

North Carolina
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Division of Coastal Management

Michael F. Easley, Governor
William G. Ross Jr., Secretary
Donna D. Moffitt, Director



April 23, 2003

Phil Harris, P.E.
Project Development and Environmental Analysis
NC Department of Transportation
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

Re: Colington Cut Mitigation Site, Dare Co, TIP No. B-2024, CAMA Permit Number 70-92 and 71-92

Dear Mr. Harris:

This letter is in response to NCDOT's request in June 1999 and in subsequent annual mitigation site monitoring reports to discontinue monitoring at the Colington Cut mitigation site in Dare County. Field visits by DCM staff over the past few years have produced questions about whether or not the site has met success criteria. While the site does contain some *Juncus roemerianus* and *Scirpus* spp., it appears to be dominated by *Phragmites*. The 2002 Annual Monitoring Report includes results from the visual vegetation monitoring that took place in October 2002. This report estimates 60% *Juncus* coverage, 25% *Scirpus* coverage and 10% coverage of other species. A site visit by two DCM staff members on October 1, 2002 showed the site is dominated by *Phragmites*.

Because the Division does not agree that the site is dominated by coastal marsh species to an extent greater than 50%, it has been determined that the site has not met the required success criteria. Therefore, additional monitoring and/or remediation will be necessary. In an effort to determine the cause of the lack of success, DCM recommends that the site elevations be compared with other areas dominated by *Juncus* in that vicinity to determine if the site needs to be regraded. If suitable mitigation can be found nearby or is available at another mitigation site, it may be proposed as replacement for the permitted impacts the Colington Cut site was designed to replace.

Please contact Kelly Williams, DCM Wetland Specialist or Cathy Brittingham, Transportation Project Coordinator at (919) 733-2293 in the Raleigh DCM Office about the remediation plans for this site.

Sincerely,

Doug Huggett
Major Permits and Consistency Coordinator

Cc: Bill Biddlecome, USACE, Washington
Randy Griffin, NCDOT, PDEA
Lynn Smith, NCDOT, PDEA
John Hennessy, NCDWQ