



⊠ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ⊠

Cameron Ingram, Executive Director

July 28, 2023

Grant Selection Committee Members
Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program
US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

Subject: Letter of Support for Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program (WCPP) grant application for the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Uwharrie CONNECT project in Montgomery County, North Carolina

Dear Grant Selection Committee Members,

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) supports the subject project that was developed with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in accordance with a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU formalized the inter-agency coordination on wildlife conservation, highway safety, and mitigation needs on existing and developing highway projects in North Carolina. The following comments on the application are offered in accordance with applicable provisions of the state and federal Environmental Policy Acts (G.S. 113A-1 through 113-10; 1 NCAC 25 and 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c), respectively) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667d).

As noted in the application, a WCPP grant is being sought to construct a bridge as part of the improvements to NC24/27 over Rocky Creek in Montgomery County. Rocky Creek at this location is a riparian corridor located within the Uwharrie National Forest. NC 24/27 is currently scheduled to be widened from a 2-lane to a 4-lane median divided facility through this area with the current hydraulic design utilizing a triple-barrel box culvert. However, a dual bridge structure would improve highway permeability of the newly widened section and be much more effective for wildlife movement, particularly white-tailed deer, the most common for wildlife vehicle collisions in this region of North Carolina. Furthermore, spanning Rocky Creek will provide recognized benefits to aquatic species by eliminating disturbance to the stream and allowing natural stream processes to persist.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide support for this project. Please contact me at travis.wilson@ncwildlife.org or 919-707-4057 if you have any questions about these comments.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Wilson'.

Travis Wilson, NCWRC Eastern DOT Coordinator