

# Roads and Animal Habitats Collide While Trying to Boost Maine's Economy

## East-West Toll Road Proposal and Impacts

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### Motivation

The project is a study of Maine's proposed four lane East-West Toll Road and its possible effects on the habitats along the route. Protecting habitats and the state of Maine's natural beauty was our motivation for this project. Another motivation for the project was the controversy caused by the reactions to the proposed route.



### Goals/Questions

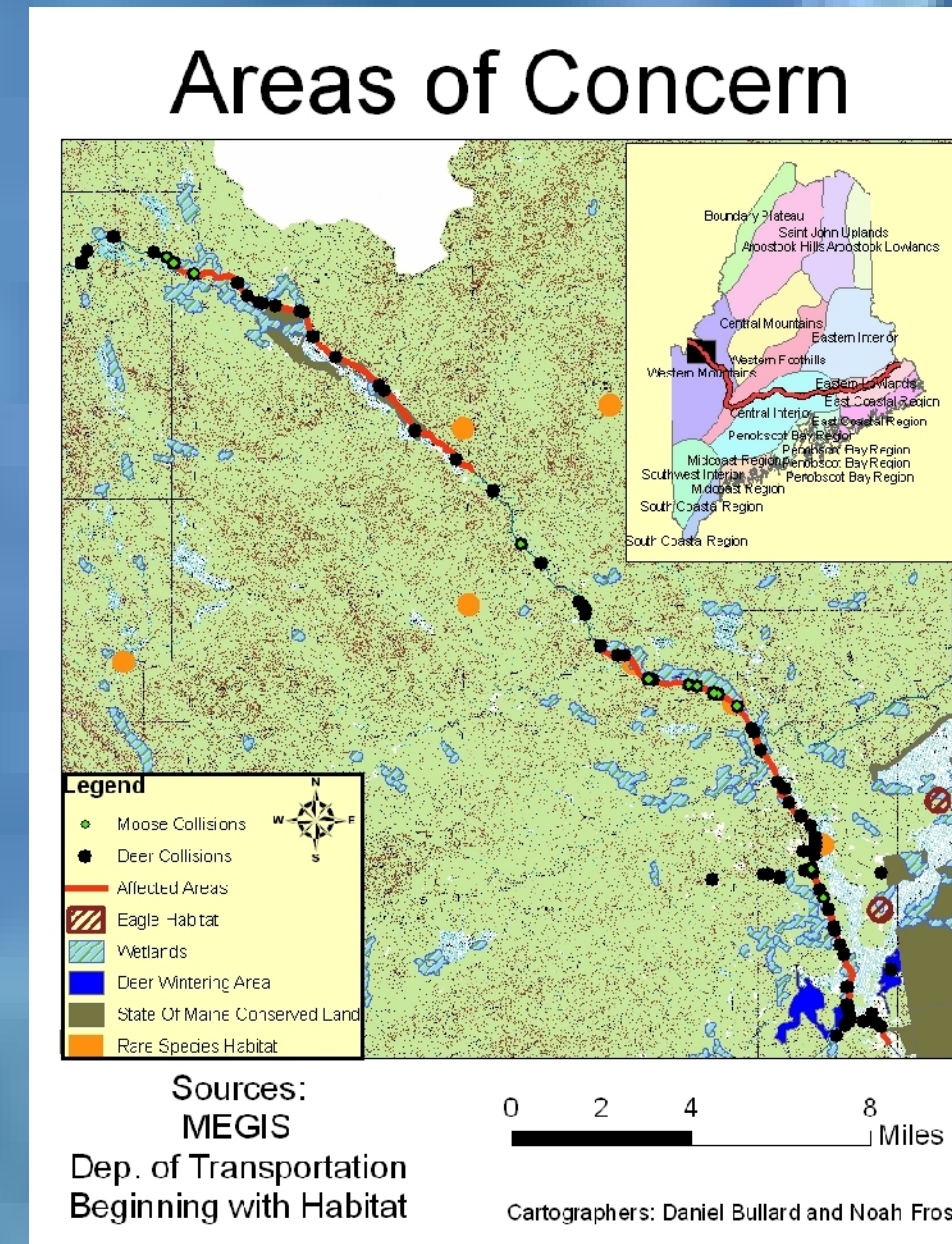
- How would the expansion of the existing road into a four lane highway impact or potentially harm sensitive wildlife areas?
- What can be done to make the proposed route design more responsive to the environment and minimize the impact to identified sensitive wildlife areas?

### Literature Review

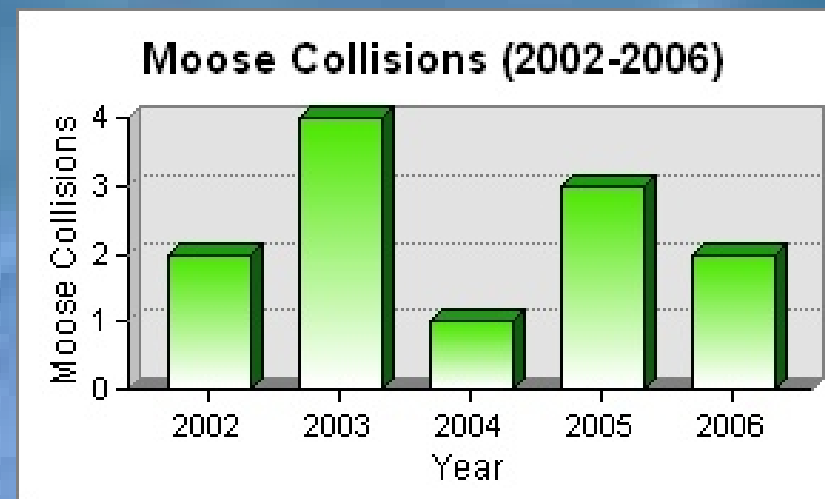
Several articles used for background research on this project discussed the problems caused by air pollution emitted from cars or provided information about how a population increase that is often the result of road expansion presents new strains on the environment.

### Approach and Results

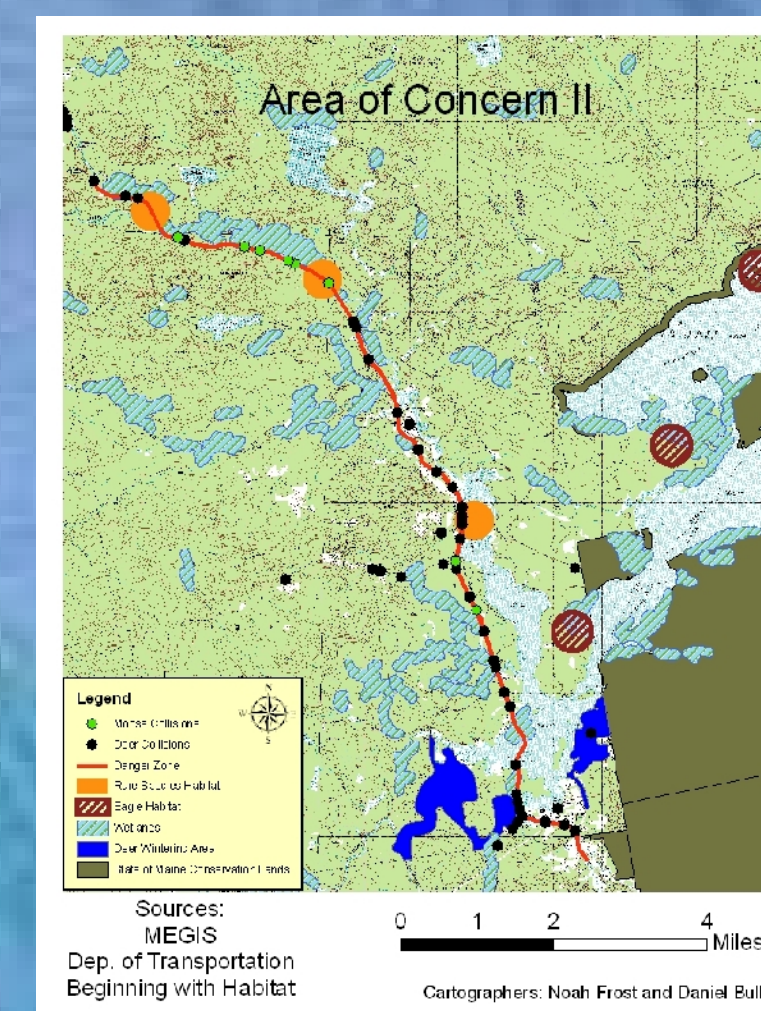
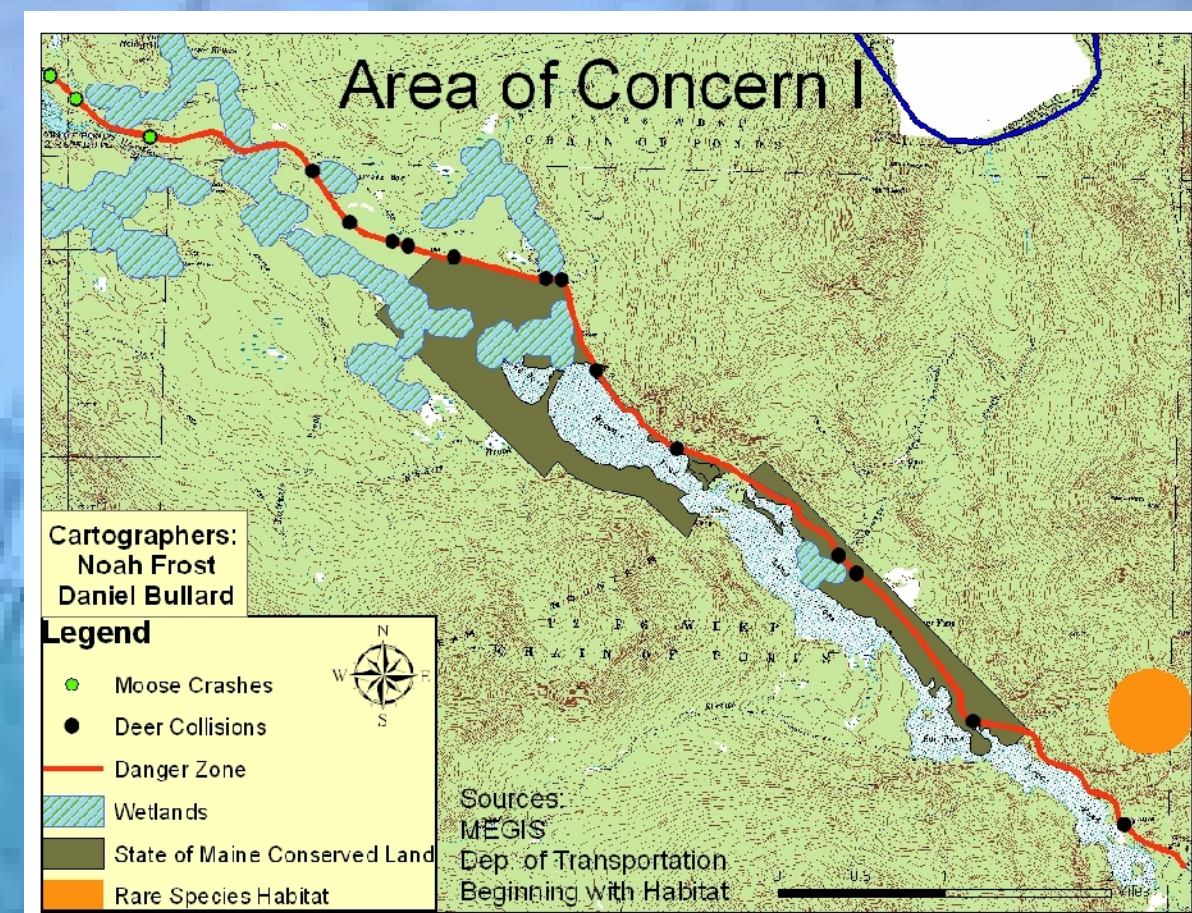
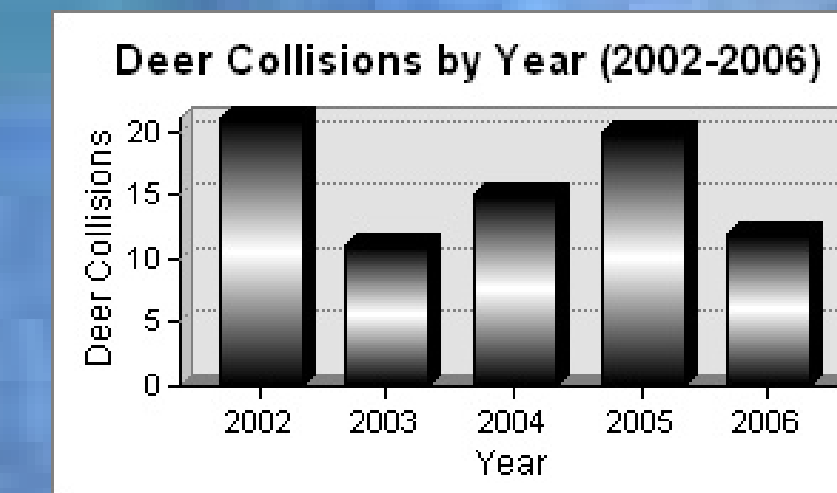
The research was started by loading large amounts of data into ESRI's ArcMap to create a geographic information systems. The next step was to create a line file that would follow the proposed route. After this data files of habitats and environments were chosen specific to the selected study area.



Inside the study area possible risks and impacts were observed. These were labeled by red lines to show areas of concern. After creating one map of the study area, the areas were divided into two separate maps. This made it easier to identify problems in the study areas.



The area chosen for in-depth study is located in Western Maine. This area was chosen because of the resident's concerns about the environment. The study area consisted of the stretch of road between Stratton and Corburn Gore.



### Conclusion

The study focused on two main areas of risk.

#### Concerns in Area I:

- large amounts of moose and deer collisions
- damage to State of Maine conservation areas

#### Concerns in Area II:

- deer wintering areas (i.e. collisions)
- eagle habitats
- water pollution from runoff

#### Ways to minimize negative impacts in both Area I & II:

- build underground tunnels for animals to go across the road safely
- don't use salt
- channel the runoff to a sewage area.

After observing the possible impact, it is clear that the new road expansion would harm the environment in these areas. The question is, are the potential economic benefits worth the potential negative impact on the environment.

### Future Work

Possible future work can be done on other sections of the road such as a section in Eastern Maine.

### Sources

Dept. of Transportation  
Beginning With Habitat  
MEOGIS