



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Wilmington District

NCDOT/ Hampstead Bypass US 17, New Hanover and Pender Counties, NC (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

DATES: 23 February 2015

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 Game Lands, Pender County.

b. The project is currently 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. Projected wetland impacts from this project may exceed 200 acres.
- f. The USEPA had a number of comments concerning the DEIS that will be addressed by the Department of Transportation after release of the DEIS.
- g. The Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) corridor was selected by the Merger Team in May 2012.
- h. 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.
- i. Comments were received on the SDEIS in response to the NCDOT's attempts to reduce impacts to threatened and endangered species, through designing a second mid town interchange that was met with opposition from residents in Hampstead.
- j. The Corps released the FEIS in July 2014. The North Carolina DOT used the FEIS to prepare a State Record of Decision (ROD) which is a necessary step before they begin to purchase Right of Way for the project.

3. **CURRENT STATUS:**

- a. A contract is expected to be awarded for the Military Cutoff (U-4751) portion of the project sometime in 2017. Therefore, a Department of Army (DA) permit application is anticipated by 2016. The Hampstead Bypass (R-3300) portion is currently not funded with anticipated funding at least ten years out.
- b. The project will likely require consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for effects on the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) as well as two other threatened and endangered plant species. The DOT must comply with the requirements under the Endangered Species Act prior to final permit decision.
- c. The regulated public will have additional opportunity to provide comment during the public notice comment period following receipt of DA permit application.