

**Ferncliff Road Extension
Ferncliff Industrial Park
Haywood County
WBS 48420**

**Administrative Action
State Environmental Assessment /
Finding of No Significant Impact**

Submitted Pursuant to the North Carolina Environmental Policy Act

Prepared for:



**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division 14**

Prepared by:



**Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers
3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27609**


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Document Prepared by Vaughn & Melton

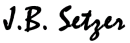


Tracy A. Walter, PE
Senior Transportation Planner

4/10/19

Date



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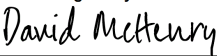
Joel B. Setzer, PE
Project Manager

4/11/2019

Date

For the North Carolina Department of Transportation

Reviewed By:

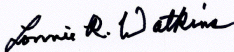
DocuSigned by:


David G. McHenry
Division 14 Environmental Supervisor

4/11/2019

Date

Approved By (on behalf of Division 14 Engineer):

DocuSigned by:


Lonnie R. Watkins, PE
Division 14 – District 1 Engineer

4/10/2019

Date

Ferncliff Road Extension
Ferncliff Industrial Park
Haywood County
WBS 48420

Division 14 Construction

Sierra Nevada should be contacted if the need arises to close Ferncliff Road for any length of time preventing the Shipping/Receiving operations just west of the project.

Division 14 Environmental Officer

The Biological Conclusion for the Small whored pogonia is “*unresolved*”. Additional surveys should be performed prior to construction to confirm the absence or presence of this species. The United States Fish and Wildlife lists the optimum survey window for this species as mid-May through early July.

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- Figure 1 – Vicinity Map
- NCDOT No Archaeological Survey Required Form

Proposed Project Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to construct a new access road (Ferncliff Road Extension) within the Ferncliff Industrial Park, beginning at SR 2418 (Ferncliff Park Drive) and heading northward for approximately 1700 feet (0.3 miles), terminating into a roundabout, with a proposed right-of-way width of 60 feet. The proposed roadway is two 12-foot lanes with 6-foot offsets and a design speed of 25 miles per hour.

Purpose and Need for Proposed Project

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide transportation infrastructure that helps support economic development. The proposed roadway will provide access to the northernmost area of Ferncliff Industrial Park (Tracts 2, 3 and 4) as well as provide additional access opportunities for GF Linamar, LLC.

Alternatives Analysis

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative was not evaluated since it does not meet the purpose and need.

Build Alternative

One Build Alternative was studied for this project. NCDOT proposes to locate the new access road parallel with the western property line of Linamar, LLC. This location will reduce the overall impact to the existing Tracts, as well as maximize usable land for the future businesses (see Figure 1).

Existing Conditions

Natural Resources

Wetlands

A site survey was conducted on March 13, 2019 by a qualified soil scientist with Vaughn & Melton which concluded that no wetlands were present within the proposed project study area.

Terrestrial Communities

The entire study area is composed of pine-hardwood forest, consisting of white pine, shortleaf pine, and white oak.

Land Use

The current land use within the project area is wooded area. Future land use in and adjacent to the project study area is industrial in nature. The property directly east of the study area is the location of an automotive light metal die-casting plant. Southwest of the proposed study area is the location of a local brewery and bottling facility.

The proposed project would promote future industrial activities consistent with current land use.

Federally Protected Species

Plant and animal species listed as Endangered (E), Threatened (T), or Threatened by similar appearance (T(S/A)) are protected by Section 7 and Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). As of October 17, 2018, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists 12 federally protected species for Henderson County:

Bog Turtle (T(S/A)) (Biological Conclusion: *Not Required*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of mountain bogs, is not present within the study area.

Carolina northern flying squirrel (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) - This project will not affect the Carolina northern flying squirrel, since suitable high elevation habitats are not available in the project area.

Gray Bat (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for these species, consisting of caves, is not present within the study area.

Northern long-eared bat (T) (Biological Conclusion: **Exempt - May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect**) – Potentially suitable summer roosting habitat for this species, consisting of trees greater than 3 inches DBH is present within the study area. Some tree removal is anticipated for this project; however, it would be consistent with the exemption from incidental take for NLEB as outlined in the Final 4(d) Rule because Henderson County is not considered an area of concern.

Appalachian elktoe (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of moderate to fast flowing streams, is not present within the study area.

Rusty patched bumble bee (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of grasslands and tall prairies, is not present within the study area.

Bunched arrowhead (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of shallow water seepage areas of bogs, wooded swamps and deciduous woodlands, is not present within the study area.

Mountain sweet pitcher plant (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of mountain bogs, is not present within the study area.

Small whorled pogonia (T) (Biological Conclusion: *Unresolved*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of mixed deciduous or mixed deciduous/coniferous forests with small light gaps or canopy breaks, is present within the study area. Additional surveys need to be conducted to confirm the absence or presence of this species.

Swamp pink (T) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of wetland areas, is not present within the study area.

White fringeless orchid (T) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of flat, partially shaded boggy areas is not present within the study area.

White irisette (E) (Biological Conclusion: *No Effect*) – Potentially suitable habitat for this species, consisting of southeast to southwest aspect of gentle to very steep, mid-elevation mountain slopes in thin-canopied, dry-mesic Basic Oak Hickory Forests that area mature, successional, or recently logged, is not present within the study area.

A March 20, 2019 review of North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) records for each species indicates there are no known occurrences of these species within 1.0 miles of the study area.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

Habitat for the bald eagle primarily consists of mature forest in proximity to large bodies of open water for foraging. Large dominate trees are utilized for nesting sites, typically within 1.0 mile of open water. One water body large enough or sufficiently open to be considered potential feeding sources was identified within 1.0 mile of the study area, the French Broad River, which is located approximately 3,000 feet from the study area at its closest point. Since there was no foraging habitat within the review area, a survey of the project study area and the area within 660 feet of the project limits was not conducted. Additionally, a March 20, 2019 review of NCNHP records revealed no known occurrences of this species within 1.0 mile of the project study area.

Water Resources (Surface Water and Groundwater)

The study area is in the French Broad River basin [U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit 06010105]. No stream channels were identified in the study area. No surface waters were identified in the study area.

There are no regulated stream buffers, administered by the NC Division of Water Resources (NCDWR) located within the study area. An Approved Jurisdictional Determination (AJD) was issued for the property containing the study area on August 10, 2016 by the US Army Corps of Engineers (Action ID: 2016-01581), which shows that there are no jurisdictional streams or wetlands within the study area.

Cultural Resources

The NCDOT Environmental Assessment Unit, under the provisions of a Programmatic Agreement with FHWA, NCDOT, HPO, OSA and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (effective July 1, 2009), reviewed the proposed project and determined no historic structures are in the project corridor and the project would have no impacts to archaeological resources. Historic Architecture resources were evaluated for the project area under the STIP

Project Number R-5524 (PA Project Tracking No. 12-07-0062). Archaeological Resources for this project were evaluated (PA Project Tracking No. 19-04-0009) and “No Archaeology Survey Required” was determined by NCDOT (see Attachments).

Public Lands and Scenic, Recreational, and State Natural Areas

There are no areas designated as park land, scenic or recreational areas within the project area, nor within the Ferncliff Industrial Park.

Air Quality

Air pollution originates from various sources. Emissions from industry and internal combustion engines are the most prevalent sources. The impact resulting from highway construction ranges from intensifying existing air pollution problems to improving the ambient air quality. Changing traffic patterns are a primary concern when determining the impact of a new highway facility or the improvement of an existing highway facility. Motor vehicles emit carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxide (NO), hydrocarbons (HC), particulate matter, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb) (listed in order of decreasing emission rate).

The Federal Clean Air Act of 1970 established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). These were established in order to protect public health, safety, and welfare from known or anticipated effects of air pollutants. The NAAQS contain criteria for SO₂, particulate matter (PM₁₀, 10-micron and smaller, PM_{2.5}, 2.5-micron and smaller), CO, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), ozone (O₃), and lead (Pb).

The primary pollutants from motor vehicles are unburned HC, NO_x, CO, and particulates. HC and NO_x can combine in a complex series of reactions catalyzed by sunlight to produce photochemical oxidants such as O₃ and NO₂. Because these reactions take place over a period of several hours, maximum concentrations of photochemical oxidants are often found far downwind of the precursor sources. These pollutants are regional problems.

A project-level air quality analysis was prepared for this project. A copy of the unabridged version of the full technical report entitled *Air Quality Report, New Access Road Ferncliff Industrial Park, Henderson County*, dated March 2019, can be viewed at the Environmental Analysis Unit, Century Center Building A, 1000 Birch Ridge Drive, Raleigh.

Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT)

The purpose of this project is to provide transportation infrastructure that helps support economic development by constructing a new access road (Ferncliff Road Extension) within the Ferncliff Industrial Park, beginning at SR 2418 (Ferncliff Park Drive) and heading northward for approximately 1700 feet (0.3 miles), terminating into a roundabout, with a proposed right-of-way width of 60 feet. This project has been determined to generate minimal air quality impacts for Clean Air Act criteria pollutants and has not been linked with any special mobile source air toxic (MSAT) concerns. As such, this project will not result in changes in traffic volumes, vehicle mix, basic project location, or any other factor that would cause a meaningful increase in MSAT impacts.

Summary

Vehicles are a major contributor to decreased air quality because they emit a variety of pollutants into the air. Changing traffic patterns are a primary concern when determining the impact of a new highway facility or the improvement of an existing highway facility. New highways or the widening of existing highways increase localized levels of vehicle emissions, but these increases could be offset due to increases in speeds from reductions in congestion and because vehicle emissions will decrease in areas where traffic shifts to the new roadway. Significant progress has been made in reducing criteria pollutant emissions from motor vehicles and improving air quality, even as vehicle travel has increased rapidly.

The proposed project is located in Henderson County, which complies with the NAAQS. The proposed project is located within an attainment area; therefore, 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93 are not applicable. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to create any adverse effects on the air quality of this attainment area. This evaluation completes the assessment requirements for air quality of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments and the SEPA process. No additional reports are necessary.

Traffic Noise Levels

In accordance with Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 772, Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise (Title 23 CFR 772) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation Traffic Noise Policy, each Type I highway project must be analyzed for predicted traffic noise impacts. In general, Type I projects are proposed State or Federal highway projects that construct a highway on new location, add new through lanes to an existing highway, substantially change the horizontal or vertical alignment of an existing highway, add or relocate interchange ramps or loops to complete an existing partial interchange, or involve new construction or substantial alteration of transportation facilities such as weigh stations, rest stops, ride-share lots or toll plazas.

Traffic noise impacts are determined through implementing the current Traffic Noise Model (TNM®) approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and following procedures detailed in Title 23 CFR 772, the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy and the NCDOT Traffic Noise Manual. When traffic noise impacts are predicted, examination and evaluation of alternative noise abatement measures must be considered for reducing or eliminating these impacts. Construction noise impacts may occur if noise-sensitive receptors are in proximity to project construction activities. All reasonable efforts should be made to minimize exposure of noise sensitive areas to construction noise impacts. **No noise sensitive land uses are in the project area.**

In accordance with NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy, the Federal/State governments are not responsible for providing noise abatement measures for new development for which building permits are issued after the Date of Public Knowledge. The Date of Public Knowledge of the proposed highway project will be the approval dated of this State Environmental Assessment / Finding of No Significant Impact.

Floodplains

The proposed project is not located in a flood hazard zone.

Hazardous Material Sites / Underground Storage Tanks

A desktop records search was performed by the NCDOT Geotechnical Engineering Unit on April 1, 2019 for the proposed project area. No sites of concern were identified within the project area.

Utilities

Utilities provided by Duke Energy and AT&T, as well as municipal water and sewer are present in the area of the project. A Fire Department Connection is located just outside the project area along the existing roadway.

Prime or Unique Agricultural Lands

North Carolina Executive Order Number 96 requires all state agencies to consider the impact of land acquisition and construction projects on prime farmland soils, as designed by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The proposed project is a State funded project and therefore not subject to the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

There are no agricultural lands classified as “prime” or “unique” within the project area.

Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

The proposed project is not expected to have a notable indirect effect on future land use. Any direct natural environment impacts by the project would be addressed by avoidance, minimization, or mitigation. Developers are required to follow local, state and federal guideline and permitting regulations.

State and Federal Permits Required

The project as proposed will not require a Nationwide Permit (NWP) nor will individual impacts exceed the NWP maximum threshold requiring an individual permit. This threshold includes cumulative impacts of streams and wetlands totaling up to 0.5 acres, and cumulative loss or degradation of up to 300 linear feet jurisdictional stream.

Based on the recommended alternative, impacts to jurisdictional surface waters or wetlands will not occur from the construction of the proposed project. As a result, construction activities will not require permits and certifications from various regulatory agencies in charge of protecting the water quality of public water resources.

Coordination and Agency Comments

Business and property owners within the industrial park were sent email notification or web based “Contact Us” form submittal providing information concerning the proposed roadway. One comment from the Packaging Manager of Sierra Nevada responded with concern that the roadway leading to their shipping area will be obstructed. No other comments have been received to date.

Letters were provided to representatives of the following agencies: Mills River Planning Department (forwarded to Town Council and other local government entities), NCDWR,

NCWRC, USACE, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (ECBI). No comments have been received to date.

Basis for Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The recommended alternative for the proposed project is not controversial from an environmental standpoint. No significant impacts to natural, ecological, cultural, social, or scenic resource are expected. The proposed project is consistent with local, regional, and statewide planning efforts and will not disrupt any communities adjacent to the industrial park. In view of the above evaluation, it has been determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact is applicable for this project. Therefore, neither an Environmental Impact Statement nor further environmental analysis is required.

References

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Map Service Center.

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal>

General Assembly of North Carolina – Session 2015, House Bill 795

<https://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/PDF/2015-2016/SL2015-90.pdf>

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) R-5524 Minimum Criteria
Determination Checklist

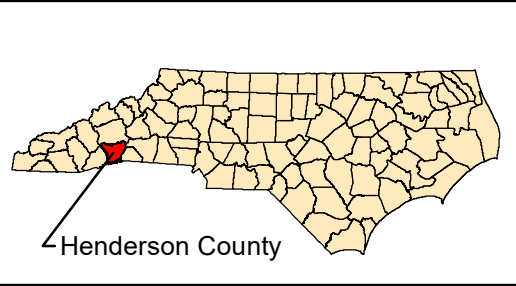
NCDOT - Natural Resources Technical Report (dated March 2019)

NCDOT Air Quality Report (dated March 2019)

NCDOT Geotechnical Pre-Scoping memo (dated April 1, 2019)

NCDOT No Archaeological Survey Required Form (dated April 9, 2019)

Attachments



Legend

- Project Study Area
- Proposed Edge of Pavement
- Proposed Right of Way



North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division 14

Henderson County
Construct New Access Road
Ferenciff Industrial Park

WBS 48420

Figure 1 - Vicinity Map

19-04-0009



NO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REQUIRED FORM

This form only pertains to ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES for this project. It is not valid for Historic Architecture and Landscapes. You must consult separately with the Historic Architecture and Landscapes Group.



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project No: New Road Location off Ferncliff Park Dr **County:** Henderson
WBS No: 48420 **Document:** EA
F.A. No: na **Funding:** State Federal
Federal Permit Required? Yes No **Permit Type:**

Project Description:

The project calls for a new access road off SR 2418 (Ferncliff Park Drive) for the Ferncliff Industrial Park in Henderson County. The archaeological Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project is defined as an approximate 1,800-foot (548.64 m) long corridor starting at Ferncliff Park Drive and heading north along new location. The corridor measures approximately 150 feet (45.72 m) wide extending 75 feet (22.86 m) on either side of the proposed centerline. It expands at the northern end measuring approximately 250 feet (76.20 m) north-south by 350 feet (106.68 m) east-west to allow for a cul-de-sac.

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW

Brief description of review activities, results of review, and conclusions:

The new road project for the Ferncliff Industrial Park is located just west of the Asheville Regional Airport and east of the French Broad River in Henderson County, North Carolina. The project area is plotted at the center of the Skyland USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangle (Figure 1).

A site file search was conducted by Casey Kirby at the Office of State Archaeology (OSA) on April 8, 2019. The project area was included in the previous archaeological investigations for the Ferncliff Industrial Park (Nagle et al. 2016). Four archaeological resources were recorded (31HN287, 31HN288, 31HN289, and 31HN290), but all are outside of the currently defined APE. According to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office online data base (HPOWEB 2019), there are no known historic architectural resources within the APE that may yield intact archaeological deposits.

Topographic maps, USDA soil survey maps, aerial photographs (NC One Map), and historic maps (North Carolina maps website) were also examined for information on environmental and cultural variables that may have contributed to prehistoric or historic settlement within the project limits and to assess the level of ground disturbance.

The project area is situated along a sloping ridge top (Figure 2). A drainage is at the APE's northern edge and is a tributary to the French Broad River. It appears to be seasonal but may be permanent. The project area is forested with an industrial property to the west. Previous disturbance is minimal within the APE consisting of past timber harvesting with severe disturbance outside from recent earth moving activities associated with the industrial park.

The USDA soil survey reports that the project area is composed of Hayesville loam (HyC, HyE) (USDA NRCS 2019) (see Figures 2). The series is well drained with gentle to steep slopes. The HyC variant has a slope of 7 to 15 percent, while HyE is at 15 to 25 percent. Slope of 15 percent or more is not usually tested since it is unlikely to yield significant subsurface deposits.

19-04-0009

The 2016 investigations carried out by S&ME consisted of a pedestrian survey with limited subsurface testing in areas that appeared likely to have a high potential for archaeological resources (Nagle et al. 2016). Four sites (31HN287, 31HN288, 31HN289, and 31HN290) were identified and recommended ineligible for the National Register. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred in a letter dated March 1, 2016 (Attachment 1).

Brief Explanation of why the available information provides a reliable basis for reasonably predicting that there are no unidentified historic properties in the APE:


The defined archaeological APE for the proposed new road north of Ferncliff Park Drive in Henderson County was previously included in archaeological investigations for the Ferncliff Industrial Park. No sites were identified within the currently defined APE. SHPO subsequently concurred with these results. As a result, this project is in compliance with North Carolina State law, and no further archaeological work is required. If federal permits or funds are needed at any point during this project, then further work may be necessary in order to meet revised guidelines issued by the Office of State Archaeology (OSA 2017).

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

See attached: Map(s) Previous Survey Info Photos Correspondence
 Photocopy of County Survey Notes Other:

FINDING BY NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

NO ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY REQUIRED



4/9/19

C. Damon Jones
 NCDOT ARCHAEOLOGIST

Date

REFERENCES CITED**HPOWEB**

2019 North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office GIS Web Service.
<http://gisNCDCCR.gov/hpweb/>. Accessed April 9, 2019.

Nagle, Kimberly, Marsha Welch, Jennifer Betsworth, and Sarah Posin
2016 *Archaeological Investigations of Approximately 150 Acres at the Ferncliff Industrial Park, Henderson County, North Carolina*. S&ME, Inc., Columbia, South Carolina.

Office of State Archaeology (OSA)

2017 *Archaeological Investigations Standards and Guidelines for Background Research, Field Methodologies, Technical Reports, and Curation*. Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina. Electronic document, https://files.nc.gov/dncr-arch/OSA_Guidelines_Dec2017.pdf.

United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services (USDA NRCS)

2019 Henderson County Soil Survey. Available online at
<http://webosilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>. Accessed April 9, 2019.

United States Geological Survey (USGS)

2013 Skyland, North Carolina, 7.5-minute quadrangle map.

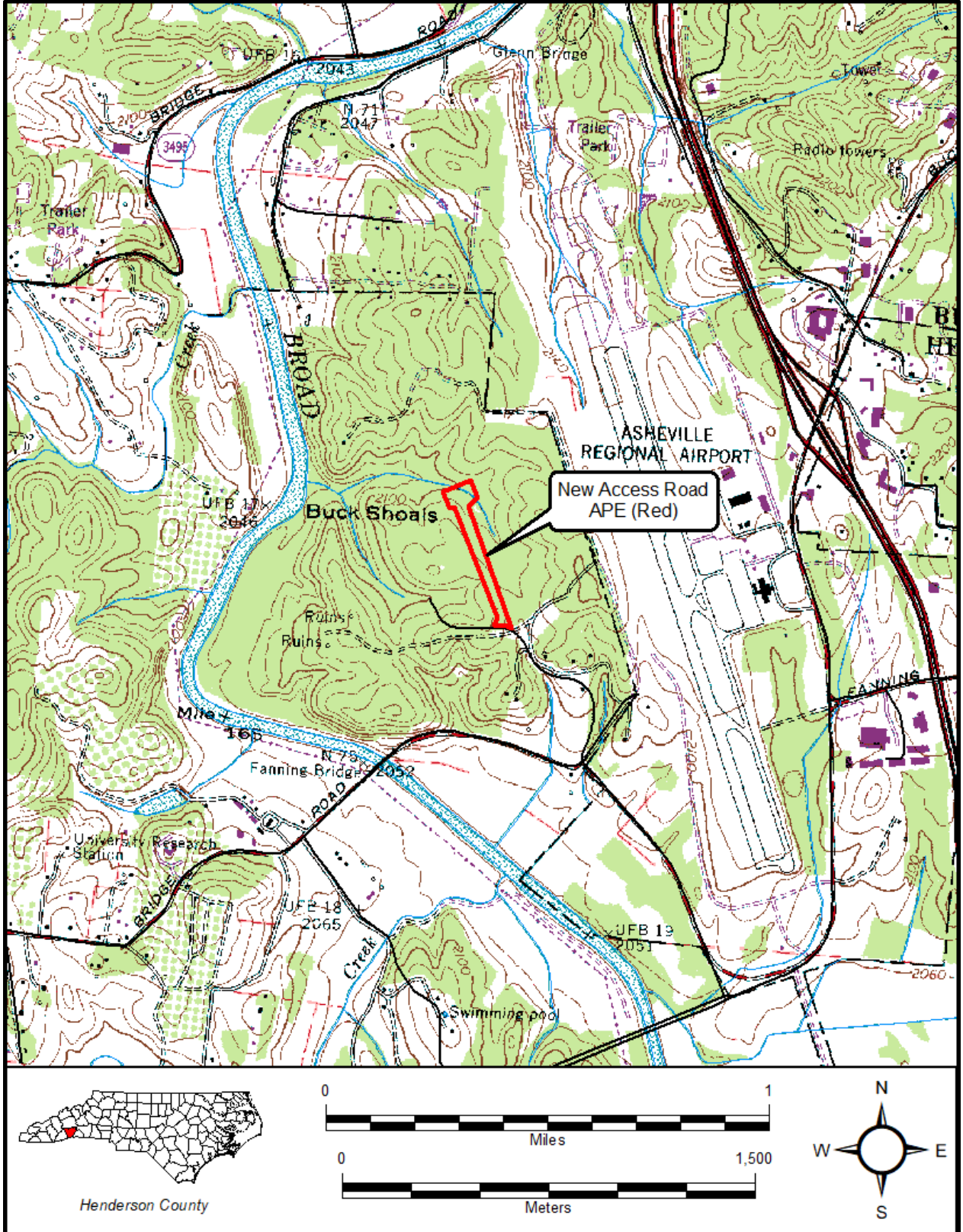


Figure 1. Topographic Setting of the Project Area, Skyland (2013), NC, USGS 7.5 Topographic Quadrangle.

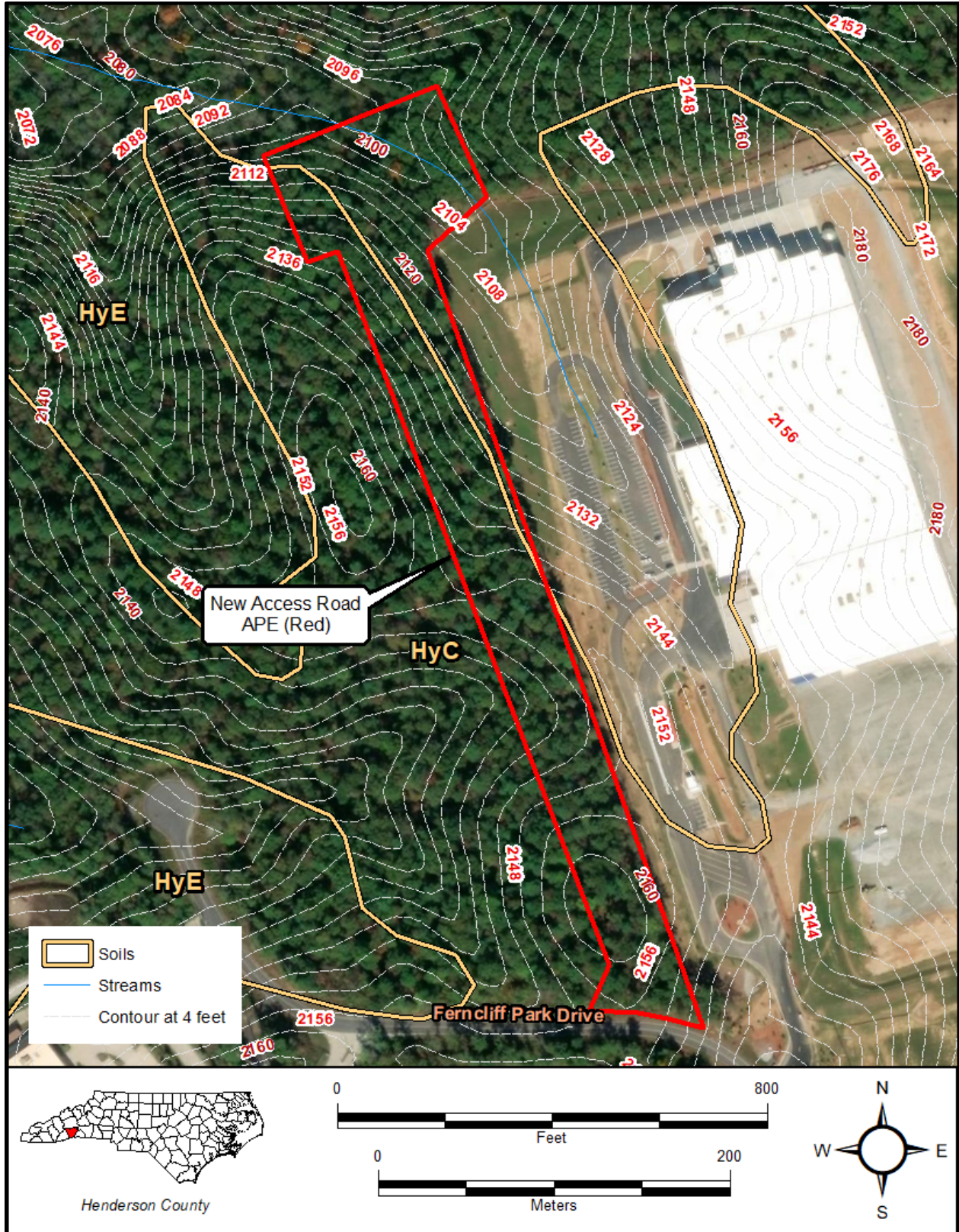


Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the APE showing development, contours, and soils.

19-04-0009



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

March 1, 2016

Kimberly Nagle
S&ME, Inc.
134 Suber Road
Columbia, SC 29210

Re: Ferncliff Industrial Park, S&ME 1616-13-360, Henderson County, ER 12-0811

Dear Ms. Nagle:

Thank you for your letter of January 15, 2016, transmitting the archaeological survey report by S&ME for the above project. The report meets our guidelines and those of the Secretary of the Interior.

During the course of the survey, four sites were located within the project area. For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that 31HN287**, 31HN288*, 31HN289 and 31HN290 are not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These sites do not retain sufficient subsurface integrity or artifact density to yield information important to history or prehistory.

The report authors have recommended that no further archaeological investigation be conducted in connection with this project. We concur with this recommendation since the project will not involve significant archaeological resources.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579 or environmental.review@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Renee Gledhill-Earley".

for Ramona M. Bartos

Location: 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh NC 27601 Mailing Address: 4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617 Telephone/Fax: (919) 807-6570/807-6599

Attachment 1. SHPO's Letter to S&ME in responds to the archaeological investigations at Ferncliff Industrial Park.