



**US Army Corps
Of Engineers**
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: March 18, 2014

Comment Deadline: April 18, 2014

Corps Action ID #: SAW-2011-01922, Br# 16 and 20, Brunswick Co.

The Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received an application from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) seeking Department of the Army authorization to discharge dredged or fill material into waters and wetlands adjacent to Honey Island Swamp to replace Bridge #16 and Bridge #20 located on NC Highway 211 just south of the Columbus County line in Brunswick County.

Specific information regarding the project is provided below and shown on the attached plans. **This Public Notice and more detailed plan sheets are also available on the Wilmington District Web Site at www.saw.usace.army.mil/wetlands**

Applicant:

Ms. Karen Fussell, P.E.
Division 3 Engineer
NC Department of Transportation
5501 Barbados Blvd.
Castle Hayne, North Carolina 28429

Authority

The Corps will evaluate this application and decide whether to issue, conditionally issue, or deny the proposed work pursuant to applicable procedures under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344).

Location

The proposed project involves the replacement of two 59 year old structurally deficient bridges that are separated by 700 feet crossing the Honey Island Swamp. Specifically, the bridges are located approximately one mile south of the Columbus County line along NC Hwy 211. The road can be physically located at 34.1904 N and -78.3561 W. The project is located in the Waccamaw River Basin and lies within Hydrologic Unit 03040206.

Applicant's Stated Purpose

The purpose for this State Project No. 17BP.3.R.26 is to preserve the mobility and safety of the traveling public by replacing the existing 59-year old structurally deficient bridges that can no longer be addressed by maintenance activities. Bridge No. 16 is a 3-span timber bridge, 25.4 feet wide by 52.6 feet long. Bridge No. 20 is a 3-span timber bridge, 25.3 feet wide by 52.4 feet long. They span Honey Island Swamp on paved NC 211.

Project Description

The replacement structure for Bridge No. 16 will consist of a single span 45" concrete girder bridge approximately 80 feet long and 34.25 feet wide. The replacement structure for Bridge No. 20 will consist of a single span 45" concrete girder bridge approximately 85 feet long and 34.25 feet wide. These bridge lengths are based on final design information and were set by hydraulic requirements. The bridges will be of sufficient width to provide for two 12-foot lanes. The low chord (height over water surface) of each new structure will be at approximately the same elevation as the existing low chord.

Summary of Impacts

Waters of the U.S.: Proposed permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas total 0.97 acre. The impacts are as follows: 0.463 acre of fill is located in forested wetlands, 0.095 acre of fill is located in herbaceous wetlands due to the proposed roadway alignment, and 0.23 acre of fill is due to sloughing which may occur in the wetlands adjacent to the undercut operations. In addition, there is 0.02 acre of permanent mechanized clearing in wetlands at the bridges and along the roadway and 0.16 acre of mechanized clearing in wetlands adjacent the area of undercutting.

Proposed temporary impacts to jurisdictional areas total 0.08 acre. The impacts are as follows: 0.08 acre of hand clearing at the bridges and along the roadway. All underground and aerial utilities in conflict with the proposed construction will be directionally bored prior to construction.

Avoidance and Minimization

The applicant has suggested the following list of avoidance and minimization measures:

- No staging of construction equipment or storage of construction supplies will be allowed in wetlands or near surface waters.
- The project was designed to avoid or minimize disturbance to aquatic life movements by use of single span bridges.
- NCDOT will minimize long-term water quality impacts through the use of the most recent Best Management Practices for Protection of Surface Waters.

- NCDOT and its contractors will not excavate, fill, or perform land clearing activities within Waters of the U.S. or any areas under the jurisdiction of the USACE, except as authorized by the USACE.
- The use of reinforced 2:1 fill slopes in jurisdictional areas which will be stabilized with geotextile fabric and vegetation.
- NCDOT will implement Best Management Practices for Bridge Demolition and Removal. The asphalt-wearing surface of the two bridges and bridge rails will be removed without dropping them into the water prior to bridge demolition.
- Turbidity curtains will be installed around existing interior bents prior to extraction of the piles. The timber piles encased in concrete will be extracted with a vibratory hammer and crane, to minimize disturbance to the natural stream.
- Silt fence and coir fiber wattle barrier will be used during construction to prevent sediment from entering the wetlands and jurisdictional waters.
- All aerial and underground utilities in conflict with the project will be directionally bored below the proposed wetland restoration area prior to construction.
- The use of hand clearing rather than mechanized clearing where possible.
- High visibility fencing will be utilized to identify environmentally sensitive areas that are not to be impacted.

On-Site Mitigation

The unavoidable impacts to jurisdictional riparian wetlands are proposed to be offset by mitigation provided by NCDOT through on-site restoration. The current plan calls for a total of 1.29 acres of Riverine Swamp Forest on-site restoration.

**** More detailed plans can be viewed on the Corps website www.saw.usace.army.mil/wetlands or requested from the Corps Project Manager, Brad Shaver at 910-251-4611.**

Other Required Authorizations

This notice and all applicable application materials are being forwarded to the appropriate State agencies for review. The Corps will generally not make a final permit decision until the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ) 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 in the NCDWQ Central Office in Raleigh serves as application to the NCDWQ for certification. A waiver will be deemed to occur if the NCDWQ fails to act on this request for certification within sixty days of the date of the receipt of this notice in the NCDWQ Central Office. Additional information regarding the Clean Water Act certification may be reviewed at the NCDWQ Central Office, 401 Transportation Permitting Unit, 512 N. Salisbury Street, Archdale Building, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604. All persons desiring to make comments regarding the application for certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act should do so

in writing delivered to the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NCDWQ), 1650 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1650 Attention: Mr. Mason Herndon c/o Ms. Sonya Carillo by April 18, 2014.

The applicant has not provided to the Corps, a certification statement that his/her proposed activity complies with and will 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 can not issue a permit for the proposed work until the applicant submits such a certification to the Corps and the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (NCDCM), and the NCDCM notifies the Corps that it concurs with the applicant's consistency certification.

Essential Fish Habitat

This notice initiates the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) consultation requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Corps' initial determination is that the proposed project will not adversely impact EFH or associated fisheries managed by the South Atlantic or Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Councils or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Cultural Resources

In late 2013, NCDOT archaeological staff concluded that there were no archaeological sites found within the project's Area of Potential Effect. It appears based on the provided information that no historic properties nor properties eligible for inclusion in the National Register are present within the Corps permit area; therefore, there will be no historic properties affected. The Corps subsequently requests concurrence from the State Historic Preservation Office.

Endangered Species

The NC Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) database (updated November 2013) was also reviewed for recorded occurrences of protected species. No occurrences of federally protected species were recorded within one mile for the project study area. The Corps determines that the proposed project would not affect any federally listed endangered or threatened species or their formally designated critical habitat.

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 is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State and local agencies and officials; 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 to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit 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.

Written comments pertinent to the proposed work, as outlined above, will be received by the Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, until 5pm, April 18, 2014. Comments should be submitted to Mr. Brad Shaver, US Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington Regulatory Field Office, 69 Darlington Ave., Wilmington 28403-1343.