



US Army Corps
Of Engineers
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: October 10, 2014
Comment Deadline: November 10, 2014
Corps Action ID Number: SAW-2011-01243

The Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) received an application from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) regarding a potential future requirement for Department of the Army (DA) authorization to discharge dredged or fill material into waters of the United States associated with proposed improvements to existing NC 11, SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) and portions of existing US 13 from just south of the NC 11 intersection with NC 561 to the US 13 interchange with US 158 and NC 45, a distance of approximately 7.8 miles between Ahoskie and Winton in Hertford County, North Carolina.

Specific alignment alternatives and location information are described below and shown on the attached plans. This Public Notice and all attached plans are also available on the Wilmington District Web Site at

<http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Missions/RegulatoryPermitProgram.aspx>

Applicant: North Carolina Department of Transportation
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit
Attention: Richard Hancock, Manager
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

Authority

The Corps evaluates this application to compare alternatives that have been carried forward for detailed study pursuant to applicable procedures of the following Statutory Authorities:

- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344)
- Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403)
- Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1413)

In order to more fully integrate Section 10 and Section 404 permit requirements with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and to give careful consideration to our required public interest review and 404(b)(1) compliance determination, the Corps is

Six terrestrial communities were identified in the study area:

- (1) **Maintained/Disturbed:** Maintained/disturbed areas are scattered throughout the study area in places where the vegetation is periodically mowed, such as roadside shoulders, residential lawns, agricultural fields, and overhead utility corridors. The vegetation in this community is comprised of low growing grasses and herbs, including fescue, clover, wild onion, broomsedge, blackberry, and Japanese honeysuckle.
- (2) **Non-Riverine Swamp Forest (Sweetgum Subtype):** The non-riverine swamp forest community occurs on large flatwoods throughout the study area. Areas of this community type in the study area show signs of recent logging activities. Large tracts of land appear to have been clear cut within the last five years. Sweetgum, red maple, and tulip poplar dominate the over story canopy, while red maple, sweetgum, giant cane, Chinese privet, and multiflora rose occur in the understory. Vine species were limited to greenbriar, poison ivy, and Japanese honeysuckle.
- (3) **Non-Riverine Wet Hardwood Forest (Oak Flat Subtype):** The non-riverine wet hardwood forest is the most common forested community found in the project study area. This community type is found on broad flats with little topographic relief and is often segmented by agricultural fields. Large tracts within this community have been recently logged, and dominant canopy species in this community include swamp chestnut oak, laurel oak, loblolly pine, red maple, sweetgum, tulip poplar, American holly, and water oak. The understory is dominated by American holly, high-bush blueberry, red maple, and sweetgum. Vine species observed were limited to greenbriar, poison ivy, and Japanese honeysuckle.
- (4) **Brownwater Bottomland Hardwood Forest (High Subtype):** The brownwater bottomland hardwood forest is found at the southwestern end of the project study area along the banks of Ahoskie Creek. This area was once the active floodplain of Ahoskie Creek, but historic channelization and human impacts no longer allow this system to flood, resulting in a drier forest community. Hardwood species such as swamp chestnut oak, sweetgum, musclewood, and green ash dominate the canopy layer. The understory is dominated by American holly and highbush blueberry. Herbaceous and vine species observed were limited to Japanese grass, greenbriar, and Japanese honeysuckle.
- (5) **Pine Forest:** Loblolly pine stands are present in the study area in tracts managed for silvicultural operations. Canopy species observed included loblolly pine and sweetgum. The understory consisted of sweetgum, red maple, and red cedar. Herbaceous and vine species observed were limited to blackberry, greenbriar, and Japanese honeysuckle.
- (6) **Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (Coastal Plain Subtype):** Mesic mixed hardwood forest communities are located on slight topographic terraces throughout the project study area. Dominant species in this community include American beech, water oak, sweetgum, tulip poplar, red oak, white oak, and red maple in the overstory. Species in the understory consist of American holly, red cedar, American beech, red maple, red oak, and Chinese privet. Herbaceous and vine species observed were limited to Christmas fern and greenbriar.

Coverage of Terrestrial Communities in the Study Area

Community	Impacts (acres)
Maintained/Disturbed	832.4
Non-Riverine Wet Hardwood Forest	725.4
Non-Riverine Swamp Forest	364.8
Pine Forest	205.1
Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest	109.7
Brownwater Bottomland Hardwood Forest	12.0
Total:	2,249.4

Terrestrial Community Impacts by Alternative

Community	Alt. 1 (acres)	Alt. 3 (acres)	Alt. 5 (acres)	Alt. 6 (acres)
Maintained/Disturbed	154.54	228.86	209.46	130.28
Non-Riverine Wet Hardwood Forest	91.79	74.81	49.50	57.02
Non-Riverine Swamp Forest	40.24	9.17	9.17	40.24
Pine Forest	19.13	22.03	16.71	13.83
Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest	12.78	24.91	24.20	12.24
Brownwater Bottomland Hardwood Forest	0.22	0.20	0.20	0.22
Total:	318.70	359.98	309.24	253.83

Water resources in the study area are part of the Chowan River basin [US Geological Survey Hydrologic Units 03010203 and 03010204]. Nine jurisdictional streams were identified in the study area. The water quality designations of these streams are detailed in the table below. Channel substrate in these streams consist of silt and sand and water clarity is clear to slightly turbid. Ahoskie Creek is classified as turbid in the project location and has a fast velocity. All jurisdictional streams in the study area have been designated as warm water streams for the purposes of stream mitigation. Aquatic communities in the study area consist of both perennial and intermittent coastal streams. The perennial streams in the study area could support bluegill, bluehead chub, and redbreast sunfish. Intermittent streams in the study area are relatively small in size and would support aquatic communities of spring peeper, crayfish, and various benthic macroinvertebrates such as amphipods and isopods.

Water Resources in the Study Area

Stream Name	Map ID	Classification	NCDWQ Index #	Best Usage Classification
Flat Swamp	Flat Swamp	Intermittent	25-14-1-8-2	C;NSW
Ahoskie	Ahoskie	Perennial	25-14-1	C;NSW

Creek	Creek			
UT to Mill Branch	SC	Intermittent	25-4-8-11	C;NSW
UT to Flat Swamp	SX	Intermittent	25-14-1-8-2	C;NSW
UT to Horse Swamp	SY	Perennial	25-14-1-8-1	C;NSW
UT to Horse Swamp	SZ	Perennial	25-14-1-8-1	C;NSW
UT to Flat Swamp	SBB	Intermittent	25-14-1-8-2	C;NSW
UT to Flat Swamp	SCC	Intermittent	25-14-1-8-2	C;NSW
Mill Branch	Mill Branch	Perennial	25-4-8-11	C;NSW

NCDWQ Classifications: C – Aquatic Life, Secondary Recreation, Fresh Water; NSW - Nutrient Sensitive Waters

Forty-nine jurisdictional wetlands were identified within the project study area. All wetlands in the study area are within the Chowan River basin (USGS Hydrologic Units 03010203 and 03010204). Wetland classification and quality rating data are presented in the table below.

Jurisdictional Characteristics of Wetlands in the Study Area

Map ID	NCWAM Classification	Hydrologic Classification	DWQ Wetland Rating	HUC Code	Area (acres)
WA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	12	03010203	54.3
WB	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	17.4
WD	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	7.1
WF	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	5.1
WG	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	6.1
WH	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	271.0
WJ	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	32.2
WL	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	12	03010204	12.6
WM	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	12	03010203	17.7
WN	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	12	03010203	7.1
WO	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	24.4
WP	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	24.6
WR	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	23.9
WS	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	20.7
WT	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	13.8
WU	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203 03010204	46.2

Map ID	NCWAM Classification	Hydrologic Classification	DWQ Wetland Rating	HUC Code	Area (acres)
WV	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	7.3
WX	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	94.1
WY	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203 03010204	60.2
WZ	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	43.9
WAA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	4.2
WAB	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	0.8
WAC	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	12	03010203	0.2
WAD	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	2.7
WAE	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	12	03010204	9.0
WAF1	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	2.9
WAF2	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	7.7
WAF3	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	0.02
WAF4	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	0.3
WAF5	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	0.2
WAG	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	1.2
WAH	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	6.4
WAI	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	16	03010204	3.3
WBB	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	12	03010203	1.0
WBC	Bottomland Hardwood Forest	Riparian	20	03010203	0.9
WHA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	97.6
WNA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	0.3
WRA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	7.5
WRB	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	4.1
WSA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	6.2
WSS	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	2.9
WTT	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	9.2
WUU	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	8.0
WVV	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	3.4
WWA	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	10.1
WWW	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	17.6
WXX	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010204	37.1
WYY	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	31.6
WZZ	Hardwood Flat	Non-Riparian	16	03010203	19.7
				Total:	1,085.8

Applicant's Stated Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the safety of the NC 11/US 13 corridor between the NC 11/NC 561 intersection and the US 13/US 158/NC 45 intersection in Hertford County.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to improve existing North Carolina Highway 11, State Road 1212 (Shortcut Road) and portions of existing US 13 from just south of the NC 11 intersection with NC 561 to the US 13 interchange with US 158 and NC 45, a distance of approximately 7.8 miles between Ahoskie and Winton. The proposed improvements include possible widening of the roadways within the existing corridor, constructing new roadway, or a combination of widening and new construction. All of the alternatives currently under consideration for this project would improve the NC 11/US 13 corridor in the project area to a four-lane, median divided facility. Intersections along the project would either be removed, grade separated, or upgraded to superstreet intersections (no left turns from side streets) or interchanges. Widening NC 11 and US 13 to four-lane divided roadways and changing access patterns at the existing intersections is expected to improve the safety of the route throughout the study area. As proposed, the project would result in impacts to between 49.3 and 147.7 acres of jurisdictional wetlands and between 1,101 and 1,171 linear feet of stream depending on the alternative selected. Wetland impacts are calculated from slope stake to slope stake plus an additional 25 feet outside of each limit as determined from the current functional design plans for each alternative studied.

Detailed Study Alternatives

No Build Alternative

The No-Build alternative avoids impacts to the study area. However, this alternative does not address the purpose and need of the project because it does not improve the safety of the NC 11/US 13 corridor. According to the Alternative Safety Analysis, by year 2035, crashes are predicted to be 58% higher than in the current year. For this reason, this alternative was eliminated from further consideration. The No Build alternative would not meet the project purpose and need, but serves as a basis for comparing impacts and benefits of the build alternatives.

Four construction alternatives were evaluated in detail by the applicant:

Alternative 1 – Freeway (Part New Location)

This alternative proposes the upgrade of existing NC 11 and SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) to a four-lane freeway from south of NC 561 to US 13. A four-lane roadway on new location would be constructed between SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) at US 13 and existing

US 13 at its northern intersection with NC 461. Full control of access would exist for this new roadway. Existing US 13 would be upgraded to a four-lane freeway between the northern intersection with NC 461 to south of US 158/NC 45 and interchanges would be constructed at the intersections of NC 11 with NC 561 and NC 11/SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) with NC 11. All other crossing roads would be grade separated or have their access removed and turned into cul-de-sacs. Additional right of way would be required to construct the new road segment east of existing US 13, between US 13/SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) and the northern US 13/NC 461 intersection.

Alternative 3 – Freeway/Expressway (Existing Location)

This alternative proposes the upgrade of existing NC 11 and SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) to a four-lane freeway from south of NC 561 to US 13. The portion of US 13 from SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) to NC 461 would be widened to four lanes with partial control of access (one driveway per parcel). Existing US 13 would be upgraded to a four-lane freeway between the northern intersection with NC 461 to south of US 158/NC 45. Interchanges would be constructed at NC 11 and NC 561, NC 11/SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) and the US 13 and the northern leg of NC 461.

Alternative 5 – Superstreet (Existing Location)

This alternative proposes the upgrade of NC 11, existing SR 1212 (Shortcut Road), and existing US 13 to a four-lane roadway from south of NC 561 to south of US 158/NC 45. Partial control of access would be obtained along existing US 13 between SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) and the northern intersection with NC 461 since this section of US 13 currently has no control of access. Although an interchange would be constructed at the northern intersection of US 13 and NC 461, a superstreet design will be utilized at the remaining intersections, with the exception of NC 11 and NC 561, which will be an offset or “dog leg” superstreet design.

Alternative 6 – Superstreet (Part New Location)

This alternative proposes the upgrade of existing NC 11 and SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) to a four-lane roadway from south of NC 561 to US 13. A four-lane roadway on new location would be constructed between SR 1212 (Shortcut Road) at US 13 and the northern intersection of US 13 at NC 461, which will become a grade separation. Full control of access would be obtained for the new location portion of the project beyond SR 1408 (Saluda Hall Road), meaning that connections to the facility are only provided via ramps at interchanges. Existing US 13 would be upgraded to a four-lane roadway between NC 461 to south of US 158/NC 45. No interchanges would be constructed with this alternative, but a superstreet design will be utilized at the remaining intersections, with the exception of NC 11 and NC 561, which will be an offset or “dog leg” superstreet design.

Comparison of Detailed Study Alternatives

Resource		Alternative 1	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 6
Project Length (miles)		7.9	7.7	7.7	7.9
Relocations	Residential	1	54	54	1
	Business	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	54	54	1
Minority/Low Income Populations - Disproportionate Impacts*		No	Yes	Yes	No
Historic Properties (adverse effect)		0	1	1	0
Community Facilities Impacted**		0	2+	2+	0
Section 4(f) Impacts		0	2	2	0
Prime Farmland (acres)		58.7	68.9	62.2	51.5
Noise Impacts		2	26	26	1
Wetlands (acres)		147.7	106.6	49.3	83.5
Streams (linear feet)		1,141	1,101	1,101	1,171
Floodplain (acres)		0	0	0	0
Federally Protected Species		0	0	0	0

* The impacts to the affected communities are considered to be disproportionately high and adverse since there is not enough available housing in this area to accommodate those relocated by these alternatives.

** Impacts to schools, parks, churches, fire stations, cemeteries, etc.

+ Community facilities impacted include the Pleasant Plains Church & cemetery

Compensatory Mitigation

The purpose of compensatory mitigation is to replace the lost functions from a project's impacts to Waters of the United States, including wetlands. Appropriate and practicable compensatory mitigation will be required for unavoidable impacts from the construction of the intersection of US 17 Business and NC 37 on the north side of the project area. The applicant will make every effort to provide on-site mitigation where possible. Any mitigation requirements not provided on-site will be met off-site through utilization of the North Carolina Ecosystem Enhancement Program.

Essential Fish Habitat

Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, this Public Notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements. The Corps' initial determination is that the proposed project would not effect EFH or associated fisheries managed by the South Atlantic or Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Councils or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Cultural Resources

Three structures of historic or architectural importance have been identified within the project study area. These include the Pleasant Plains Rosenwald School, the Newsome-Hall House, and the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church, all of which have been determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Given the function and proximity of the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church and Rosenwald School, they have been considered as one joint historic resource. A description of each resource is provided below.

The Pleasant Plains Rosenwald School, located on the west side of US 13, just south of the intersection with SR 1132 (Pleasant Plain Road), was built in the 1920s and is a well-preserved, one story, symmetrical frame building that was originally constructed as a school for African-American children. The school was built with assistance from the Rosenwald Fund, which was named for Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, and Company. The Rosenwald Fund offered matching grants to rural communities interested in building black schools, which often became the centers of small, rural, black settlements in early 20th century North Carolina. Pleasant Plains School, a three-teacher facility, was one of the first of ten Rosenwald schools built in Hertford County, and is a well-preserved example. Since the 1960s, after it ceased functioning as a school, the building has been used by its owner, Pleasant Plains Baptist Church, as a recreation building and community center.

Pleasant Plains Baptist Church, organized in 1851 and located across US 13 from the Pleasant Plains Rosenwald School, is a 1949 Gothic Revival, 2-story brick church.

The Newsome-Hall House is a two-story farmhouse with Queen Anne style-influence located at the northwest corner of the intersection of US 13 and SR 1131 (Saluda Hall Road). It was originally the home of W.D. Newsome, a free black man that lived from 1822-1916, and served Hertford County as both a county commissioner (1868-1870) and a state legislator in the House of Representatives (1870-1872).

On June 11, 2013, a meeting was held with the State Historic Preservation Office to seek concurrence on the effects that the various alternatives would have on these resources. The following table presents the effects of each alternative on these resources.

Historic Resource Effects

Alternative	Historic Resource	Project Effect
1	Newsome-Hall House	No effect
1	Pleasant Plains Baptist Church &	No effect

	Rosenwald School	
3	Newsome-Hall House	No adverse effect
3	Pleasant Plains Baptist Church & Rosenwald School	Adverse effect
5	Newsome-Hall House	No adverse effect
5	Pleasant Plains Baptist Church & Rosenwald School	Adverse effect
6	Newsome-Hall House	No adverse effect
6	Pleasant Plains Baptist Church & Rosenwald School	No effect

Under Alternative 1, there will not be any impacts to either of the historic resources, and under Alternatives 3, 5, and 6, there will be no adverse effect to the Newsome-Hall House since the access may be affected, but the character of the property will not suffer. However, under Alternatives 3 and 5, the Pleasant Plains Baptist Church and Rosenwald School will both have adverse impacts due to a loss of property and a change in access. The church will lose nearly 40 feet off the front of their lot, which will reduce the available parking and impact the adjacent cemetery, which could necessitate the relocation of graves. The church building itself will not be directly affected. The Rosenwald School will also lose approximately 100 feet of property as a result of the additional right of way that will be acquired, although the structure itself will not be affected.

There may be areas within the current study area that have a high potential for the presence of eligible archaeological resources, particularly those dating to the historic period. As the designs are refined and a preferred alternative chosen, NCDOT will coordinate with the SHPO so they may assess the potential effects of the project and the need for an archaeological investigation.

Endangered Species

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Corps reviewed the project area, examined all information provided by the applicant and consulted the latest North Carolina Natural Heritage Database. Based on available information:

The Corps determines that the proposed project would not affect federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat.

The Corps determines that the proposed project may affect, not likely to adversely affect federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat. Further evaluation and coordination concerning these species will be included in the final environmental document.

The Corps is not aware of the presence of species listed as threatened or endangered or their critical habitat formally designated pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) within the project area. The Corps will make a final determination on the effects of the proposed project upon additional review of the project and completion of any necessary biological assessment and/or consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or National Marine Fisheries Service.

Other Required Authorizations

The Corps forwards this notice and all applicable application materials to the appropriate State agencies for review.

North Carolina Division of Water Resources (NCDWR): The Corps will generally not make a final permit decision until the NCDWR issues, denies, or waives State Certification required by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (PL 92-500). The receipt of the application and this public notice combined with appropriate application fee at the North Carolina Division of Water Resources Central Office in Raleigh constitutes initial receipt of an application for a 401 Water Quality Certification. A waiver will be deemed to occur if the NCDWR fails to act on this request for certification within sixty days of the date of the receipt of this notice in the NCDWR Central Office. Additional information regarding the Clean Water Act Certification may be reviewed at the NCDWR Central Office, Transportation Permitting Unit, 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-2260. All persons desiring to make comments regarding the application for certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act should do so, in writing, by November 10, 2014 to:

NCDWR Central Office
Attention: Ms. Amy Chapman
1650 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1650

North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (NCDCM): The application did not include a certification that the proposed work complies with and would be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the approved North Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program. Pursuant to 33 CFR 325.2 (b)(2) the Corps cannot issue a Department of Army (DA) permit for the proposed work until the applicant submits such a certification to the Corps and the NCDCM, and the NCDCM notifies the Corps that it concurs with the applicant's consistency certification. As the application did not include the consistency certification, the Corps will request, upon receipt, concurrence or objection from the NCDCM.

Evaluation

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors

which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values (in accordance with Executive Order 11988), land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. For activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, the evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the Environmental Protection Agency's 404(b)(1) guidelines.

Commenting Information

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials, including any consolidated State Viewpoint or written position of the Governor; Indian Tribes and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to select the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and/or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider the application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing. Requests for a public hearing shall be granted, unless the District Engineer determines that the issues raised are insubstantial or there is otherwise no valid interest to be served by a hearing.

The Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District will receive written comments pertinent to the proposed work, as outlined above, until 5pm, November 10, 2014. Comments should be submitted to Tracey Wheeler, Washington Regulatory Field Office, 2407 West Fifth Street , Washington, North Carolina 27889, at (910) 251-4627.