Wilson, NAGPRA Coordinator)
- Tunica-Biloxi Indians of Louisiana, Inc., Marksville, Louisiana (Mr. Earl J. Barbry, Jr., THPO; Mr. Brent Barbry, Sr., Assistant THPO)
- Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas, Livingston, Texas (Ms. Debbie Thomas, NAGPRA Coordinator)
- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, Elton, Louisiana (Lovelin Poncho, Chairman)
- Caddo Nation, Binger, Oklahoma (Mr. Robert Cast, THPO; Mr. Bobby Gonzales, NAGPRA Coordinator)

Initial contacts have been made with all of the identified tribes and consultation with each sovereign nation is continuing as the planning process proceeds. No comments have been received from the noted tribes that relates to the location of alignments and particular effects to tribal resources of concern. Following selection of a PA after the evaluation of comments on the Draft EIS, the Project Team will present the PA to tribal leaders to solicit comments on the PA. Field visits by tribal representatives will follow these presentations.