



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Wilmington District

Cape Fear River above Wilmington, NC (Navigation, Section 216)

- Initial appraisal report approved in July 2009
- Ready to initiate reconnaissance phase, subject to the availability of funds



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC 7

DATE: 6 March 2014

1. **AUTHORIZATION:** River and Harbor Act of 1970, Section 216, Public Law 91-611
2. **PROJECT AREA:** The Cape Fear River Locks and Dams, located in Bladen County in southeastern North Carolina, consist of three federally built and maintained locks and dams. They are part of the Cape Fear River above Wilmington, NC project. Two of the locks and dams were constructed between 1915 and 1917, while the third was constructed in 1935. The locks and dams were constructed to ensure a navigable channel for commercial barges from Wilmington to Fayetteville.
3. **IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED:** This study will review the completed project and determine if modifications are advisable due to significantly changed physical or economic conditions. Alternatives that will be investigated could include leaving the locks and dams in their current status or recommending project deauthorization and transferring it to a non-Federal entity.
4. **COST ESTIMATE:** \$ 100,000 (Reconnaissance – 100% Federal)
5. **FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION THRU FY 2013:** \$0.
6. **FY 2014 FUNDING ALLOCATION:** \$0.

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7. **FY 2015 BUDGET AMOUNT:** \$0. Funds in the amount of \$100,000 could be used to initiate a reconnaissance phase, complete a 905(b) analysis to determine Federal interest, develop a project management plan and negotiate a feasibility cost sharing agreement.
8. **COMPLETION DATE:** Reconnaissance phase – 18 months from initiation, subject to the availability of funds.
9. **OTHER INFORMATION:** Since 1994, commercial traffic has practically ceased, raising questions about the economic viability and continued maintenance of the navigation project. Based on maintenance records for the past 10 years, the Corps of Engineers spends over \$790,000 per year on the three locks and dams and the 111 miles of associated channels.

All alternatives investigated under the subsequent studies will be assessed for impacts on water supply, fish passage, wetlands and associated wildlife, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and commercial and recreational navigation. Further, the NC General Assembly enacted legislation (HB 2785) in August 2008 to accept the transfer of the three locks and dams once they have been “properly refurbished and rock arch rapids fish ladders have been successfully constructed”. To date, the construction of rock arch rapids was completed in FY 2012 at Lock and Dam No. 1 using Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and state of North Carolina funds as a mitigation requirement for the Wilmington Harbor 96 Act navigation deepening project.