

# US 701 PUBLIC HEARING

## Public Hearing for US 701 Bridge Replacement Project Over the Great Pee Dee River, Great Pee Dee River Overflow, and Yauhannah Lake Horry and Georgetown Counties, South Carolina

September 10, 2013

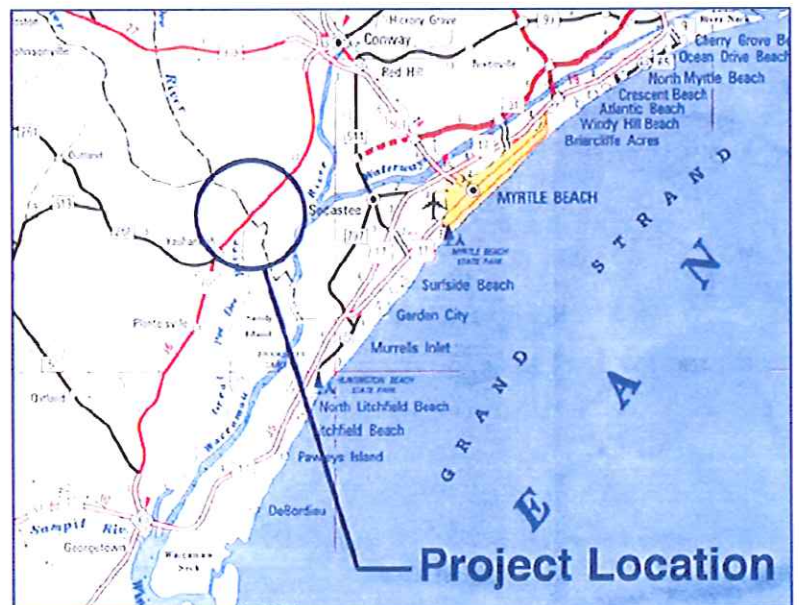
Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center



File No. 22.124B

Project No. BR-BR88(044)

PIN 30688



## What is the purpose of this public hearing?

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed US 701 project was completed and was approved by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on July 31, 2013. The purpose of this public hearing is to present an overview of the EA, including the Preferred Alternative and its potential impacts on the surrounding human and natural environment, and provide the public with an opportunity for input and comment on the project. You are invited to view the displays, examine the EA, and provide comments on the document and the Preferred Alternative. All comments received will become part of the official public hearing record and will be available for public review. Your comments, along with others received, will be considered in refinement of the Preferred Alternative. Citizens are encouraged to discuss the benefits and their concerns about the Preferred Alternative with members of the project team.

## What is the format of this public hearing?

The public hearing will be an informal, open-house style meeting combined with a formal project presentation and public comment period. In the open-house style setting, you may view displays, discuss the project on an individual basis with project team members, and provide comments. You may make comments by using the voice recorder available at a comment table, completing a written comment form at the meeting, or mailing in a comment form after the meeting. During the formal project presentation and public comment period, SCDOT will give a brief overview of the project. Immediately following the project presentation, citizens will have the opportunity to make formal verbal comments regarding the project. Individuals who wish to make formal comments must sign up to do so prior to the beginning of the formal presentation.

## What is the US 701 project?

The US 701 Bridge Replacement project consists of the replacement and realignment of an approximately two mile long section of US 701 located in Georgetown and Horry Counties. The project would involve replacing the three existing US 701 bridges over Yauhannah Lake, the Great Pee Dee River, and the Great Pee Dee River Overflow. The project extends from a point near the US 701 / Trinity Road intersection in Georgetown County, to a point near the US 701 / Lucas Bay Road intersection in Horry County. The project involves replacement of the three (3) existing bridges as well as realignment of the connecting roadways on embankment fills and the construction of new approach roadways at the beginning and end of the project.

To avoid a long detour, traffic will be maintained on the existing facilities during the construction of the replacement bridges and roadways. These existing bridges will be demolished upon completion of construction.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. This EA was approved by SCDOT and FHWA officials on July 31, 2013.

## What is the project's purpose and need?

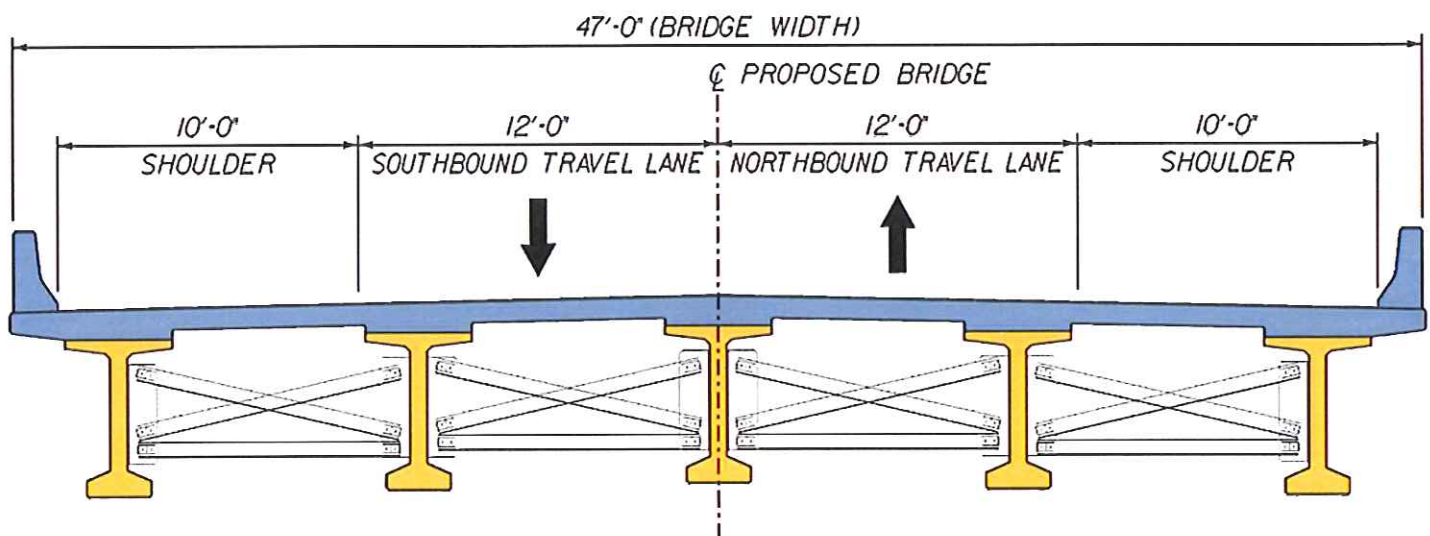
The purpose of the project is to replace the existing structurally deteriorated and functionally obsolete US 701 bridges and maintain the principal direct rural connection between the larger towns of Conway and Georgetown, as well as the smaller communities such as Bucksport and Yauhannah in between. Replacement of these three existing bridges was determined urgent by the Department and the Federal Highway Administration due to the physical condition of the existing structures. The existing bridges have been inspected by the Department and rated structurally deficient, and therefore, are in need of replacement for public safety reasons.

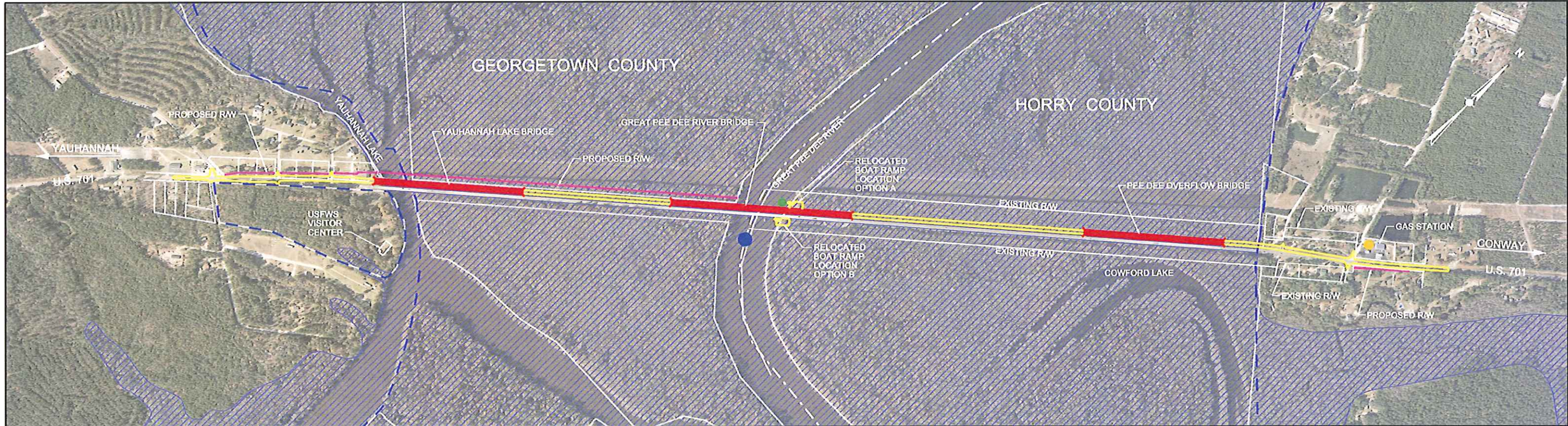
## What is the Preferred Alternative?

Several new alternative alignments were considered in the preliminary alignment selection process, and six feasible alternatives were considered for further development. Below is a discussion regarding the preferred alternative. Information regarding the other alternatives can be found in the matrix on page 5 and in the Environmental Assessment.

The Preferred Alternative involves construction in a new parallel alignment approximately 55 feet northwest (upstream) of the centerline of the existing alignment. Fifty-five (55) feet has been established as the minimum offset distance from the existing centerline that will permit the safe operation of the existing US 701 roadway and provide adequate space for drainage provisions during construction.

The three new bridges would be placed on this alignment with the roadway connecting the bridges and the approach roadways on both ends of the project placed on embankment fills. The bridge replacement project would begin at a point near the US 701 / Lucas Bay Road intersection and continue southwest for approximately two miles to a point near the US 701 / Trinity Road intersection. The bridges will carry one travel lane in each direction that is 12 feet wide, and a shoulder in each direction of travel that is 10 feet wide (see below). The proposed bridge deck for each of the three replacement bridges will be 47 feet wide, facilitating a 44 feet clear bridge width between the concrete barriers. The roadway section will consist of one travel lane in each direction that is 12 feet wide, and a shoulder in each direction of travel that is 10 feet wide. The 10 foot wide shoulder will have 6 feet paved and 4 feet unpaved.





**PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

**LEGEND:**

- PROPOSED ROADWAY
- PROPOSED BRIDGE
- EXISTING PROPERTY LINES
- EXISTING RW LINES
- PROPOSED RW LINES
- WILDLIFE REFUGE LIMITS
- 100 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN
- POTENTIAL HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
- THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES
- RECREATIONAL AREAS



South Carolina Department of Transportation  
**REPLACEMENT OF US 701 BRIDGES OVER  
 GREAT PEE DEE RIVER, PEE DEE OVERFLOW  
 & YAUHANNAH LAKE**

HORRY/GEORGETOWN COUNTIES, SC



U.S. Department of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
 Administration**

## ENVIRONMENTAL MATRIX

Impact Category	Impacts by Alternative						
	"No Build" Alternative	Alternative 1 72' Upstream	Alternative 2 55' Upstream (Preferred)	Alternative 3 55' Downstream	Alternative 4 72' Downstream	Alternative 5 Downstream/ Upstream Crossover	Alternative 6 Upstream Bowed
<b>Property</b>							
Residential Relocations	0	3 <sup>(1)</sup>	1 <sup>(1)</sup>	0	0	0	1 <sup>(1)</sup>
Acreage	0.00 acre	2.30 acre	0.94 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.94 acre
Residential Total Takes (without relocations)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Acreage	0.00 acre	0.73 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre
Residential Partial Takes	0	3	7	2	1	0	2
Acreage	0.00 acre	0.37 acre	1.28 acre	0.20 acre	0.13 acre	0.0 acre	0.02 acre
Commercial Relocations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farmland (NRCS Rating)	N/A	147	147	145	145	145/147	147
Floodplains	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Wetlands</b>							
Permanent Impacts	0.00 acre	10.88 acre	9.47 acre	8.55 acre	10.14 acre	10.86 acre	15.44 acre
On Site Mitigation	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	0.00 acre	-10.00 acre
Temporary Impacts	0.00 acre	12.06 acre	11.07 acre	11.45 acre	12.35 acre	15.69 acre	15.08 acre
Streams	N/A	None	None	None	None	None	None
<b>Threatened/ Endangered Species</b>							
Federal	N/A	2 <sup>(1)</sup>	2 <sup>(1)</sup>	2 <sup>(1)</sup>	2 <sup>(1)</sup>	2 <sup>(1)</sup>	2 <sup>(1)</sup>
State Listed Species	N/A	1	1	1	1	1	1
Noise (Receptors above the NAC)	8		8	6			
<b>Cultural Resources</b>							
Archaeological Site 38GE18	N/A	No <sup>(2)</sup>	No <sup>(2)</sup>	No <sup>(2)</sup>	Yes	No <sup>(2)</sup>	No <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Section 4(F) Resources</b>							
Wildlife Refuge (4(f) Programmatic)	N/A	5.14 acre	3.64 acre	3.79 acre	6.67 acre	9.26 acre	8.99 acre
Cowford Lake Ecosystem	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Horry Co. Boat Ramp (De minimis)	N/A	To be Relocated	To be Relocated	No Relocation	No Relocation	No Relocation	No Relocation
<b>Section 6(F) Re- sources</b>							
Wildlife Refuge - LWCF Funded	N/A	0.77 acre	0.61 acre	2.76 acre	3.32 acre	2.76 acre	0.72 acre
Hazardous Materials	N/A	1 <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(3)</sup>	1 <sup>(3)</sup>
Permits	N/A	Yes *	Yes *	Yes *	Yes *	Yes *	Yes *

Notes: (1) – A seasonal construction moratorium will serve to protect the shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) and the Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*). As a result of this measure, the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the shortnose sturgeon and the Atlantic sturgeon. No other federally threatened or endangered species will be affected.

(2) – Impact is limited to previously disturbed area

(3) – Potential for encountering petroleum contaminated soil/groundwater during construction

(\*) – Refer to the Permit section of the EA for list of permits required

## What are the major environmental and design commitments?

The corridor crosses Yauhannah Lake, the Great Pee Dee River and the Great Pee Dee River Overflow, as well as extensive floodplain forested wetlands. The Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge occupies a major portion of the project corridor. The project would result in certain modifications to the human and natural environment. However, the environmental studies indicate the absence of any major impacts on the human and natural environment. The “Environmental Assessment” (EA) document discusses in detail the probable beneficial and adverse social, economic, and environmental effects of the project and describes the measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impacts. The “Environmental Commitments” section of the EA describes the project commitments. Some of the highlights from the EA are:

- The Atlantic and Shortnose Sturgeon are listed as Federally Endangered species and are known to be present in the Great Pee Dee River. The Department has made a commitment to a seasonal construction moratorium for all in-water work for the period of January 1 through April 15, and work will not impede more than 50% of the channel during the months of January through April.
- Based on the studies, the proposed action is not expected to affect any other threatened or endangered species or critical habitats currently listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Wetlands were given special consideration during development and evaluation of the project with a subsequent determination that the preferred alternative would pose the least impact to wetlands. The impacted wetland will be less than 10 acres. The Department has committed to reclaiming the wetland areas temporarily lost through construction activities which will require returning disturbed areas to their original elevations to the extent practical.
- The project would involve construction within the 100 year floodplain limits associated with the Great Pee Dee River and the Yauhannah Lake floodplains. The proposed bridges will utilize longer span lengths which will result in less number of piers. These measures will reduce the impacts within the waterway and floodplain area.
- The Department’s Cultural Resources Survey identified one Historic Site, 38GE18. This site extends on both sides of US 701 on the southeastern side of Yauhannah Lake. No adverse effects to site 38GE18 are anticipated from this project; however, the Department has committed to monitoring of the site by one of the Department’s archeologists during ground disturbing construction activities. If any significant portion of the site is encountered, the construction activities in that area will be halted .
- The project will encroach on the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge property. During project development SCDOT and FHWA have worked closely with the USFWS to evaluate alternatives, associated impacts, and mitigation for the refuge.
- The Horry County Public Boat Landing is another public recreation area and is located beneath the existing US 701 Great Pee Dee River Bridge. With the selection of the preferred alternative, this boat landing will be relocated and a new access road will be constructed, which will be safer. The Department has made a commitment to keep the boat ramp accessible, to the extent possible, during construction. Any parking areas impacted by construction will be reconstructed as necessary.

SCDOT, in response to the nondiscrimination requirements set forth by the Federal regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation to effectuate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, complies with all regulations in this regard. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin under a program receiving federal aid has the right to file a written complaint with SCDOT. The complaint should be forwarded to the address located in this handout and submitted no later than 90 days after the date of the alleged act of discrimination. The complaint should detail the facts and circumstances of the incident and be signed by the person making the complaint.

### What happens next in the process?

Once the public hearing is complete, comments from the hearing will be collected, reviewed, and become part of the public record. Following any necessary additional studies, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) could be issued by the FHWA. SCDOT plans to execute a construction contract in Fall 2014.

If a FONSI is determined and funding is available, right of way acquisition may begin. An SCDOT right of way agent will contact the property owners to verify the information on ownership and property lines and to explain how construction of the project will affect their property. The right of way agent will make a written offer based on the fair market value for any property needed for the project. Details of right of way acquisition procedures can be found in the booklet "Highways and You" available at this hearing. Right of way representatives are also available at this hearing to answer your questions.

### How can I comment on the project?

Comments regarding the project are encouraged and several means of commenting are provided. Comments may be made by:

- Completing a project comment form and returning it at the public hearing or mailing it in by September 25, 2013
- Providing recorded comments on the voice recorder available at the public hearing
- Speaking during the formal presentation and comment period at the public hearing

Written comments pertaining to the project will be accepted through September 25, 2013 and will be included in the official public hearing records. Information provided, including name and address, will be published and is subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Send the comment form or other written comments to:

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