

North Carolina Department of Transportation

NEPA/SEPA Consultation Form

STIP Project No.

B-5302

WBS Element

46016.1.1

Federal Aid Project No.

BRNHPP-0017(127)

A. Project Description, Location, and Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to replace Bridge No. 3 on US 17 Business over the Norfolk Southern Railroad in Beaufort County.

Bridge No. 3 is 173 feet in length. The replacement structure will be a bridge approximately 245 feet in length, will have an approximately 68-foot clear deck width with four 12-foot travel lanes and 10-foot offsets on the existing alignment, and have proposed right of way up to 280 feet. The total length of the project is approximately 2070 feet in length. The bridge length is based on preliminary design information and is set by clearance requirements. The roadway grade of the new structure will be raised to meet the minimum vertical clearance requirements of 23 feet over railroads. No construction is anticipated to impact the railroad right-of-way.

The roadway is classified as a Minor Arterial Route with a 60-mile per hour design speed. The bridge will be replaced on the existing alignment while detouring traffic offsite.

B. Consultation Phase: (Check one)

- ☐ Right-of-Way
- ☒ Construction
- ☐ Other: Identify the trigger – (e.g., design change, change in impacts)

C. NEPA/SEPA Class of Action Initially Approved as: (Check one)

- ☒ FHWA Class II (CE) (Type II B) 12/22/2016

D. Changes in Proposed Action & Environmental Consequences:

Water Resources

Water resources and classifications in the project area have not changed since the referenced CE was completed.

Protected Species

As of July 17, 2020, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists seventeen protected species for Beaufort County.

The Natural Resources Technical Report Addendum (2016) reached a Biological Conclusion of No Effect for the Kemp's ridley sea turtle, red knot, red-cockaded woodpecker, West Indian manatee, Atlantic sturgeon, and Shortnose sturgeon due to the absence of habitat. Since the completion of the NRTR Addendum, Atlantic pigtoe, dwarf wedgemussel, green sea turtle, Neuse River waterdog, Northern long-eared bat, and Tar River spiny mussel have been added to the list for Beaufort County. The project site lacks habitat for Atlantic pigtoe, dwarf wedgemussel, green sea turtle, Neuse River waterdog and Tar River spiny mussel; therefore, they have Biological Conclusions of No Effect.

The Biological Conclusion of No Effect remains for the red wolf due its continuing status as an "Experimental, non-essential" population. Plant surveys were conducted by NCDOT staff in September 2020 that confirmed the No Effect conclusions for rough leaved loosestrife and sensitive joint vetch.

Habitat for the bald eagle primarily consists of mature forest in proximity to large bodies of open water for foraging. Large dominant trees are utilized for nesting sites, typically within 1.0 mile of open water. A desktop-GIS assessment of the study area, as well as the area within a 1.13-mile radius (1 mile plus 660 feet) of the project limits, was performed during preparation of the NRTR in 2013. Water bodies large enough to be considered potential feeding sources were identified, and a survey was conducted. A historic record existed of a nest within 1.0 mile of the project site, although the nest had not been active since 2009. A review of NCNHP records in January 2021, revealed that the historic nest data was updated on October 5, 2020. The previously recorded nest was active as recently as 2015 and is approximately 0.75 miles from the project. The NCNHP record did not mention an occurrence since 2015. No eagles or eagle nests were observed during a project visit in September 2020. Due to the lack of recent occurrences, and minimal impact anticipated for this project, it has been determined that this project will not affect this species.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has revised the previous programmatic biological opinion (PBO) in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and NCDOT for the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) in eastern North Carolina. The PBO covers the entire NCDOT program in Divisions 1-8, including all NCDOT projects and activities. Although this programmatic opinion covers Divisions 1-8, NLEBs are currently only known in 19 counties, but may potentially occur in 11 additional counties within Divisions 1-8. NCDOT, FHWA, and USACE have agreed to two conservation measures which will avoid/minimize mortality of NLEBs. These conservation measures only apply to the 30 currently known/potential counties shown on Figure 2 of the PBO at this time. The programmatic determination for NLEB for the NCDOT program is **May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect**. The PBO provides incidental take coverage for NLEB and will ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for ten years for all NCDOT projects with a federal nexus in Divisions 1-8, which includes Beaufort County where B-5302 is located. This level of incidental take is authorized from the effective date of a final listing determination through December 31, 2030.

Historic Architecture and Archaeology

NCDOT has reviewed the Section 106 effects findings for historic properties within the project's area of potential effects (APE), that were made as part of the NEPA analysis. NCDOT has confirmed that there is no new information that would alter the original Section 106 findings and, therefore, they remain valid.

E. Conclusion:

The above NEPA/SEPA documentation has been reevaluated (as required by either 23 CFR 771 or by NC General Statute Chapter 113A Article 1). It has been determined that the current proposed action is essentially the same as the original proposed action. Proposed changes, if any, are noted in Section D. It has been determined that anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts were accurately described in the above referenced document(s) unless noted otherwise herein. Therefore, the original Administration Action remains valid.

F. Coordination

NCDOT personnel have discussed the current project parameters with qualified NCDOT representatives and FHWA (where applicable). The NCDOT Project Manager, Jacquelyn Bowles, PE, hereby verifies the involvement of the following staff and the incorporation of their technical input:

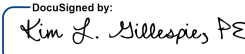
Design Engineer:	Tommy Register, PE	12/17/2020
Environmental Specialist:	Gordon Cashin	1/7/2021
FHWA (if applicable):	George Hoops, PE	12/1/2020
Other:	Jerry Snead	9/22/2020

G. Consultation Approval for NCDOT Project B-5302

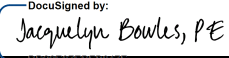
Prepared By:

1/21/2021

Date

DocuSigned by:

69AAB8EE6274FE
Kim L. Gillespie, PE, Project Manager
NCDOT, Project Management Unit

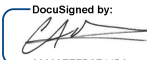
Prepared For:

DocuSigned by:

DD26E87E1CFB047E
Jacquelyn Bowles, PE
NCDOT – Structures Management Unit

Reviewed By:

1/22/2021

Date

DocuSigned by:

32883EFD0F14B9
Colin Mellor, Eastern Region Team Lead
NCDOT – Environmental Policy Unit



Approved

In adherence with 23 CFR 771 (NEPA) or NC General Statute Chapter 113A Article 1 (SEPA), NCDOT approves this Consultation.

or

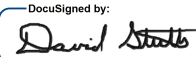


Certified

NCDOT staff certifies if FHWA signature was previously required or where changes have resulted in FHWA signature being required.

1/22/2021


Date

DocuSigned by:

74052388783C04F2
David Stutts, PE, PEF Project Engineer, Structures Management Unit
North Carolina Department of Transportation

FHWA Approved: FHWA signature required for Type I(B) CE, Type II(B) CE, Type III CE, FONSI or ROD.

1/22/2021

Date

DocuSigned by:

F27A4AAB00D141E
John F. Sullivan, III, PE, Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

H. Project Commitments (as of January 11, 2021)

PROJECT COMMITMENTS

T.I.P Project No. B-5302
Replacement of Bridge No. 3 over Norfolk Southern Railroad on US 17 Business
Beaufort County
Federal Aid Project No. BRNHPP-0017(127)
WBS Element 46016.1.1

COMMITMENTS FROM PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

Current status to the project commitments are printed in italics.

NCDOT Roadway Design, Structure Design

Forty-two inch bridge rails are proposed on both sides of the bridge to accommodate bicycles.

NCDOT Natural Environment Section

It is anticipated the project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the red wolf. Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service regarding this biological conclusion will be conducted prior to construction authorization for the project.

Coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed that a formal biological conclusion is not necessary for this species in the project area.

Surveys for rough-leaved loosestrife will be conducted during the survey window (May to June) prior to construction authorization of the project.

Surveys for this species and sensitive joint vetch in September 2020 did not locate any plants in the project area.

NCDOT Structures Management Unit – Public Involvement Newsletter

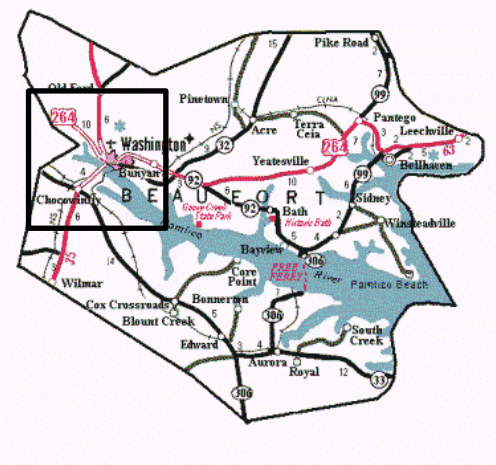
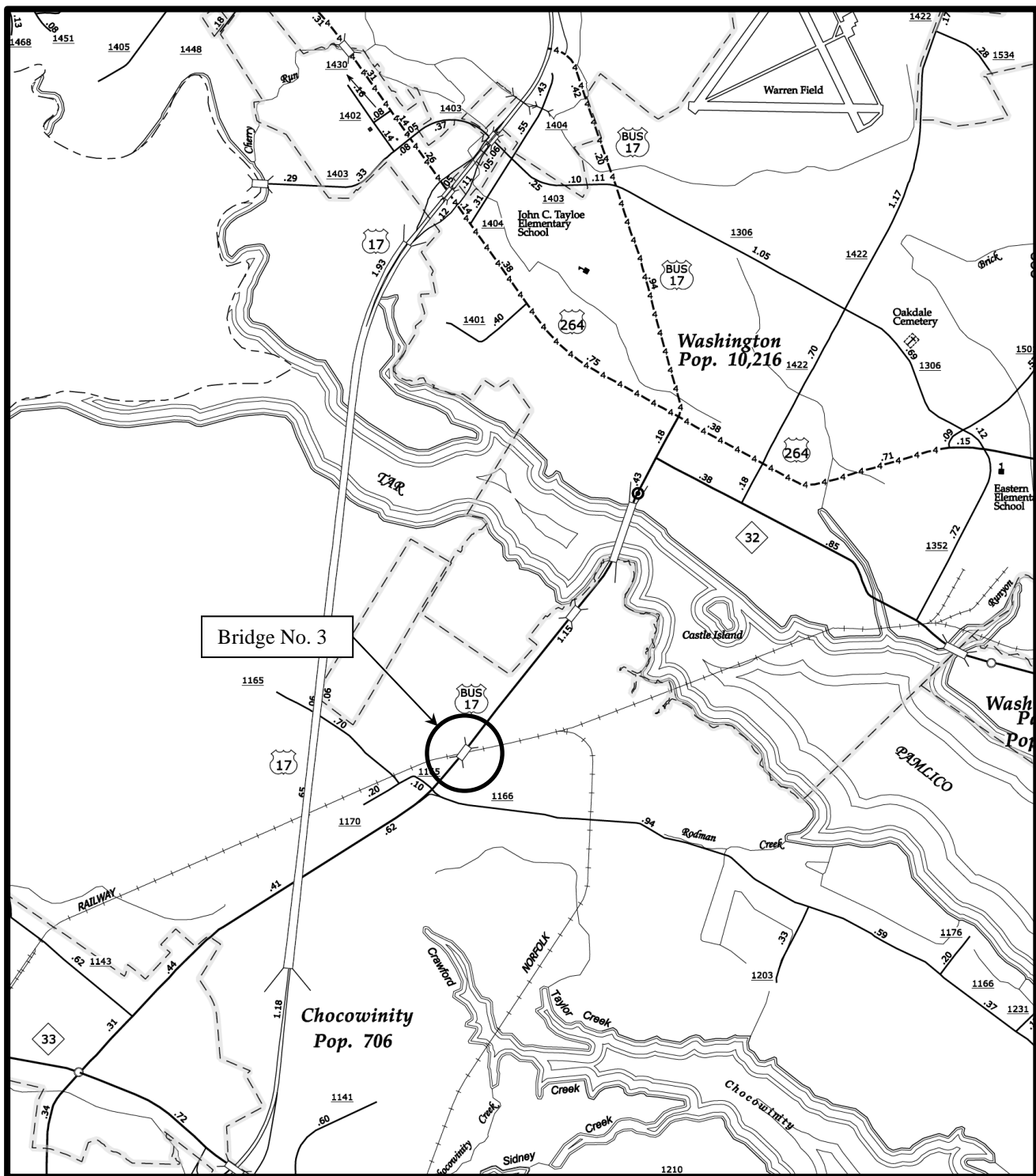
Newsletters were sent to the property owners affected by the project on February 22, 2013 to inform them of the project and the offsite detour.

NCDOT Division 2 - Schools and Emergency Services

NCDOT will coordinate construction activities with Beaufort County Schools (Jerry Wynne, Transportation Director, 252-946-6209) and Beaufort County Emergency Services (Carnie Hedgepeth, Emergency Services Director, 252-940-6519) at least one month prior to construction.

COMMITMENTS FROM PERMITTING

No new special commitments were developed during permitting.



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT &
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

**BEAUFORT COUNTY
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 3 ON US 17 BUSINESS
OVER NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILROAD
B-5302**

Figure 1



This Exhibit is for planning purposes only and information shown herein does not meet NC 47-30 Requirements and therefore is not for design, construction, or recording or transfer of title. The Exhibit was compiled from available information obtained from the sources listed below. Streams and Wetlands: All features located in the field were recorded using a mapping grade Trimble GeoXT or GeoXH GPS receiver with supposed sub-meter accuracy.

Sources:
Study Limits: NCDOT Topo Maps: USGS



Legend



B-5302 Study Area



0 1,000 2,000
Feet

Figure 2

Project Study Area
B-5302 Bridge Replacement Project
Beaufort County, North Carolina