



NCDOT/ Hampstead Bypass (Regulatory)

- **Regulatory Action:** Reviewing NCDOT's request for a wetland fill permit under the NEPA/EIS process associated with the extension of Military Cutoff Road, referred to as the Hampstead Bypass.
- **Current Concerns:** Environmental concerns include significant wetland impacts (over 200 acres), and potential impacts to habitat used by the endangered Red-Cockaded Woodpecker.



CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: NC – 07

DATE: 5 February 2014

1. **PURPOSE:**

To provide the status of the proposed Hampstead Bypass, New Hanover and Pender Counties, North Carolina. (T.I.P. No. U-4751 and R-3300, Action ID SAW-2007-1386).

1. **BACKGROUND:**

a. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently pursuing the permit of a new highway extending Military Cutoff Road in New Hanover County to I-140 and continuing northeast around Hampstead to US Hwy 17 just below Holly Shelter Gamelands, Pender County.

b. The project currently is being reviewed within the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 Merger Process, a streamline process intended to blend the requirements of NEPA with the 404 b(1) guidelines of the Clean Water Act.

c. The Merger team (Project Delivery Team) was provided a scoping notice for this project in 2005 and signed the first concurrence point (purpose and need) in Sept. 2006.

d. The Corps is acting as the lead Federal Agency and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was released in the fall of 2011.

e. The DOT must enter into consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before the permit

PROJECT INFORMATION – NCDOT/Hampstead Bypass (Regulatory), Continued

can be issued. This consultation process involves the presence of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) as well as two other threatened and endangered plant species.

- f. Projected wetland impacts from this project may exceed 200 acres.
- g. The USEPA had a number of comments concerning the DEIS that will be addressed by the Department of Transportation after release of the DEIS.
- h. The Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) corridor was selected by the Merger Team in May 2012.

3. CURRENT STATUS:

- a. In 2013, some design changes in the project necessitated the development and subsequent release of a Supplement Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) in October of 2013.
- b. As before, the EPA had numerous comments that need to be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).
- c. The Project Delivery Team is recertifying the LEDPA decision point as well as avoidance and minimization efforts by the DOT considering comments received from the public and agencies post release of the SDEIS.
- d. Receipt of the FEIS is currently anticipated in late spring 2014.