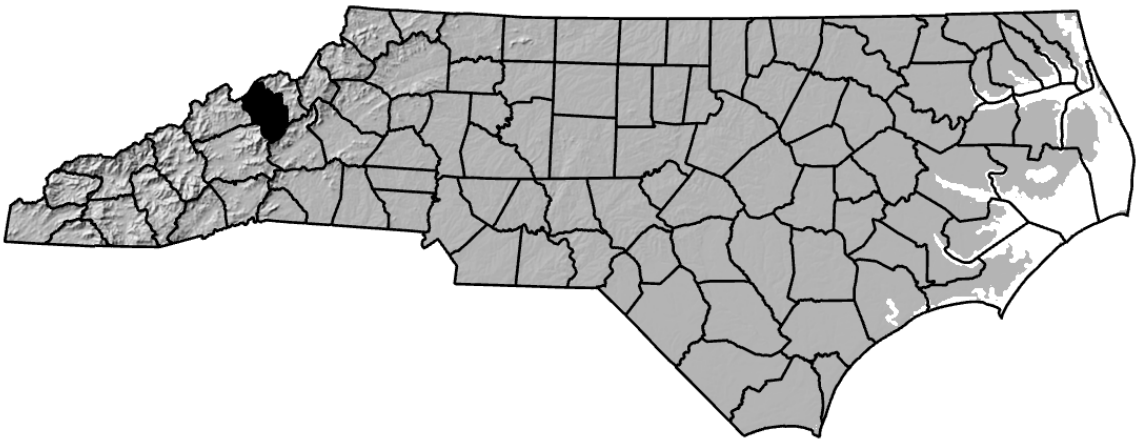
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023



Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site
ONE ID #: 100-014
Yancey County
TIP No. R-2519B
COE Action ID: SAW-2004-9987181 / 2004-30631
NCDWR Project #: 2013-0743v.2

Prepared By:
Roadside Environmental Unit and Environmental Analysis Unit
North Carolina Department of Transportation
October 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

APPENDICES

SUMMARY

The following report summarizes the stream monitoring activities that have occurred during the Year 2023 at the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site in Yancey County. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) completed the streambank reforestation in March 2020. This report provides the monitoring results for the fourth formal year of monitoring (Year 2023). The Year 2023 monitoring period was the fourth of five scheduled years of monitoring on the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site (See Success Criteria Section 2.1).

Based on the overall conclusions of monitoring at the Long Branch Site #6, it has met the required monitoring protocols for the fourth formal year of monitoring on the stream. The channel throughout the stream site is stable at this time. The streambank and buffer planted vegetation are surviving at this time.

NCDOT proposes to continue stream and vegetation monitoring at the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site in 2024.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description

The following report summarizes the stream monitoring activities that have occurred during the Year 2023 at the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site. Site #6 is located on US 19 adjacent to the South Toe River crossing in Yancey County at Sta. 125+95 to 127+17 -L- Lt. (Figure 1). The Long Branch Site #6 was constructed to provide mitigation for stream impacts associated with Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) number R-2519B in Yancey and Mitchell Counties.

The mitigation site provided approximately 144 linear feet of stream relocation. Streambank reforestation was completed in March 2020 by NCDOT. Construction at the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site involved the removal of a perched, two-barrel, six foot by six foot, reinforced concrete box culvert (RCBC) and soil path on Long Branch. Several cross vanes were installed within the channel bed. The riparian buffer zone was planted with a 50-foot buffer on the north side and a 30-foot buffer on the south side. The last 15 feet of stream has the buffer reduced from 30 feet to 25 feet on the left bank due to an overhead utility line.

1.2 Purpose

In order for a mitigation site to be considered successful, the site must meet the success criteria. This report details the monitoring in 2023 at the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site. Hydrologic monitoring was not required for this site.

1.3 Project History

March 2020	Streambank Reforestation Completed
September 2020	Stream Channel and Vegetation Monitoring (Year 1)
February 2021	Supplemental Buffer Planting Completed
April 2021	NCDOT and Regulatory Agency Onsite Review
July 2021	Stream Channel and Vegetation Monitoring (Year 2)
August 2022	Stream Channel and Vegetation Monitoring (Year 3)
July 2023	Stream Channel and Vegetation Monitoring (Year 4)
September 2023	Herbicide Application on Invasive Species

1.4 Debit Ledger

The entire Long Branch Site #6 stream mitigation site was used for the R-2519B project to compensate for unavoidable stream impacts.

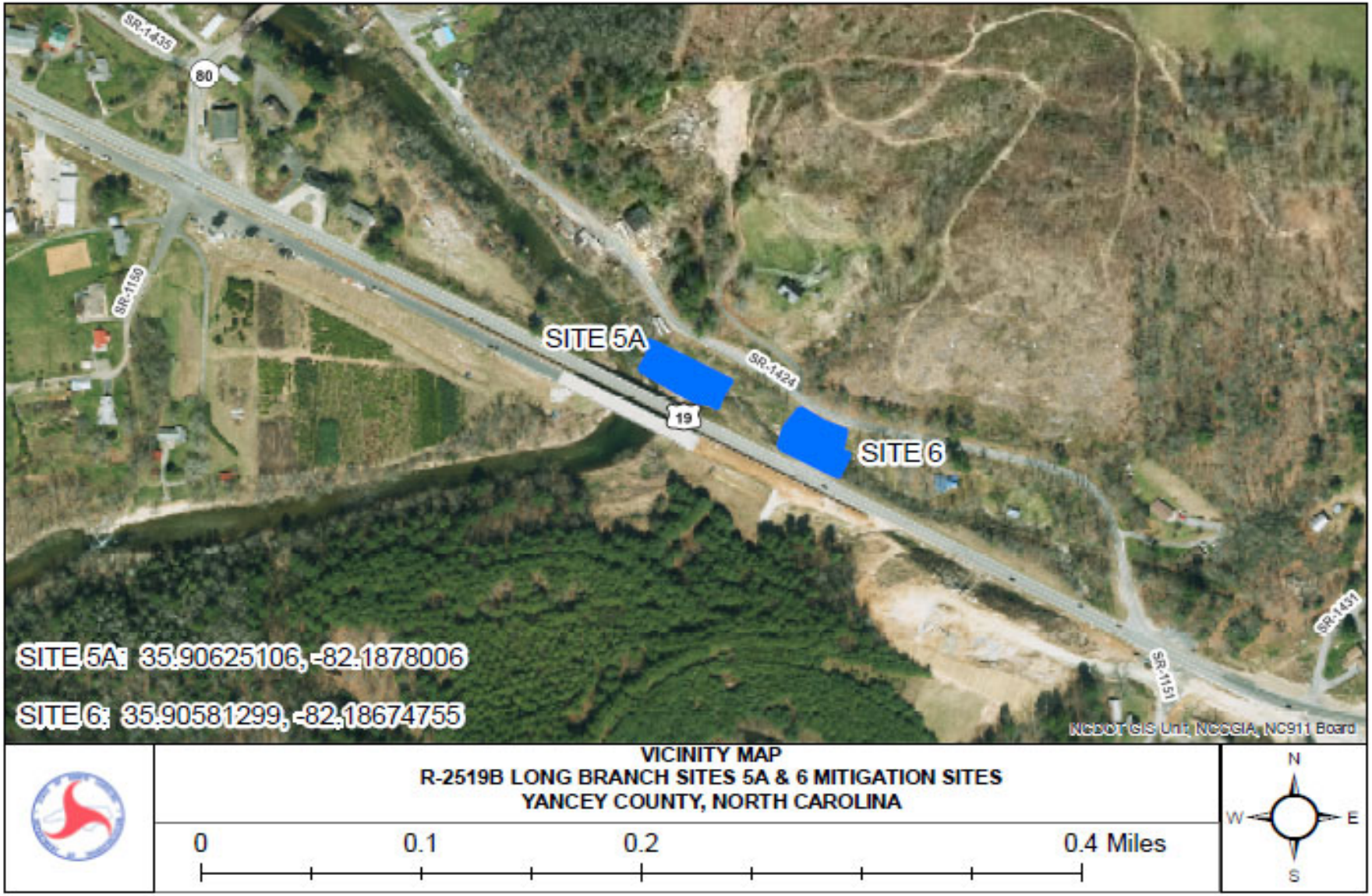


Figure 1. Vicinity Map

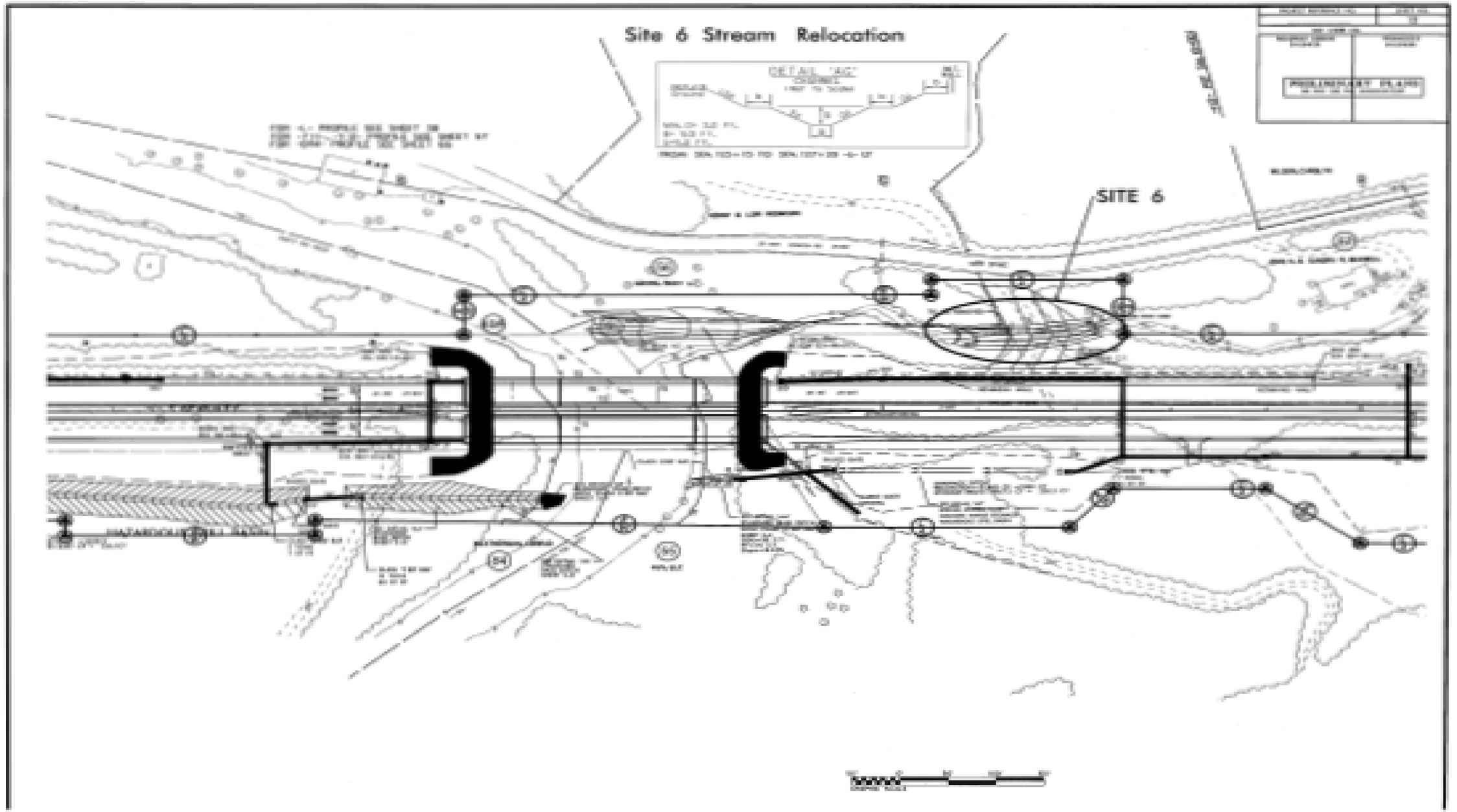


Figure 2. Site #6 Permit Drawing

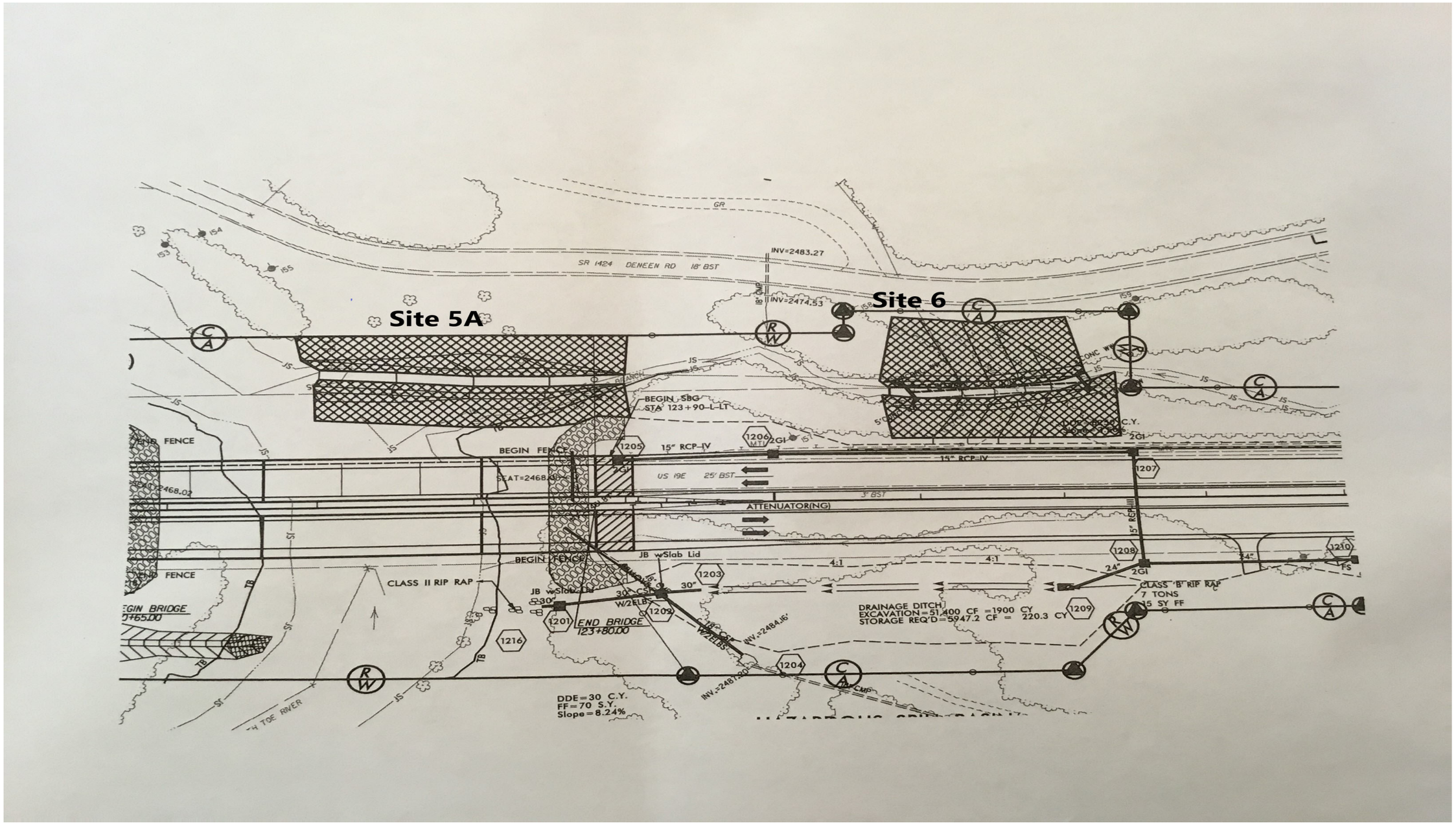


Figure 3. Site #6 Reforestation Plan

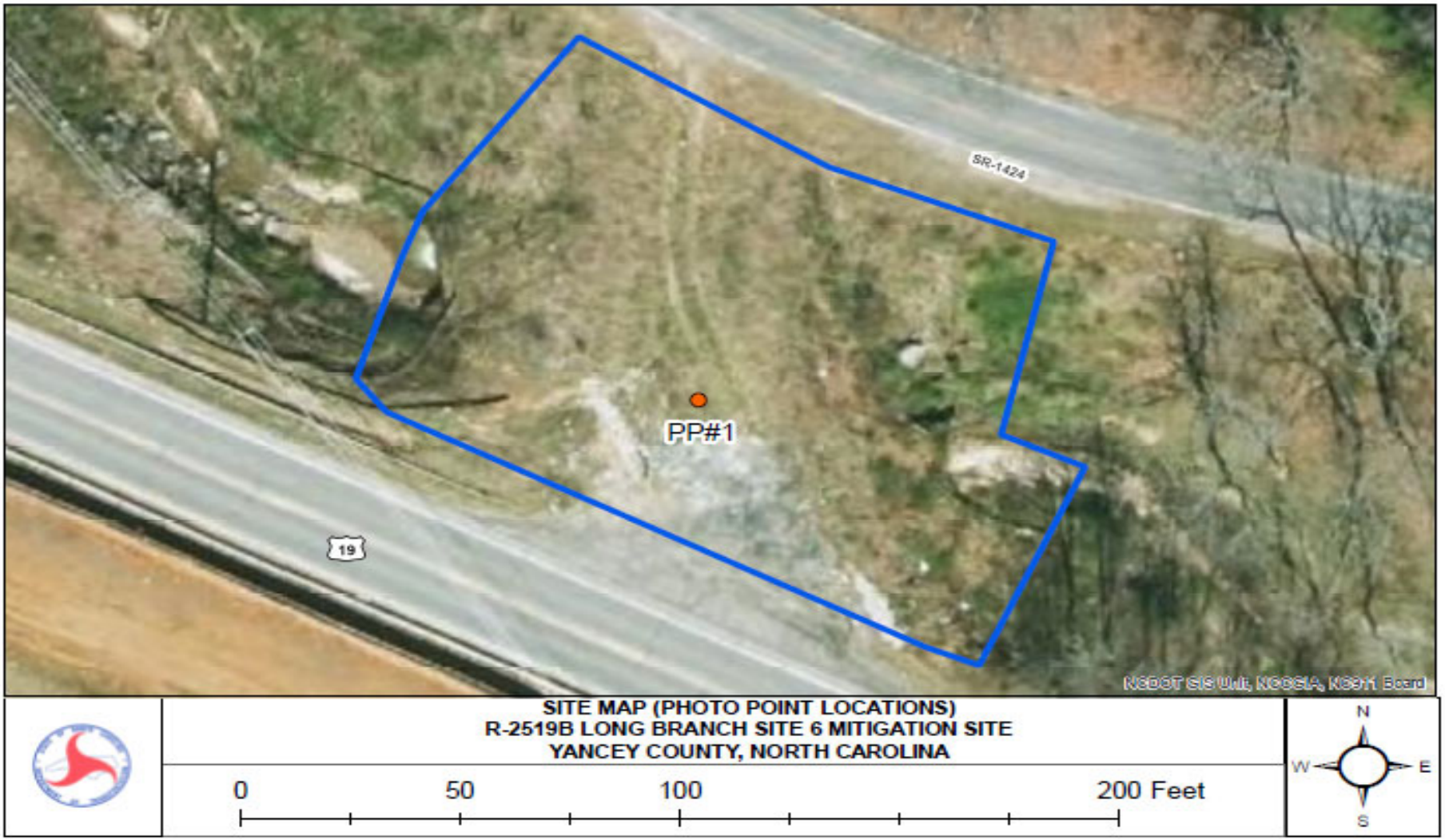


Figure 3. Site #6 Map

2.0 STREAM ASSESSMENT

2.1 Success Criteria

Based on email correspondence with the Regulatory Agencies it was agreed to maintain consistency and follow the mitigation plan language as it relates to vegetation monitoring.

Mitigation Plan

Performance Standards
Performance standards are based on the April 2003 Stream Mitigation Guidelines. Success for vegetation monitoring within the riparian buffer areas will be based on the survival of at least 260 stems of five-year-old trees at year five. Assessment of channel stability will be based on the survival of riparian vegetation and lack of significant bank erosion, channel widening or down-cutting.

Monitoring Requirements
Each site will be monitored for five years with no less than two bankfull events, which must occur in separate monitoring years and be documented. If less than two bankfull events occur during the first five years, monitoring will continue until the second bankfull event is documented. The following components of Level 1 monitoring will be performed annually for the monitoring period: reference photos, plant survival monitoring (identification of specific problem areas and remedial action), and visual inspection of channel stability. Vegetation stem counts will be conducted on Sites 8, 21, and 30 only. Physical measurements of channel stability/morphology will only be performed on Site 30. An as-built will be submitted for each site and will include stream channel profile and cross-section surveys which will provide a baseline for comparison if it is determined at any time during the monitoring period that a problem has occurred. Annual monitoring reports will be made available on the NCDOT website.

NCDWR Condition #1
The permittee shall visually monitor the vegetative plantings to assess and ensure complete stabilization of the mitigation stream segments. Riparian area success shall be determined by conducting stem counts to ensure a tree survival rate of 320 stems/acre. The monitoring shall be conducted annually for a minimum of 3 years after final planting. Photo documentation shall be utilized to document the success of the riparian vegetation and submitted to NCDWR in a final report within sixty days after completing monitoring. After 3 years the NCDOT shall contact NCDWR to schedule a site visit to “close out” the mitigation site.

2.2 Stream Description

2.2.1 Post-Construction Conditions

The relocation of the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site involved the removal of a perched, two-barrel, six foot by six foot, reinforced concrete box culvert (RCBC) and soil path on Long Branch. Several cross vanes were installed within the channel bed. The riparian buffer zone was also to be planted with a 50-foot buffer on the north side and a 30-foot buffer on the south side. The last 15 feet of stream will have the buffer reduced from 30 feet to 25 feet on the left bank due to an overhead utility line.

2.2.2 Monitoring Conditions

The objective of the Long Branch Site #6 stream relocation was to restore a stream as identified in Rosgen's Applied River Morphology. A visual stream assessment will be conducted annually each year of the monitoring period.

2.3 Results of the Stream Assessment

2.3.1 Site Data

The visual assessment of the stream noted that the channel appears stable with little or no active bank erosion. The upper cross vane was functioning properly. NCDOT will continue to monitor the channel stability at Site #6 in 2024.

3.0 VEGETATION: LONG BRANCH SITE #6

3.1 Description of Species

The following tree species were planted on the streambank:

Salix nigra, Black Willow

Cornus amomum, Silky Dogwood

The following tree species were planted in the buffer area:

Liriodendron tulipifera, Yellow Poplar

Platanus occidentalis, Sycamore

Fraxinus pennsylvanica, Green Ash

Quercus alba, White Oak

Quercus rubra, Northern Red Oak

Betula nigra, River Birch

Quercus phellos, Willow Oak

3.2 Results of Vegetation Monitoring

Streambank & Buffer Vegetation: Visual planted vegetation assessment noted the planted vegetation is surviving along the streambanks and within the buffer area. Silky Dogwood, Black Willow, Sycamore, Green Ash, Northern Red Oak, White Oak and River Birch were noted surviving.

3.3 Conclusions

Division 13 Roadside sprayed the invasive species in September 2023. NCDOT proposes to continue monitoring the planted vegetation in 2024.

4.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site has met the required monitoring protocols for the fourth formal year of monitoring. The channel throughout the stream site is stable at this time. The planted vegetation is surviving along the streambanks and within the buffer area.

NCDOT proposes to continue stream and vegetation monitoring at the Long Branch Site #6 Mitigation Site in 2024.

5.0 REFERENCES

Mitigation Plan, US 19E Widening, Yancey and Mitchell Counties, North Carolina TIP Number R-2519B, WBS No. 35609.1.1, May 6, 2013 (Revised November 4, 2013)

Department of the Army Permit, Permittee: North Carolina Department of Transportation, Permit No. 2004-9987181 / 2004-30631, TIP No. R-2519B, Issuing Office: CESAW-RG-A

North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources, December 2, 2013, Proposed improvements to US 19E from SR 1186 in Yancey County to multilane section west of Spruce Pine in Mitchell County, State Project No. 6.909001T, WBS Element No. 35609.1.1, TIP R-2519B, NCDWR Project No. 2013-0743v.2

Rosgen, D.L, 1996. Applied River Morphology. Wildland Hydrology, Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), 2003. Stream Mitigation Guidelines. Prepared with cooperation from the US Environmental Protection Agency, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, and the NC Division of Water Resources.

APPENDIX A

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Long Branch Site #6

Photo Point #1 (Upstream)

Photo Point #1 (Downstream)

Upper crossvane

July 2023