

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES**

**WATER QUALITY GENERAL CERTIFICATION NO. 7678**

**GENERAL CERTIFICATION FOR PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS REGIONAL  
GENERAL PERMIT 198200031 (NCDOT WIDENING PROJECTS - MERGER)**

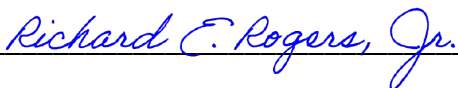
Water Quality Certification Number 7678 is issued in conformity with the requirements of Section 401, Public Laws 92-500 and 95-217 of the United States and subject to the North Carolina Regulations in 15A NCAC 02H .0500 and 15A NCAC 02B .0200 for the discharge of fill material to surface waters and wetland areas as described in the US Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District's Regional General Permit 198200031.

The State of North Carolina certifies that the specified category of activity will comply with water quality requirements and applicable portions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306 and 307 of the Public Laws 92-500 and 95-217 if conducted in accordance with the conditions hereinafter set forth.

Effective date: May 26, 2025

Signed this day: March 20, 2025

By



Richard E. Rogers, Jr.  
Director

**GENERAL CERTIFICATION COVERAGE:**

**Activities that are eligible for US Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District's Regional General Permit 198200031 qualify for coverage under this General Certification unless they meet one of the thresholds listed below. Activities meeting any one (1) of the thresholds or circumstances listed below are not eligible for coverage under this General Certification and require an Individual 401 Water Quality Certification from the Division of Water Resources (DWR):**

- a) If any of the Activity Specific or General Conditions of this General Certification cannot be met; or
- b) Total permanent impacts to intermittent and/or perennial streams greater than 300 linear feet per stream; or
- c) Total permanent impacts to wetlands equal to or greater than one-tenth (1/10) of an acre; or
- d) Total temporary impacts to wetlands equal to or greater than 0.5 acres; or
- e) Total permanent impacts to open waters of greater than 0.5 acres; or
- f) Any impacts to streams from excavation or dredging other than excavation that is conducted as preparation for installing permanent fill or structures; or
- g) Any stream restoration or relocation other than stream relocations that are conducted for the purpose of proper culvert installation, alignment, protection, repair or maintenance where the relocation length is equal to or less than 150 feet in length and the relocated stream is designed and installed based on current natural channel techniques. *[Stream relocation is when a stream is moved laterally to a new location to allow a project, or part of a project, to be constructed in the stream's former location.];* or
- h) Any permanent impacts to streams or open waters designated as: ORW (including SAV), HQW (including PNA), SA, WS-I, WS-II, Trout, or North Carolina or National Wild and Scenic River; or
- i) Any permanent impacts to coastal wetlands [15A NCAC 07H .0205] equal to or greater than 750 square feet; or
- j) Any impacts to Unique Wetlands (UWL); or
- k) Any impacts to subject water bodies and/or state regulated riparian buffers along subject water bodies in the Neuse, Tar-Pamlico, or Catawba River Basins or in the Randleman Lake, Jordan Lake or Goose Creek Watersheds (or any other basin or watershed with State Regulated Riparian Area Protection Rules State Regulated Riparian Buffer Rules in Chapter 2B of Title 15A in the North Carolina Administrative Code in effect at the time of application) *unless*:
  - i. The activities are listed as "EXEMPT" or "DEEMED ALLOWABLE" from these rules; or
  - ii. A Buffer Authorization Certificate is issued by the NC Division of Coastal Management (DCM); or

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In accordance with 15A NCAC 02H .0503(f), the Director of the North Carolina Division of Water Resources may require submission of a formal application for Individual Certification for any project if it is deemed in the public's best interest or determined that the project is likely to have a significant adverse effect upon water quality, including state or federally listed endangered or threatened aquatic species, or will degrade the waters so that existing uses of the waters or downstream waters are precluded.

This General Certification does not relieve the permittee of the responsibility to obtain all other required Federal, State, or Local approvals before proceeding with the project, including those required by, but not limited to, Sediment and Erosion Control, Non-Discharge, Water Supply Watershed, Coastal Area Management Act, and Trout Buffer regulations.

Upon the presentation of proper credentials, DWR may inspect the property.

This Water Quality Certification shall expire on the same day as the expiration date of the corresponding Section 404 Permit that is current at the time this Certification is issued. The conditions shall remain in effect for the life of the project, regardless of the expiration date of this Water Quality Certification.

Non-compliance with or violation of the conditions herein set forth by a specific project may result in revocation of this General Certification for the project and may also result in criminal and/or civil penalties.

### **I. ACTIVITY SPECIFIC CONDITIONS:**

1. All stream relocations shall be completed and stabilized, and approved on site by NCDWR staff, prior to diverting water into the new channel. All stream relocations shall include establishment of a vegetated buffer on both sides of the relocated channel to the maximum extent practical. Stream banks shall be matted with coir-fiber matting and all vegetation used for bank stabilization shall be limited to native riparian vegetation. Armoring such as rip-rap may be used if it is necessary to maintain the physical integrity of the stream. Notification including written justification and all calculations used to determine the extent of rip-rap coverage shall be provided to DWR a minimum of 30 calendar days prior to conducting the stream relocation.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b)(2); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

2. If open water features (ponds, lakes, etc) are proposed to be partially or fully drained as part of a specific project, the Permittee shall:
  - a. ensure that proper measures will be taken to drain the feature with minimal impact to upstream and downstream channel stability as well as to native aquatic species such that the conditions of waters shall be suitable for all best uses specified in 15A NCAC 02B .0200 NCDOT shall consult with NC Wildlife Resources staff to determine if there are any sensitive species, and the most appropriate measures to limit impacts to these species.
  - b. that proper measures will be taken to avoid sediment release and/or sediment accumulation downstream as a result of draining activities.

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- c. the permittee shall observe any natural channel re-establishment, or utilize natural channel construction techniques, to ensure that any stream channel above and below the drained feature remain stable, and that no indirect impacts occur within the natural stream channel as a result of draining activities.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b)(3); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

### II. GENERAL CONDITIONS:

1. The permittee shall report to the appropriate DWR Regional Office any noncompliance with, and/or any violation of, stream or wetland standards [15A NCAC 02B .0200], including but not limited to sediment impacts to streams or wetlands. Information shall be provided orally within 24 hours (or the next business day if a weekend or holiday) from the time the permittee became aware of the non-compliance circumstances.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

2. If the Permittee becomes aware of any inability to comply with any of the conditions of this Water Quality Certification, they must notify the appropriate Regional Office within 24 hours (or the next business day if a weekend or holiday) from the time the Permittee becomes aware of the circumstances.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

3. No waste, spoil, solids, or fill of any kind shall occur in wetlands or waters beyond the footprint of the impacts (including temporary impacts); or beyond the thresholds established for use of this General Certification and Regional General Permit.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506; 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

4. All activities shall be in compliance with any applicable State Regulated Riparian Buffer Rules in Chapter 2B of Title 15A in the North Carolina Administrative Code.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

5. When applicable, all construction activities shall be performed and maintained in full compliance with G.S. Chapter 113A Article 4 (Sediment and Pollution Control Act of 1973). Regardless of applicability of the Sediment and Pollution Control Act, all projects shall incorporate appropriate Best Management Practices for the control of sediment and erosion so that no violations of state water quality standards, statutes, or rules occur.

Design, installation, operation, and maintenance of all sediment and erosion control measures shall be equal to or exceed the requirements specified in the most recent version of the *North Carolina Sediment and Erosion Control Manual*, or the *North Carolina Department of Transportation Sediment and Erosion Control Manual*.

All devices shall be maintained on all construction sites, borrow sites, and waste pile (spoil) sites, including contractor-owned or leased borrow pits associated with the project.

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Sufficient materials required for stabilization and/or repair of erosion control measures and stormwater routing and treatment shall be on site at all times.

For borrow pit sites, the erosion and sediment control measures shall be designed, installed, operated, and maintained in accordance with the most recent version of the *North Carolina Surface Mining Manual*. Reclamation measures and implementation shall comply with the reclamation in accordance with the requirements of the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act and the Mining Act of 1971.

If the project occurs in waters or watersheds classified as Primary Nursery Areas (PNAs), SA, WS-I, WS-II, High Quality Waters (HQW), or Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW), then the sedimentation and erosion control designs shall comply with the requirements set forth in 15A NCAC 04B .0124, *Design Standards in Sensitive Watersheds*.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b)(2); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0200; 15A NCAC 02B .0231*

6. Sediment and erosion control measures shall not be installed in wetland or waters except within the footprint of permanent impacts covered by this Certification. The placement of such measures shall not be conducted in a manner that results in dis-equilibrium of any wetlands, streambeds, or streambanks. Any silt fences installed within wetlands shall be removed from wetlands and the natural grade restored within two (2) months of the date the sediment and erosion control program has released the specific area within the project to ensure wetland standards are maintained upon completion of the project.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0200; 15A NCAC 02B .0231*

7. Erosion control matting that incorporates plastic mesh and/or plastic twine shall not be used along streambanks or within wetlands.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

8. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) shall be required to be in full compliance with the conditions related to construction activities within the most recent version of their Individual NPDES Stormwater Permit Number NCS000250.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0200; 15A NCAC 02B .0231*

9. All work in or adjacent to streams shall be conducted so that the flowing stream does not come in contact with the disturbed area. Approved best management practices from the most current version of the *NC Sediment and Erosion Control Manual*, or the *NC Department of Transportation Construction and Maintenance Activities Manual*, such as sandbags, rock berms, cofferdams, and other diversion structures shall be used to minimize excavation in flowing water.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0200*

10. If activities must occur during periods of high biological activity of aquatic species or aquatic or jurisdictional wetland habitat (e.g. sea turtle nesting, fish spawning, or bird nesting), then all biological monitoring requested by other state or federal agencies must be conducted.

All moratoriums associated with aquatic species or aquatic jurisdictional wetland habitat on construction activities established by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) shall be implemented. Exceptions to this condition require written approval by the resource agency responsible for the given moratorium.

Work within a designated trout watershed of North Carolina (as identified by the Wilmington District of the US Army Corps of Engineers), or work within identified state or federal endangered or threatened species habitat, shall be coordinated with the appropriate WRC, USFWS, NMFS, and/or DMF personnel.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 04B .0125*

11. In-stream structures installed to mimic natural channel geomorphology such as cross-vanes, sills, step-pool structures, etc. shall be designed and installed in such a manner that allow for continued aquatic life movement.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

12. Culverts shall be designed and installed in such a manner that the original stream profiles are not altered and allow for aquatic life movement during low flows. The dimension, pattern, and profile of the stream above and below a pipe or culvert shall not be modified by widening the stream channel or by reducing the depth of the stream in connection with the construction activity. The width, height, and gradient of a proposed culvert shall be such as to pass the average historical low flow and spring flow without adversely altering flow velocity. If the width of the culvert is wider than the stream channel, the culvert shall include multiple boxes/pipes, baffles, benches and/or sills to maintain the natural width of the stream channel. If multiple culverts/pipes/barrels are used, low flows shall be accommodated in one culvert/pipe and additional culverts/pipes shall be installed such that they receive only flows above bankfull.

Placement of culverts and other structures in streams shall be below the elevation of the streambed by one foot for all culverts with a diameter greater than 48 inches, and 20% of the culvert diameter for culverts having a diameter less than or equal to 48 inches, to allow low flow passage of water and aquatic life. If the culvert outlet is submerged within a pool or scour hole and designed to provide for aquatic passage, then culvert burial into the streambed is not required.

For structures less than 72" in diameter/width and in area where topographic constraints dictate culvert slopes will be greater than 2.5%, culvert burial is not required, provided that all alternative options for flattening the slope have been investigated and aquatic life movement/connectivity has been provided when possible (e.g. rock ladders, cross-vanes, sills, baffles etc.). Notification, including supporting documentation to include a location

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map of the culvert, culvert profile drawings, and slope calculations, shall be provided to DWR 30 calendar days prior to the installation of the culvert.

When bedrock is present in culvert locations, culvert burial is not required, provided that there is sufficient documentation of the presence of bedrock. Notification, including supporting documentation such as a location map of the culvert, geotechnical reports, photographs, etc. shall be provided to DWR a minimum of 30 calendar days prior to the installation of the culvert. If bedrock is discovered during construction, then DWR shall be notified by phone or email within 24 hours of discovery.

Installation of culverts in wetlands shall ensure continuity of water movement and be designed to adequately accommodate high water or flood conditions. When roadways, causeways, or other fill projects are constructed across FEMA-designated floodways or wetlands, openings such as culverts or bridges shall be provided to maintain the natural hydrology of the system as well as prevent constriction of the floodway that may result in destabilization of streams or wetlands.

The establishment of native woody vegetation and other soft stream bank stabilization techniques shall be used where practicable instead of rip-rap or other bank hardening methods.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

13. Bridge deck drains shall not discharge directly into the stream. Stormwater shall be directed across the bridge and pre-treated through site-appropriate means to the maximum extent practicable (e.g. grassed swales, pre-formed scour holes, vegetated buffers, etc.) before entering the stream. This condition may be waived with prior approval from the NCDWR.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

14. Application of fertilizer to establish planted/seeded vegetation within disturbed riparian areas and/or wetlands shall be conducted at agronomic rates and shall comply with all other Federal, State and Local regulations. Fertilizer application shall be accomplished in a manner that minimizes the risk of contact between the fertilizer and surface waters.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0231*

15. If concrete is used during construction, then all necessary measures shall be taken to prevent direct contact between uncured or curing concrete and waters of the state. Water that inadvertently contacts uncured concrete shall not be discharged to waters of the state.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0200*

16. All temporary pipes/culverts/rip-rap pads etc. in streams shall be installed as outlined in the most recent edition of the *North Carolina Sediment and Erosion Control Planning and Design Manual* or the *North Carolina Surface Mining Manual* or the *North Carolina Department of Transportation Best Management Practices for Construction and*

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*Maintenance Activities* so as not to restrict stream flow or cause dis-equilibrium during use of this General Certification.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

17. All temporary fill and temporary culverts shall be removed and the impacted area shall be returned to natural conditions within 60 calendar days after the temporary impact is no longer necessary. The impacted areas shall be restored to original grade, including each stream's original cross-sectional dimensions, planform pattern, and longitudinal bed profile. All temporarily impacted sites shall be restored and stabilized with native vegetation.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H.0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

18. Any rip-rap required for proper culvert placement, stream stabilization, or restoration of temporarily disturbed areas shall be restricted to the area directly impacted by the approved construction activity. All rip-rap placed in streams shall be placed such that the original streambed elevation and streambank contours are restored and that the finished elevation of the rip rap shall not exceed that of the original stream bed. All rip-rap shall consist of clean rock or masonry material free of debris or toxic pollutants. Placement of rip-rap or other approved materials shall not result in de-stabilization of the stream bed or banks upstream or downstream of the area or be installed in a manner that precludes aquatic life passage.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

19. Any rip-rap used for stream or shoreline stabilization shall be of a size and density to prevent movement by wave, current action, or stream flows, and shall consist of clean rock or masonry material free of debris or toxic pollutants. Rip-rap shall not be installed in the streambed except in specific areas required for velocity control and to ensure structural integrity of bank stabilization measures. Any rip-rap placed in the streambed shall be such that the finished elevation of the rip rap shall not exceed that of the original stream bed.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0201*

20. All mechanized equipment operated near surface waters shall be inspected and maintained regularly to prevent contamination of surface waters from fuels, lubricants, hydraulic fluids, or other toxic materials. Construction shall be staged in order to minimize the exposure of equipment to surface waters to the maximum extent practicable. Fueling, lubrication, and general equipment maintenance shall be performed in a manner to prevent, to the maximum extent practicable, contamination of surface waters by fuels and oils.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0200*

21. Heavy equipment working in wetlands shall be placed on mats or other measures shall be taken to minimize soil disturbance and compaction.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); 15A NCAC 02B .0231*



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22. In accordance with G.S 143-215.85(b), the permittee shall report any petroleum spill of 25 gallons or more; any spill regardless of amount that causes a sheen on surface waters; any petroleum spill regardless of amount occurring within 100 feet of surface waters; and any petroleum spill less than 25 gallons that cannot be cleaned up within 24 hours.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c); N.C.G.S 143-215.85(b)*

23. The permittee and their authorized agents shall conduct all activities in a manner consistent with State water quality standards (including any requirements resulting from compliance with §303(d) of the Clean Water Act), and any other appropriate requirements of State and Federal Law.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

24. The permittee shall require its contractors and/or agents to comply with the terms and conditions of this permit in the construction and maintenance of this project, and shall provide each of its contractors and/or agents associated with the construction or maintenance of this project with a copy of this General Certification. A copy of this General Certification shall be available at the project site during the construction and maintenance of this project.

*Citation: 15A NCAC 02H .0506(b); 15A NCAC 02H .0507(c)*

25. This Water Quality Certification neither grants nor affirms any property right, license, or privilege in any lands or waters, or any right of use in any waters. This Water Quality Certification does not authorize any person to interfere with the riparian rights, littoral rights, or water use rights of any other person and does not create any prescriptive right or any right of priority regarding any usage of water. This Water Quality Certification shall not be interposed as a defense in any action respecting the determination of riparian or littoral rights or other rights to water use. No consumptive user is deemed by virtue of this Water Quality Certification to possess any prescriptive or other right of priority with respect to any other consumptive user.

*History Note: Water Quality Certification (WQC) Number 7678 issued March 20, 2025 replaces WQC 4135 issued December 1, 2017; WQC 4088 issued March 3, 2017; WQC 3886 issued March 12, 2012; WQC 3820 issued April 6, 2010; WQC 3627 issued March 19, 2007; WQC Number 3404 issued March 2003; WQC 3375 issued March 18, 2002; WQC 3289 issued June 1, 2000; WQC 3103 issued February 11, 1997; WQC Number 2732 issued May 1, 1992; WQC 2666 issued January 21, 1992; WQC 2177 issued November 5, 1987..*