



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JAMES B. HUNT JR.
GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 25201, RALEIGH, N.C. 27611-5201

DAVID McCOY
ACTING SECRETARY

June 17, 1999

Doug Huggett
Division of Coastal Management
P.O. Box 27687
Raleigh, NC 27611-7687

Re: Mitigation Sites, New Hanover County, TIP Project No. B-2059/B-2156; State Project No. 8.2560701; COE Action ID No. 199101126.

Dear Mr. Huggett,

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has monitored the referenced mitigation sites since 1995. No hydrologic monitoring was required on this site. Vegetation monitoring has been conducted for three growing seasons.

The sites are located near Bridge No. 1 over Spring Branch and Bridge No. 2 over Smith Creek on SR 1175 (North Kerr Avenue) in New Hanover County. These sites consist of restoration of the following swamp forest species:

Bald Cypress – *Taxodium distichum*
Black Gum – *Nyssa sylvatica*
Water Oak – *Quercus nigra*

The sites were planted in December of 1994. Areas at both sites under the old bridge approaches were graded to natural ground level and planted with appropriate species. No monitoring plots were established. NCDOT began monitoring the site in 1995. The success criteria established requires a survival rate of 32 stems per 0.1 acres (320 per acre).

At the time the 1996 Annual Report was prepared, the sites were thriving well as brackish (tidal) marshes with a dense stand of *Juncus* and *Spartina* sp. Colonization of these marsh species was beginning throughout the sites due to adjacent marsh habitat. However, it had been determined by visual observation that none of the trees planted had survived. Supplemental planting was done at both sites in January 1997.

As of the 1997 Annual Report, a site inspection revealed that the replanted trees were doing well throughout both areas. From visual observation it was concluded that there were greater than 32 stems per 0.1 acre on both sites. The sites continued to function as brackish (tidal) marshes. Site 1 (east side of bridge) was growing well with a

mixture of black willow, bald cypress, tulip poplar, black gum, *Juncus*, giant cordgrass, and cattails. Site 2 (west side of bridge) also was successfully growing with a predominant mixture of bald cypress and black gum, along with some wax myrtle, alder and pine on the higher elevations at the bottom of the fill slope.

By visual observation during the third year of vegetation monitoring in 1998, the average tree density remained greater than 320 stems per acre on both of the planted sites. The 1998 Annual Monitoring Report concluded that the site has met the vegetation success criteria.

At this time, NCDOT would recommend discontinuing monitoring of the B-2059/B-2156 mitigation site. If you have any questions, please call Shannon Simpson, Natural Systems Specialist, at 733-7844 ext. 330. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

V. Charles Bruton, Ph.D.
Assistant Branch Manager,
Project Development and Environmental
Analysis Branch

cc: Mr. David Franklin, USACE
Mr. Dave Timpy, USACE
Mrs. Kelly Williams, DCM
Mr. David Cox, WRC
Mr. John Dorney, NCDENR
Mr. Gordon Cashin, NCDOT

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT

October 15, 1999

V. Charles Bruton, Ph.D.
Assistant Branch Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis
NC Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611-7687

Re: Mitigation Sites, New Hanover County, TIP Project No. B-2059/B-2156; State Project No. 8.2560701; COE Action ID No. 199101126, CAMA Permit Number 65-92.

Dear Dr. Bruton:

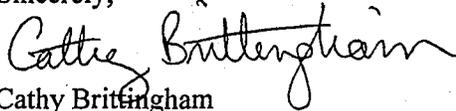
This letter is in response to your correspondence dated June 17, 1999 to the Division of Coastal Management and recent phone conversations with Shannon Simpson of your staff regarding the regulatory release of the New Hanover County Mitigation Sites located near Bridge No. 1 over Spring Branch and Bridge No. 2 over Smith Creek on SR 1175 (North Kerr Avenue).

It appears, according to the description in your letter, that most of the success criteria for these mitigation sites have been met. DCM concurs with your recommendation to discontinue monitoring of the B-2059/B-2156 mitigation site since the goals of the mitigation project have been met to the extent that a swamp forest representative of a natural swamp forest community has been restored.

Please note, the success criteria for this site as outlined in the document titled "Restoration Guidelines," an attachment to your 1992 CAMA permit application, includes proper species composition as follows: bald cypress, *Taxodium distichum*, (35%); black gum, *Nyssa sylvatica*, (35%); and water oak, *Quercus nigra*, (30%). Your letter dated June 17, 1999 does not mention water oak as a component of this site in its present condition, therefore it appears that the oak component of this swamp forest has not survived. This is disappointing. However, Kelly Williams, DCM Wetland Restoration Specialist, has visited these sites and agrees that swamp forest has been satisfactorily restored at both locations.

If you have any questions, please call me or Kelly Williams at (919) 733-2293. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Cathy Brittingham
Transportation Project Coordinator

cc: Gordon Cashin, NCDOT
David Cox, WRC
John Dorney, NCDENR
David Franklin, USACE
Shannon Simpson, NCDOT ✓
Dave Timpy, USACE
Randy Turner, NCDOT
Kelly Williams, P.W.S., NCDCM

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