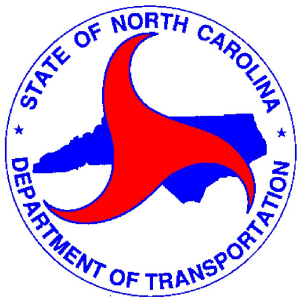
NATURAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL REPORT

Replacement of Bridge No. 800358 over Grays Creek
on SR 1144 (Jim Dobbins Road)
Rutherford County, North Carolina

WBS Element No. 82000.17



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Environmental Coordination and Permitting

November 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 800358 over Grays Creek on SR 1144 (Jim Dobbins Road) (WBS Element No. 82000.17) in Rutherford County. The following Natural Resources Technical Report (NRTR) has been prepared to assist in the preparation of the appropriate environmental documentation. Field investigations were performed on October 7, 2026. All work was conducted in accordance with the NCDOT Environmental Coordination and Permitting Group's *Preparing Natural Resources Technical Reports* procedure and the latest *NRTR Template* and *NRTR Guidance* documents. A list of the principal personnel contributing to fieldwork and document preparation is provided in the appendix.

2.0 TERRESTRIAL COMMUNITIES

Terrestrial communities encompass the various vegetation types and ecological systems present within the study area. The composition and distribution of terrestrial communities are influenced by factors such as topography, soils, land use, and disturbance history. The table below presents the existing terrestrial communities identified within the study area, characterizes their dominant vegetation, and presents their total area of coverage.

Coverage of terrestrial communities in the Study Area

Community	Dominant Species	Coverage (ac.)
Maintained/Disturbed	Southern crownbeard (*Verbesina occidentalis*) Purpletop tridens (*Tridens flavus*) Northern common goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*)	0.7
Piedmont Headwater Stream Forest	River birch (*Betula nigra*) Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis var. occidentalis*)	0.3

3.0 PROTECTED SPECIES AND HABITATS

3.1 Endangered Species Act Protected Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists the following federally protected species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as potentially occurring within the study area. For each species, a discussion of the presence or absence of suitable habitat is included along with a Biological Conclusion rendered based on the results of habitat assessments and surveys conducted within the study area.

ESA federally protected species listed within the Study Area as of October 13, 2026

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	Habitat Present	Biological Conclusion
Myotis grisescens	Gray bat	E	No	Unresolved
Myotis sodalist	Indiana bat	E	Yes	Unresolved
Perimyotis subflavus	Tricolored bat	PE	Yes	Unresolved
Glyptemys muhlenbergii	Bog turtle	SAT	Yes	Not Required
Danaus Plexippus	Monarch butterfly	PT	Yes	Not Required

E - Endangered; P – Proposed; T – Threatened; SAT - Similarity of Appearance (Threatened)

Biological Conclusions

Gray bat / Indiana bat / Tricolored bat

USFWS optimal survey window: Bridge surveys: May 1 - Oct 1, concrete/metal, culvert surveys (3'Hx60'L min): hibernation range = Dec 15 - Feb 15

Biological Conclusion: Unresolved

As of April 15, 2026, the following federally protected bat species are listed in the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation Report (IPaC; https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/) as occurring in the action area: gray bat, Indiana bat, and tricolored bat. Construction activities for this project are unknown at this stage in project planning, NCDOT will resolve Section 7 prior to let as appropriate.

Bog turtle

USFWS optimal survey window: April 1 - October 1 (visual surveys)

Biological Conclusion: Not Required

Bog turtle habitat consists of open, groundwater supplied (spring fed), graminoid dominated wetlands along riparian corridors or on seepage slopes. Habitat for bog turtles is present in the project study area.

The bog turtle is listed as threatened due to similarity of appearance with another species listed as threatened and is not biologically endangered. It is not subject to Section 7 consultation, unless a survey for this species is specifically requested by the USFWS. A review of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NHP) records on September 22, 2026, indicated no known occurrences within 1.0 mile of the study area.

Monarch butterfly

USFWS optimal survey window: N/A

Biological Conclusion: Not Required

The USFWS proposed to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under the ESA in December 2024. However, as of December 2025 the final decision has been delayed, and the status has been moved to "long-term action," meaning no final ruling is expected for at least another year. No regulatory protections will take effect until the listing is finalized. Until that time, proposed species do not receive formal ESA protections, though federal action agencies are still required to ensure that their actions do not jeopardize the

continued existence of the species. Action agencies may initiate consultation with the USFWS to obtain a conference opinion. If and when the listing is finalized, and at the agency's request, the Service may adopt the conference opinion as a biological opinion—provided no relevant new information has emerged and no substantial changes to the proposed action have occurred.

3.2 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) is enforced by USFWS. Golden eagles do not nest in North Carolina. Habitat for the bald eagle primarily consists of mature forests 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 of the project limits, was performed on September 30, 2026, using 2025 color aerials. Two water bodies large enough or sufficiently open to be considered potential feeding sources were identified: Broad River to the southwest ~0.82 miles and a pond to the south ~0.95 miles from the study area. Since foraging habitat was found within the review area, a survey of the study area and the area within 660 feet of the project limits was conducted on October 7, 2026. No individuals or nests were identified. Additionally, a review of the NHP database on September 22, 2026, revealed no known occurrences of this species within 1.13 miles of the study area.

Should project activities have the potential to disturb eagles, their nests, or important foraging or roosting areas, consultation with the USFWS may be required to ensure compliance with BGEPA permit and avoidance requirements.

4.0 AQUATIC RESOURCES

The occurrence of potentially jurisdictional streams, wetlands, and other waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) within the study area is described below. Additional information, including delineation methodologies and resource identification/data forms, for the proceeding aquatic resources is available in the project's *Aquatic Resources Delineation Report*.

4.1 Streams within the Study Area

Stream determinations were conducted in accordance with the North Carolina Division of Water Resources (NCDWR) *Stream Identification Method* and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) *Final National Ordinary High Water Mark Field Delineation Manual for Rivers and Streams*.

Stream Identification and Classifications

Stream Name or Label	NCDWR		Flow Regime	NCSAM Rating
	Index Number	Classification		
Grays Creek	9-27	WS-IV	Perennial	^
SA	9-27	WS-IV	Perennial	^

^NCSAM not performed. Stream is perennial and not sufficiently degraded to require a rating assessment.

4.1.1 Stream Designations and Surface Water Quality

Watershed Identification

Aquatic resources found in the study area are part of the Broad River Basin (U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit 03050105).

Regulatory Classifications and Designations

There are no designated Outstanding Resource Water (ORW), High Quality Waters (HQW), or water supply watersheds (WS-I or WS-II) present in, or located within 1.0 mile downstream of, the study area.

The NCDWR has no designated trout waters present in, or located within 1.0 mile downstream of, the study area, nor is the study area in a designated USACE trout watershed.

Impaired Water Classification

The North Carolina 2022 Final 303(d) list of impaired waters does not identify any stream present in, or located within 1.0 mile downstream of, the study area as impaired.

Stream Temperature Regime

All streams in the study area have been designated as cool water streams for the purposes of stream mitigation.

4.2 Wetlands within the Study Area

Wetland delineations were conducted in accordance with the USACE *Wetlands Delineation Manual* and the appropriate *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual*.

Wetland Identification and Classifications

Wetland Label	NCWAM			Forested
	Wetland Type	Category	Rating	
WA	Headwater Forest	Riparian	High	Yes

There are no other surface waters within the study area.

5.0 REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Clean Water Act

Aquatic resources identified within the study area, including streams, wetlands, and other surface waters, may be subject to federal and state jurisdiction under Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The jurisdictional status of these features has not been confirmed at the time of this report and would require verification through coordination with the USACE and NCDWR, as appropriate, during the permitting process.

5.2 Endangered Species Act

The presence and potential occurrence of federally listed threatened and endangered species within the study area has been evaluated using available desktop resources and field observations. However, the need for further consultation under Section 7 of the ESA has not yet been determined. Any future permitting or funding actions associated with the project may require coordination with the USFWS to assess potential effects on listed species and designated critical habitats.

5.3 N.C River Basin Riparian Buffer Rules

Streamside riparian zones within the study area are not protected under provisions of any of the N.C. River Basin Riparian Buffer Rules administered by NCDWR.

5.4 Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10

There are no streams or open surface waters designated by the USACE as a Navigable Water under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act within the study area.

6.0 REFERENCES

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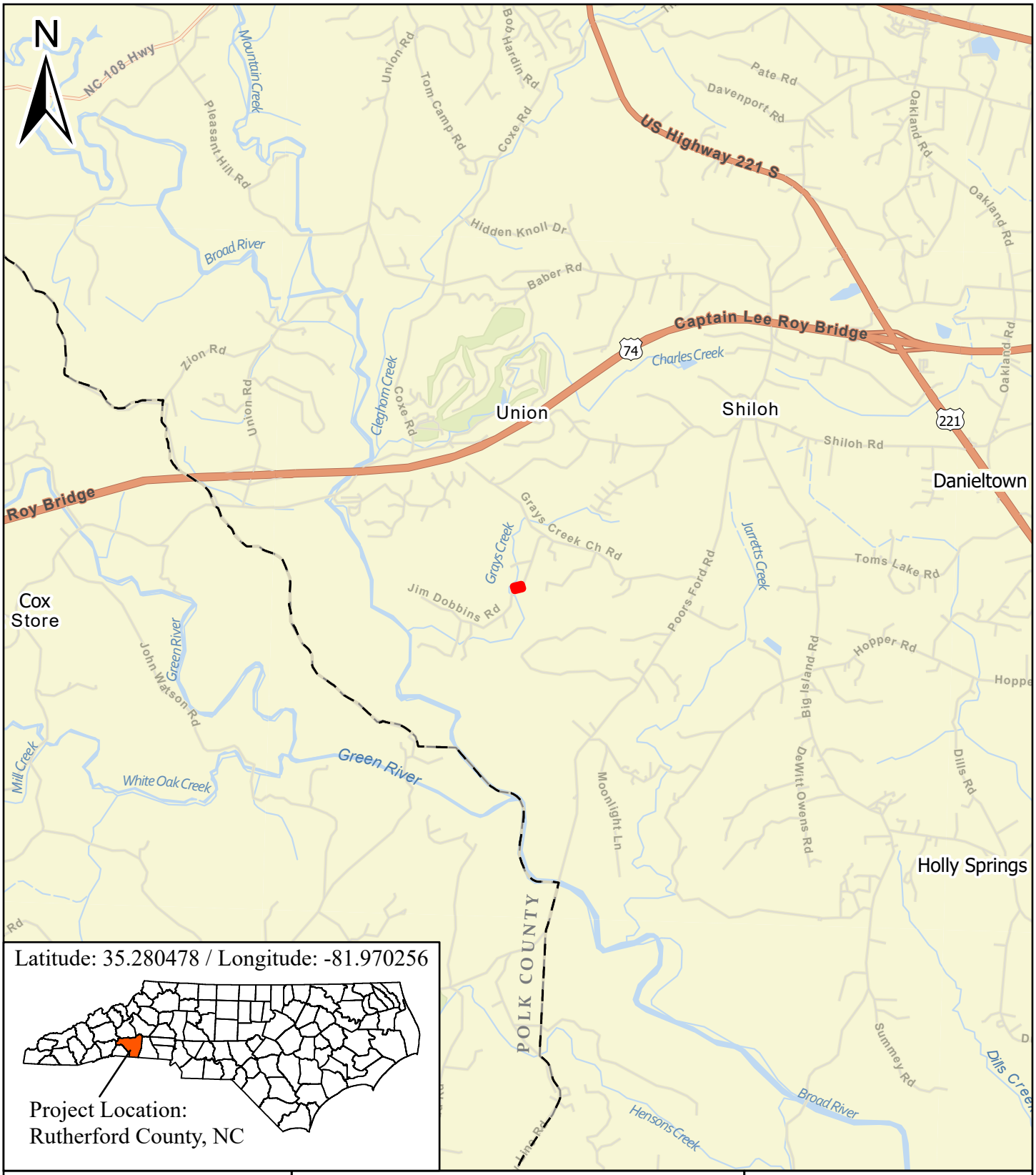
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WBS 82000.17
Bridge No. 800358
Rutherford County, NC

Figure 1:
Vicinity Map

Date Produced: 9/30/2026



0 25 50 US Feet

Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane North Carolina FIPS 3200 Ft US

Study Area

Maintained/Disturbed

Piedmont Headwater Stream Forest

Perennial Stream

Aerial Imagery Post-Helene February 2025 -
NC Collaboratory at UNCCH

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Bridge No. 800358
Rutherford County, NC

Figure 2: Terrestrial Communities Map

Date Produced: 10/15/2026



0 25 50 US Feet

Coordinate System:
NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane North Carolina FIPS 3200 Ft US

Study Area

Culvert (Temporary Repair)

Wetland

Perennial Stream

Data Form Location

Aerial Imagery Post-Helene February 2025 - NC Collaboratory at UNCCH

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WBS 82000.17
Bridge No. 800358
Rutherford County, NC

Figure 3: Aquatic Resources Map

Date Produced: 10/16/2026

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

Contributor		Stream Determinations	Wetland Delineations	Terrestrial Community ID	ESA Assessments	Document Preparation	GIS / Figure Creation	QA/QC Review
Name	**Role**							
Preston Butler, PWS	Senior Environmental Scientist	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Brittnie Fleming	Environmental Scientist			✓		✓	✓	
Tina Sekula, AICP, CEP, PWS	Section Head							✓