

Type I and II Ground Disturbing Categorical Exclusion Action Classification Form

TIP Project No.	BR-0108
WBS Element	67108.1.1
Federal Project No.	N/A

A. Project Description:

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 4 on South Windy Gap Road (S.R. 2418) over Little Hunting Creek in Wilkes County. The bridge will be replaced on the existing alignment while detouring traffic offsite during construction. (See attached figures.)

Bridge No. 4 was originally built in 1960 and reconstructed in 1987. The existing structure is 41 feet long with a deck width of 25 feet. The structure is a timber floor on salvaged I-Beams with timber substructure. NCDOT proposes to construct a 70 foot long single span structure with a deck width of 30 feet. The new structure will include 10-foot lanes and variable width shoulders that average 3-foot, 11-inches. The length of the overall improvement project is 510 feet. The project is scheduled for Right of Way (ROW) in January 2020 and Let in July 2020.

B. Description of Need and Purpose:

The purpose of the proposed project is to replace a deficient bridge. NCDOT Structure Management Unit (SMU) records indicate Bridge No. 4 has a sufficiency rating of 48.41 out of a possible 100 for a new structure. The bridge is considered structurally deficient due to insufficient load-carrying capacity and a superstructure condition rating of 4 out of a possible 9.

The replacement of Bridge No. 4 is part of the *Growing Rural Economy and Agriculture through Transportation and Technology Enhancement or Replacement in North Carolina (GREATER-NC)* Project under the United States Department of Transportation's 2018 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant program. The purpose of the grant and this bridge replacement project is to provide transportation infrastructure to support economic development and improve physical and digital connectivity in rural communities in North Carolina. The posted weight restriction (23 tons for single vehicle and 29 tons for a truck/tractor/semitrailer) on Bridge No. 4 prohibits large or heavy vehicles, typically used in transporting agricultural and manufactured products, from using the bridge. Vehicles above the posted weight must detour approximately 1.3 miles to avoid the bridge. Replacing the existing bridge will eliminate posted weight limits by providing a safe crossing for all legal loads and will make accommodations for broadband installation in order to support economic competitiveness.

C. Categorical Exclusion Action Classification:



TYPE I A

D. Proposed Improvements:

- 28. Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction, or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings, if the actions meet the constraints in 23 CFR 771.117(e)(1-6).

E. Special Project Information:

Offsite Detour:

The proposed 1.3-mile offsite detour for this project is on Little Hunting Creek Road (S.R. 2419) and Bowman Branch Road (S.R. 2420) as shown on the Detour Map.

Wilkes County Emergency Services indicated a low impact to response services if the bridge were closed for up to a year. Wilkes County Schools staff indicated a high impact on overall school transportation if the bridge were closed for up to a year.

NCDOT should coordinate with Wilkes County Emergency Services (Mr. Timothy Pennington, 336.651.7363) and with Wilkes County Public Schools (Mr. Eric Barker, 336.667.1126) at least one month prior to construction.

Cost:

The estimated costs of the proposed project are as follows:

Right of Way:	\$	24,000
Utilities:	\$	24,000
<u>Construction:</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>600,000</u>
Total:	\$	648,000

Design:

Design Standards: Sub-regional Tier

Design Speed: 30 miles per hour (mph)

Design Exceptions (horizontal): Design speed of 30 mph and stopping sight distance for 20 mph.

Construction Type: Replace in-place

Estimated Traffic:

Average Daily Traffic 2020: 120 vehicles per day

Average Daily Traffic 2045: 240 vehicles per day

Alternatives Discussion:

No Build – The no build alternative would result in eventually closing the road, which is unacceptable given the volume of traffic served by South Windy Gap Road (S.R. 2418).

Rehabilitation – The bridge was originally constructed in 1960. The timber materials within the bridge are reaching the end of their useful life. Rehabilitation would require replacing the timber components, which would constitute effectively replacing the bridge.

Replace In-Place with Onsite Detour – An onsite detour was not evaluated due to the presence of an acceptable offsite detour. A temporary onsite detour would unnecessarily increase temporary project impacts to Little Hunting Creek.

Replace In-Place using Staged Construction – Staged construction was not considered because of the availability of an acceptable offsite detour.

Replace on New Alignment – Given that the alignment for South Windy Gap Road is acceptable, and a new alignment would unnecessarily increase project impacts (especially to Little Hunting Creek), replacing the bridge on new alignment was not considered as an alternative.

Replace In-Place with Offsite Detour (Preferred) – Bridge No. 4 will be replaced on the existing alignment. Traffic will be detoured offsite (see attached Detour Map) during the construction period. The offsite detour for this project (approximately 1.3 miles in length) would include South Windy Gap Road, Little Hunting Creek Road (S.R. 2419) and Bowman Branch Road (S.R.2420).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations:

This portion of South Windy Gap Road is not designated as a bicycle route. No specific accommodations will be included in the project.

Human Environment:

Cultural Resources

Under NCDOT’s programmatic agreement with the NC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for bridge replacement projects, NCDOT reviewed the study area to determine the potential for historic architectural and archeological resources. The reviews concluded no survey required for historic architecture and archeological resources.

Environmental Justice

While census data indicates low-income populations are present in the Demographic Study Area (DSA), no notably adverse community impacts are anticipated with this project; thus impacts to minority or low-income populations do not appear to be disproportionately high and adverse. Benefits and burdens resulting from the project are anticipated to be equitably distributed throughout the community. No disparate impacts are anticipated under Title VI and related statutes.

Natural Environment:

Water Resources

Water resources within the project study area include Little Hunting Creek and two unnamed tributaries to Little Hunting Creek. The best usage classification for all three resources is WS-III.

The project is located in the Yadkin – Pee Dee River Basin and is not subject to NCDEQ regulated riparian buffer rules.

Three potential jurisdictional streams and one potential jurisdictional wetland are located in the study area.

The floodplain associated with Little Hunting Creek at the project site is identified as Zone AE.

Threatened and Endangered Species

As summarized in the July 2019 Natural Resources Technical Report (NRTR), and subsequent memorandum, NCDOT anticipates to have no effects on any federally-protected species.

Anticipated Permit or Consultation Requirements:

A Nationwide Permit (NWP) will likely be required for impacts to “Waters of the United States” resulting from this project.

In addition, an NCDWR Section 401 Water Quality General Certification (GC) may be required prior to the issuance of a Section 404 Permit. The USACE holds the final discretion as to what permit will be required to authorize project construction.

Since completion of the NRTR, the gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*) has been added to the threatened and endangered species list for Wilkes County by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as of 11/13/19. NCDOT’s Biological Surveys Group will survey the project study area as appropriate for this species. Construction authorization will not be provided, and work on the Project will not start, until consultation with the USFWS is complete. NCDOT’s Environmental Analysis Unit (EAU) will coordinate as appropriate with the USFWS under Section 7 until concurrence is obtained. This commitment is noted in the green sheet / project commitments.

Public Outreach:

A newsletter was distributed in the mail to notify the public of the proposed project and proposed detour during the construction period. The newsletter provided contact information for the public if they had any questions or comments. The public comment period was open from December 17, 2019 to January 10, 2020. No comments have been received to date.

Tribal coordination letters were distributed on December 16, 2019 to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), the Catawba Indian Nation, the Cherokee Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee. Comments on the proposed project were requested by January 17, 2020. NCDOT received responses from the Cherokee Nation and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee; however, neither response indicated the presence of any previously unknown resources. The Cherokee Nation requested that, should any items of cultural significance be discovered as the project progresses, NCDOT cease all work and contact the tribe immediately for further consultation. In addition, it was requested that NCDOT coordinate with other appropriate tribal and cultural resource representatives regarding any other potential resources not included in the Cherokee Nation’s records; as noted in this document, NCDOT has completed this coordination.

F. Project Impact Criteria Checklists:

<u>Type I & II - Ground Disturbing Actions</u>			
<u>FHWA APPROVAL ACTIVITIES THRESHOLD CRITERIA</u>			
If any of questions 1-7 are marked "yes" then the CE will require FHWA approval.		Yes	No
1	Does the project require formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	Does the project result in impacts subject to the conditions of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	Does the project generate substantial controversy or public opposition, for any reason, following appropriate public involvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Does the project cause disproportionately high and adverse impacts relative to low-income and/or minority populations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	Does the project involve a residential or commercial displacement, or a substantial amount of right of way acquisition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Does the project require an Individual Section 4(f) approval?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	Does the project include adverse effects that cannot be resolved with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) or have an adverse effect on a National Historic Landmark (NHL)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If any of questions 8 through 31 are marked "yes" then additional information will be required for those questions in Section G.			
<u>Other Considerations</u>		Yes	No
8	Does the project result in a finding of "may affect not likely to adversely affect" for listed species, or designated critical habitat under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9	Is the project located in anadromous fish spawning waters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10	Does the project impact waters classified as Outstanding Resource Water (ORW), High Quality Water (HQW), Water Supply Watershed Critical Areas, 303(d) listed impaired water bodies, buffer rules, or Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11	Does the project impact waters of the United States in any of the designated mountain trout streams?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12	Does the project require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Individual Section 404 Permit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13	Will the project require an easement from a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensed facility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
14	Does the project include a Section 106 of the NHPA effects determination other than a no effect, including archaeological remains?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<u>Other Considerations (continued)</u>		Yes	No
15	Does the project involve hazardous materials and/or landfills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
16	Does the project require work encroaching and adversely affecting a regulatory floodway or work affecting the base floodplain (100-year flood) elevations of a water course or lake, pursuant to Executive Order 11988 and 23 CFR 650 subpart A?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Is the project in a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) county and substantially affects the coastal zone and/or any Area of Environmental Concern (AEC)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
18	Does the project require a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) permit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
19	Does the project involve construction activities in, across, or adjacent to a designated Wild and Scenic River present within the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
20	Does the project involve Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
21	Does the project impact federal lands (e.g. U.S. Forest Service (USFS), USFWS, etc.) or Tribal Lands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
22	Does the project involve any changes in access control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
23	Does the project have a permanent adverse effect on local traffic patterns or community cohesiveness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
24	Will maintenance of traffic cause substantial disruption?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
25	Is the project inconsistent with the STIP or the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (where applicable)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
26	Does the project require the acquisition of lands under the protection of Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act, the Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Act, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), or other unique areas or special lands that were acquired in fee or easement with public-use money and have deed restrictions or covenants on the property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
27	Does the project involve Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) buyout properties under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
28	Does the project include a <i>de minimis</i> or programmatic Section 4(f)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
29	Is the project considered a Type I under the NCDOT's Noise Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
30	Is there prime or important farmland soil impacted by this project as defined by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
31	Are there other issues that arose during the project development process that affected the project decision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Response to Question 8: Since completion of the NRTR, the gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*) has been added to the threatened and endangered species list for Wilkes County by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as of 11/13/19. NCDOT's Biological Surveys Group will survey the project study area as appropriate for this species. Construction authorization will not be provided, and work on the Project will not start, until consultation with the USFWS is complete. The NCDOT EAU will coordinate with the USFWS under Section 7 until concurrence is obtained. This commitment is noted in the green sheet / project commitments.

Response to Question 16: This project involves construction activities on or adjacent to FEMA-regulated stream(s). Therefore, the Division shall submit sealed as-built construction plans to the Hydraulics Unit upon completion of project construction, certifying that the drainage structure(s) and roadway embankment that are located within the 100-year floodplain were built as shown in the construction plans, both horizontally and vertically.

The Hydraulics Unit will coordinate with the NC Floodplain Mapping Program (FMP) to determine status of the project with regard to applicability of NCDOT's Memorandum of Agreement, or approval of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and subsequent final Letter of Map Revision (LOMR). This is noted in the green sheet / project commitments.

H. Project Commitments

Wilkes County
Replace Bridge 4 on South Windy Gap Road (S.R. 2418) over Little Hunting Creek.
WBS No. 67108.1.1
TIP No. BR-0108

NCDOT Environmental Analysis Unit (EAU)/ Biological Surveys Group (BSG) - Complete Section 7 Consultation

NCDOT's Biological Surveys Group will survey the project study area as appropriate for the gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*). Construction authorization will not be provided, and work on the Project will not start, until consultation with the USFWS under Section 7 is complete. EAU will continue to survey and coordinate with the USFWS and/or USACE until concurrence is obtained.

NCDOT Division 11 - Continued Coordination with Emergency Services

NCDOT should coordinate with Wilkes County Emergency Services (Mr. Timothy Pennington, 336.651.7363) at least one month prior to construction.

NCDOT Division 11 - Continued Coordination with School Transportation Services

NCDOT should coordinate with Wilkes County Public Schools (Mr. Eric Barker, 336.667.1126) at least one month prior to construction.

NCDOT Division 11 Construction, NCDOT Structures Management Unit (SMU) - FEMA Floodplains and Floodways

This project involves construction activities on or adjacent to FEMA-regulated stream(s). Therefore, the Division shall submit sealed as-built construction plans to the Hydraulics Unit upon completion of project construction, certifying that the drainage structure(s) and roadway embankment that are located within the 100-year floodplain were built as shown in the construction plans, both horizontally and vertically.

NCDOT Hydraulics Unit - Floodplain Mapping Coordination

The Hydraulics Unit will coordinate with the NC Floodplain Mapping Program (FMP), to determine status of project with regard to applicability of NCDOT'S Memorandum of Agreement, or approval of a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and subsequent final Letter of Map Revision (LOMR).

NCDOT Division 11 Construction - Tribal Coordination

In the event any tribal artifacts, items of cultural significance, and/or human remains are located during the course of the project, the NCDOT Division 11 Construction Engineer's Office will notify Matt Wilkerson, NCDOT Cultural Resources Archaeology Team lead, at (919) 707-6089 or mtwilkerson@ncdot.gov to coordinate with the appropriate tribal entities, including the Cherokee Nation and/or Catawba Indian Nation.

I. Categorical Exclusion Approval

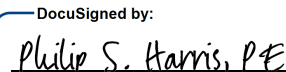
TIP Project No.	<u>BR-0108</u>
WBS Element	<u>67108.1.1</u>
Federal Project No.	<u>N/A</u>

Prepared By:

<u>1/22/2020</u>	
Date	Darren Even, AICP, Senior Planner Dewberry Engineers Inc.

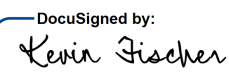
Prepared For: NCDOT Structures Management Unit

Reviewed By:

<u>1/23/2020</u>	DocuSigned by: 
Date	Philip S. Harris, III, PE, Environmental Analysis Unit North Carolina Department of Transportation

Approved If all of the threshold questions (1 through 7) of Section F are answered "no," NCDOT approves this Categorical Exclusion.

Certified If any of the threshold questions (1 through 7) of Section F are answered "yes," NCDOT certifies this Categorical Exclusion.

<u>1/23/2020</u>	DocuSigned by: 
Date	Kevin Fischer, PE, Assistant State Structures Engineer Structures Management Unit North Carolina Department of Transportation

FHWA Approved: For Projects Certified by NCDOT (above), FHWA signature required.

<u>N/A</u>	
Date	John F. Sullivan, III, PE, Division Administrator Federal Highway Administration