DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 1890
Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890

Action ID No. 198200031 September 12, 2003

PUBLIC NOTICE
RENEWAL OF REGIONAL GENERAL PERMIT

THE DISTRICT ENGINEER, WILMINGTON DISTRICT, Post Office Box 1890, Wilmington, North Carolina 28402 hereby announces the modification and re-issuance of Regional General Permit (RGP) 198200031 (NCDOT Bridge Construction, Maintenance and Repair) pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344). Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations, Paragraph 325, authorizes the District Engineer to issue regional general permits to authorize activities, which are substantially similar in nature and cause only minimal individual and cumulative environmental impacts.

RGP 198200031 (copy attached) authorizes the construction, maintenance, and repair of NCDOT bridges on waters of the United States that are located in the State of North Carolina. The RGP also includes authorization of cofferdams, abutments, foundation seals, piers, approach fills, detour fills, box culvert installation and temporary construction and access fills associated with bridge construction.

The RGP has been extensively reviewed through a public notice process, and no substantive objections to the modification or re-issuance were received. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have reviewed this application and have no unresolved concerns.

The RGP is not applicable when the proposed activity would adversely affect areas that possess historic, cultural, scenic, conservation or recreational values.

The RGP was not found to be controversial or to have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. The RGP was also not found to be a major federal action that would significantly affect the human environment; and hence, detailed statements under Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environment Policy Act of 1969 were not prepared.

The decision to modify and reissue the RGP was based on evaluations of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposed activities and their intended use on the public interest. The re-issuance of the RGP will not be contrary to the general public interest provided those availing themselves of the authority comply with the general and special conditions incorporated in the RGP.

Additional information concerning this RGP can be obtained from Richard K. Spencer, Regulatory Division, Wilmington District Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Post Office Box 1890, Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890 or telephone (910) 251-4172.

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Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 1890
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Regional General Permit No. 198200031
Name of Permittee: General Public
Effective Date: September 1, 2003
Expiration Date: August 31, 2008

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
REGIONAL GENERAL PERMIT

A regional general permit (RGP) to perform work in or affecting navigable waters of the United States and waters of the United States, upon recommendation of the Chief of Engineers, pursuant to Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of March 3, 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403), and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), is hereby modified and re-issued by authority of the Secretary of the Army by the

District Engineer
U.S. Army Engineer District, Wilmington
Corps of Engineers
Post Office Box 1890
Wilmington, North Carolina 28402-1890

TO AUTHORIZE **THE DISCHARGE OF DREDGED OR FILL MATERIAL IN WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES, INCLUDING WETLANDS, ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF BRIDGES, INCLUDING COFFERDAMS, ABUTMENTS, FOUNDATION SEALS, PIERS, APPROACH FILLS, DETOUR FILLS, BOX CULVERT INSTALLATION AND TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION AND ACCESS FILLS, IN WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES AS PART OF WORK CONDUCTED BY THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NCDOT) OR OTHER STATE, FEDERAL OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY, IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.**

1. Special Conditions.

a. Written confirmation that the proposed work complies with this RGP must be received from the Wilmington District Engineer prior to the commencement of any work. To enable this determination to be made, the permittee must furnish the Wilmington District Engineer a pre-construction notification with the following information:

(1) A map indicating the location of the work.

(2) Plans of the proposed work showing all pertinent structures, elevations, dimensions and quantities of materials and locations of all structures and/or fill in wetlands or waterward of the normal/high water elevation contours.

(3) A brief discussion of the affected aquatic resources, including streams and wetlands. The discussion shall include the identification and types of vegetation present.

(4) Approximate commencement and completion dates.

(5) A description of methods to be employed to avoid and/or minimize permanent and temporary impacts to aquatic resources caused by the proposed work.

(6) Plans, including timetables and techniques, for construction, stabilization and removal of all unavoidable temporary fills.

(7) Names and addresses of adjoining property owners.

b. In the case of fills of one acre or less, including permanent approach fills, detour fills and fills associated with culvert installation, the Corps of Engineers' Project Manager will determine, after appropriate onsite visits and review of plans, if the impacts on aquatic resources, including streams and wetlands, are likely to be such as to require review by Federal and State agencies. If it is determined that impacts are minimal or can be made minimal by changes agreed to by the applicant, a letter of authorization to proceed will be provided. If it is determined that review by Federal and State agencies is necessary to fully evaluate impacts, copies of all plans and materials will be forwarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). These agencies will furnish comments to the Wilmington District Engineer within thirty (30) days.

c. In cases of fills greater than one acre, copies of all plans and materials will be forwarded to the USFWS, the NMFS, the EPA and the NCDENR. These agencies will furnish comments to the Wilmington District Engineer in thirty (30) days. In cases of land disturbing activities comprising more than one acre, a Sedimentation/Erosion Control Plan will be filed with the North Carolina Division of Land Resources, Land Quality Section, thirty (30) days prior to commencing work.

d. Where work is proposed within the twenty (20) coastal counties, as defined by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, the applicant shall forward a copy of the pre-construction notification to:

National Marine Fisheries Service
101 Pivers Island Road
Beaufort, North Carolina 28516

The counties in which this condition applies are:

Beaufort	Hertford	Bertie	Hyde	Brunswick
New Hanover	Camden	Onslow	Carteret	Pamlico
Chowan	Pasquotank	Craven	Pender	Currituck
Perquimans	Dare	Tyrrell	Gates	Washington

e. In the event that any Federal agency maintains an objection or any required State authorization is outstanding, no notice to proceed will be given until objections are resolved and State authorizations are issued.

f. No work will proceed until after the applicant has received written notice to proceed from the Wilmington District Engineer. This notice may include additional conditions and/or restrictions. Copies of the notice to proceed will be furnished to the USFWS, the NMFS, the EPA and the NCDENR with a brief description of the work, including the area of wetlands affected and the quantity of fill material.

g. Upon completion of any work authorized by this RGP, all temporary fills will be completely removed and the area reestablished as a wetland by restoring natural hydrology and native vegetation. Stream contours and riparian vegetation will be reestablished upon the removal of temporary culverts. In such instances, a restoration plan will be submitted to the Wilmington District Engineer for approval. Information in the restoration plan will be in accordance with special condition i. below.

h. Appropriate soil and erosion control measures must be established and maintained during construction. All fills, temporary and permanent, must be adequately stabilized at the earliest practicable date to prevent erosion of fill material into adjacent waters or wetlands.

i. In cases where new alignment approaches are to be constructed and the existing wetland approach fill is to be abandoned and no longer to be maintained as a roadway, the abandoned fill shall be removed and the area reestablished as a wetland. In such instances, a restoration plan will be submitted to the Wilmington District Engineer for approval. Information in the restoration plan will be in accordance with special condition i. below.

j. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, must be minimized or avoided to the maximum extent practicable. In reviewing an activity, the Wilmington District Engineer will first determine whether the activity will result in more than minimal adverse environmental affects. For activities that are determined to have more than minimal impacts, compensatory mitigation will be required. To expedite the process, the applicant will provide a mitigation plan with the request for authorization. Site specific mitigation proposals will include, but are not necessarily limited to, a description of work, a

schedule of work and a monitoring plan, and they will be in accordance with currently approved Wilmington District and/or Corps-wide mitigation guidelines. The applicant may propose other forms of mitigation, such as mitigation bank credits or in-lieu fee mitigation with the notification, which in some situations and at the discretion of the Wilmington District, may be considered acceptable mitigation.

k. Activities in any North Carolina designated "Mountain Trout Waters" must comply with all pH, temperature and turbidity criteria established for such waters by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and/or the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ). Work that may result in the sedimentation of trout waters will generally be prohibited from October 15 to April 15, of any year, to avoid impacts on trout spawning.

l. Before discharging dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, in the twenty-five (25) mountain counties of North Carolina that contain trout waters, the applicant will obtain and provide a letter of comments and recommendations from the North NCWRC on the proposed activities. A discussion of alternatives to working in the mountain trout waters and why alternatives were not selected, and a plan to provide compensatory mitigation for all unavoidable adverse impacts to the mountain trout waters shall also be submitted with the letter from NCWRC. To facilitate coordination with the NCWRC, the proponent may provide a copy of the notification to the NCWRC concurrent with the notification to the District Engineer. The NCWRC will respond both to the proponent and directly to the Corps of Engineers.

The applicant should contact:

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Habitat Conservation Program Manager
1721 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1721
Telephone (919) 733-7638

The counties in which this condition applies are:

Alleghany	Ashe	Avery	Buncombe	Burke
Caldwell	Cherokee	Clay	Graham	Haywood
Henderson	Jackson	Macon	Madison	McDowell
Mitchell	Polk	Rutherford	Stokes	Surry Swain
Transylvania	Watauga	Wilkes	Yancey	

m. This permit does not authorize the use of culverts in areas designated as anadromous fish spawning areas by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) or the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC).

n. Discharges into Waters of the United States designated by either the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) or the NCWRC as anadromous fish spawning area are prohibited during the period between February 15 and June 30, without prior written approval

from NCDMF or NCWRC and the Corps. Discharges into waters of the United States designated by NCDMF as primary nursery areas and discharges into waters of the United States designated by NCWRC as inland nursery areas shall be coordinated with NCDMF and NCWRC prior to being authorized by this RGP. Coordination with NCDMF and NCWRC may result in a required construction moratorium during periods of significant biological productivity or critical life stages.

The Applicant should contact:

NC Division of Marine Fisheries
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557
Telephone 252-726-7021
or 800-682-2632

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission
Habitat Conservation Program Manager
1721 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1721
Telephone (919) 733-7638

o. No activity may result in substantial permanent disruption of the movement of those species of aquatic life indigenous to the waterbody, including those species that normally migrate through the area.

p. This permit generally allows the permanent installation of culverts to 100 feet in length. For culverts longer than 100 feet, the proposed application will be closely evaluated to determine if unacceptable impacts on movement of aquatic organisms would result. In such cases, approval may not be provided.

q. If the project is located within the twenty (20) counties of North Carolina designated as coastal counties by the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), then all pipe and culvert inverts will be buried at least one foot below normal bed elevation when they are placed within the Public Trust Area of Environmental Concern (AEC) and/or the Estuarine Waters AEC as designated by CAMA, and/or all streams appearing as blue lines on United States Geological Survey (USGS) quad sheets. If the project is not located within the twenty (20) counties of North Carolina designated as coastal counties by CAMA, then culvert inverts will be buried at least one foot below the bed of the stream for culverts greater than 48 inches in diameter. For culverts 48 inches in diameter or smaller, culverts must be buried below the bed of the stream to a depth equal to or greater than 20 percent of the diameter of the culvert. Bottomless arch culverts will satisfy this condition. A waiver from the depth specifications in this condition may be requested in writing. The waiver will only be issued if it can be demonstrated that the impacts of complying with this condition would result in more adverse impacts to the aquatic environment.

r. All activities authorized by this RGP shall, to the extent practicable, be conducted "in the dry", with barriers installed between work areas and aquatic habitat to protect that habitat from cement or other pollutants. Where concrete is utilized, measures will be taken to prevent live or fresh concrete, including bags of uncured concrete, from coming into contact with waters of the state until the concrete has hardened. Water in the work area will be pumped to holding and settling ponds as practicable, and water will not be allowed to re-enter the water column until decanted.

s. If the project authorized by this RGP is proposed by a Federal or State agency, and is located within the twenty (20) counties of North Carolina designated as coastal counties by the CAMA, then prior to project initiation the proponent must obtain a determination of consistency with the state's coastal management program from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management (DCM). A copy of the state's consistency determination must be provided to the appropriate Wilmington District Regulatory Office at the following address:

Wilmington Regulatory Field Office	**Washington Regulatory Field Office**
P.O. Box 1890`	**P.O. Box 1000**
Wilmington, NC 28402	**Washington, NC 27889**

The state's consistency determination will be conveyed in the form of a CAMA permit if the project is located within a designated CAMA Area of Environmental Concern (AEC), and will be conveyed in the form of a Consistency Determination letter from DCM if the project is not located within a designated CAMA AEC.

t. No work shall be authorized by the RGP within the twenty coastal counties, as defined by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, without prior consultation with NOAA Fisheries. For each activity reviewed by the Corps of Engineers where it is determined that the activity may affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Federally managed species, an EFH Assessment shall be prepared by the applicant and forwarded to the Corps of Engineers and NOAA Fisheries for review and comment prior to authorization of work.

u. All work will comply with Water Quality Certification No. 3404, issued by the NCDWQ on 28 March 2003.

v. The activity must be designed to maintain preconstruction downstream flow conditions (e.g., location, capacity, and flow rates). Furthermore, the activity must not permanently restrict or impede the passage of normal or expected high flows and the structure or discharge of dredged or fill material must withstand expected high flows

2. General Conditions.

a. All activities authorized by this RGP that involve the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States will be consistent with applicable water quality standards, effluent limitations and standards of performance, prohibitions, pre-treatment standards and management practices established pursuant to the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344) and applicable State and local law. If the proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States, prior to the commencement of any work, the applicant will satisfy the NCDWQ regarding the need for a Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

b. There will be no unreasonable interference with navigation or the right of the public to riparian access by the existence or use of activities authorized by this RGP.

c. A permittee, upon receipt of written notice from the Wilmington District Engineer of failure to comply with the terms or conditions of this RGP, will, within 60 days, without expense to the U.S. Government, and in such manner as the Wilmington District Engineer may direct, affect compliance with the terms and conditions or return the worksite to a pre-work condition.

d. The permittee must make every reasonable effort to perform the work authorized herein in a manner so as to minimize any adverse impact on fish, wildlife and natural environmental values.

e. The permittee must perform the work authorized herein in a manner so as to minimize any degradation of water quality. The activity will be conducted in such a manner as to prevent a significant increase in turbidity outside the area of construction or construction-related discharge. Increases such that the turbidity in the water body is 50 NTU's or less in all rivers not designated as trout waters by the North Carolina Division of Environmental Management (NCDEM), 25 NTU's or less in all saltwater classes and in all lakes and reservoirs, and 10 NTU's or less in trout waters, are not considered significant.

f. The permittee will permit the Wilmington District Engineer or his representative to make periodic inspections at any time deemed necessary in order to assure that the activity is being performed or maintained in strict accordance with the Special and General Conditions of this permit.

g. This RGP **does not** convey any rights, either in real estate or material, or any exclusive privileges; and it does not authorize any injury to property or invasion of rights or any infringement of Federal, State or local laws or regulations, nor does it obviate the requirement to obtain State or local assent required by law for the activity authorized herein. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to, a Dredge and/or Fill Permit (N.C.G.S. 113-229), a CAMA Permit (N.C.G.S. 113A-118), an Easement to Fill (N.C.G.S. 146-12) and a Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.

h. Authorization provided by this RGP may be modified, suspended or revoked in whole or in part if the Wilmington District Engineer, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, determines that such action would be in the best public interest. Unless subject to modification, suspension or revocation, the term of this RGP shall be five years. Any modification, suspension or revocation of this authorization will not be the basis for any claim for damages against the U.S. Government.

i. This RGP does not authorize the interference with any existing or proposed Federal project and the permittee will not be entitled to compensation for damages or injury to the structures or work authorized herein which may be caused by or results from existing or future operations undertaken by the United States in the public interest.

j. This RGP will not be applicable to proposed construction when the Wilmington District Engineer determines that the proposed activity would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and determines that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared.

k. This RGP will not be applicable to proposed construction when the Wilmington District Engineer determines, after any necessary investigations, that the proposed activity would adversely affect areas that possess historic, cultural, scenic, conservation or recreational values. Application of this exemption applies to:

(1) Rivers named in Section 3 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (15 U.S.C. 1273), those proposed for inclusion as provided by Sections 4 and 5 of the Act and wild, scenic and recreational rivers established by State and local entities.

(2) Historic, cultural or archeological sites listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987 and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

(3) Sites included in or determined eligible for listing in the National Registry of Natural Landmarks.

(4) Endangered or threatened species or critical habitat of such species as determined by the Secretaries of Interior or Commerce and concerned in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531).

(5) NOAA designated marine sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and coral reefs.

l. Permittees are advised that activities in or near a floodway may be subject to the National Flood Insurance Program, which prohibits any activities, including fill within a floodway that results in any increase in base flood elevations.

m. At his discretion, the Wilmington District Engineer may determine that this RGP will not be applicable to a specific construction proposal. In such case, the procedure for processing an individual permit in accordance with 33 CFR 325 will be available.

n. The permittee or the permittee's successors will maintain the authorized work in good condition and in conformance with the terms and conditions of the RGP.

o. The discharge of dredged or fill material shall consist of suitable material free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts.

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Charles R. Alexander, Jr.
Colonel, U. S. Army
District Engineer