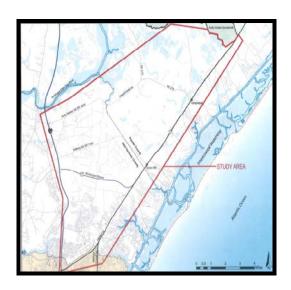


NCDOT/ Hampstead Bypass US 17, New Hanover and Pender Counties, NC (Regulatory)

- 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.

PROJECT INFORMATION – NCDOT/Hampstead Bypass, US 17, New Hanover and Pender Counties, NC (Regulatory), Continued

- 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.