



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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GOVERNOR

ANTHONY J. TATA
SECRETARY

May 27, 2014

MEMO TO: File

FROM: Matthew W. Potter, P.E. *Matthew W. Potter*
Project Development Engineer
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit

SUBJECT: **Environmental Document Update**, Proposed NC 43 Connector
from south of US 70 to US 70, Craven County, WBS# 35601.1.3,
TIP Project # R-4463AA

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

This memo is to provide an environmental document update for TIP Project R-4463AA. The state EA for R-4463 was approved on March 21, 2005 and the state FONSI was approved on August 30, 2005. Although a consultation is not required since this is a state funded project, the project was evaluated to see if the SEPA documents are still valid in anticipation of the right of way authorization.

II. CONCLUSIONS

It has been determined that the current proposed action is essentially the same as the original proposed action. The original study corridor has not changed. Proposed changes, if any, are noted below. It has also been determined that anticipated social, economic, and environmental impacts were accurately described in the above referenced document(s) unless noted otherwise herein. Therefore, the original Administrative Action remains valid.

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III. CHANGES IN PROPOSED ACTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Since the SFONSI was completed in 2005, the following changes have occurred:

- Construction of TIP Project R-2301A, US 17 (New Bern Bypass) from US 17 South of New Bern to US 70, resulted in a large tract of land (356 acres owned by Wredco) to become landlocked between the controlled-access highways of US 17 Bypass and US 70. To resolve the access issues, NCDOT and Wredco have developed a written agreement (signed 09/30/2013) in which the NCDOT agreed to construct a portion of TIP Project R-4463A to provide access to the Wredco property. These improvements will be constructed under TIP Project R-4463AA.
- Construction for R-4463AA will include all grading and installation of hydraulic structures for the ultimate typical section, which will be a 4-lane median divided facility with 12-foot lanes and a 46-foot grass median; however, only two of the four lanes will be paved for the interim condition. The two paved lanes will be the future eastern lanes of the NC 43 Connector. The remaining two lanes will be paved in the future when the remaining portion of the NC 43 Connector is extended to US 17 (see Figure 1).
- Two access points (one on the east side and one on the west side of the NC 43 Connector) will be provided at the Wredco southern property line. The paved service roads will extend 300 feet to the east and 300 feet to the west at the Wredco southern property line and will have full access control (see Figure 2).
- As a part of the agreement with NCDOT, Wredco will donate all right of way and any associated easements needed for the R-4463AA facility.
- There are no Historic or Archaeological resources on this section of the project.

Natural Resources:

- There are no jurisdictional wetlands or streams within the R-4463AA study area. There is a current jurisdictional determination held by the land owner (Wredco), which covers the full study area.
- As of January 24, 2014, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) lists seven species protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for Craven County (see Table 2). Since the SEA and SFONSI were completed, the rough-leaved loosestrife has been added to Craven County. Also the red knot has been added to Craven County as "proposed" for listing. Other than the rough-leaved loosestrife, all the other listed species have a biological conclusion of No Effect due to lack of habitat. The rough-leaved loosestrife is scheduled for

survey this year pending the survey window (mid May-June). Therefore, it is unresolved at this time.

Table 2: Federally Protected Species of Brunswick County

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	Habitat Availability	Biological Conclusion
Alligator mississippiensis	American alligator	T (S/A)	No	No Effect
Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus	Atlantic sturgeon	E	No	No Effect
Dermochelys coriacea [†]	Leatherback sea turtle	E	No	No Effect
Picoides borealis	Red-cockaded woodpecker	E	No	No Effect
Trichechus manatus	West Indian manatee	E	No	No Effect
Lysimachia asperulaefolia	Rough-leaf loosestrife	E	TBD	TBD
Aeschynomene virginica	Sensitive joint-vetch	T	No	No Effect

- The Bald eagle was removed from the Endangered Species List on August 8, 2007. It is however, protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Surveys found no nests within 660 feet of the project limits, and no nesting and foraging habitat. A review of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) database, updated January 2014, indicated no occurrences of protected species within one mile of the project study area.

IV. LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

NCDOT will implement all practical measures and procedures to minimize and avoid environmental impacts. See attached list of Project Commitments.

V. COORDINATION

Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit personnel have discussed current project proposals with others as follows:

Design Engineer:	Gary Lovering, P.E.	<u>10/20/13</u> Date
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Permits Specialist:	Chris Manley	<u>04/23/14</u> Date
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If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (919) 707-6036 or at mwpotter@ncdot.gov.

PROJECT COMMITMENTS

NC 43 CONNECTOR FROM SOUTH OF US 70 TO US 70

CRAVEN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

STATE PROJECT NO. 6.804857 WBS NO. 35601.1.3 T.I.P. NO. R-4463AA

Current status, changes, or additions to the project commitments as shown in the environmental document for the project are printed in *italics*, with any deletions shown by using *strike-through* text.

Roadway Design Unit

1. In lieu of a ramp in the southeast quadrant of the interchange at US 70, the interchange will be constructed with a ramp/loop configuration in the southwest quadrant. However, the NCDOT will purchase right-of-way for a future ramp in the southeast quadrant should it be warranted by future traffic volumes or after the construction of the (currently unfunded) NC 43 Connector south of US 70.

The right-of-way for a future ramp in the southeast quadrant was purchased as a part of the R-4463B project.

Roadway Design Unit & Project Development & Environmental Analysis Unit

1. To minimize noise impacts, a noise wall is proposed along the western boundary of the Trent Creek subdivision, just north of US 17. This commitment is subject to a detailed design noise study and additional public involvement efforts.

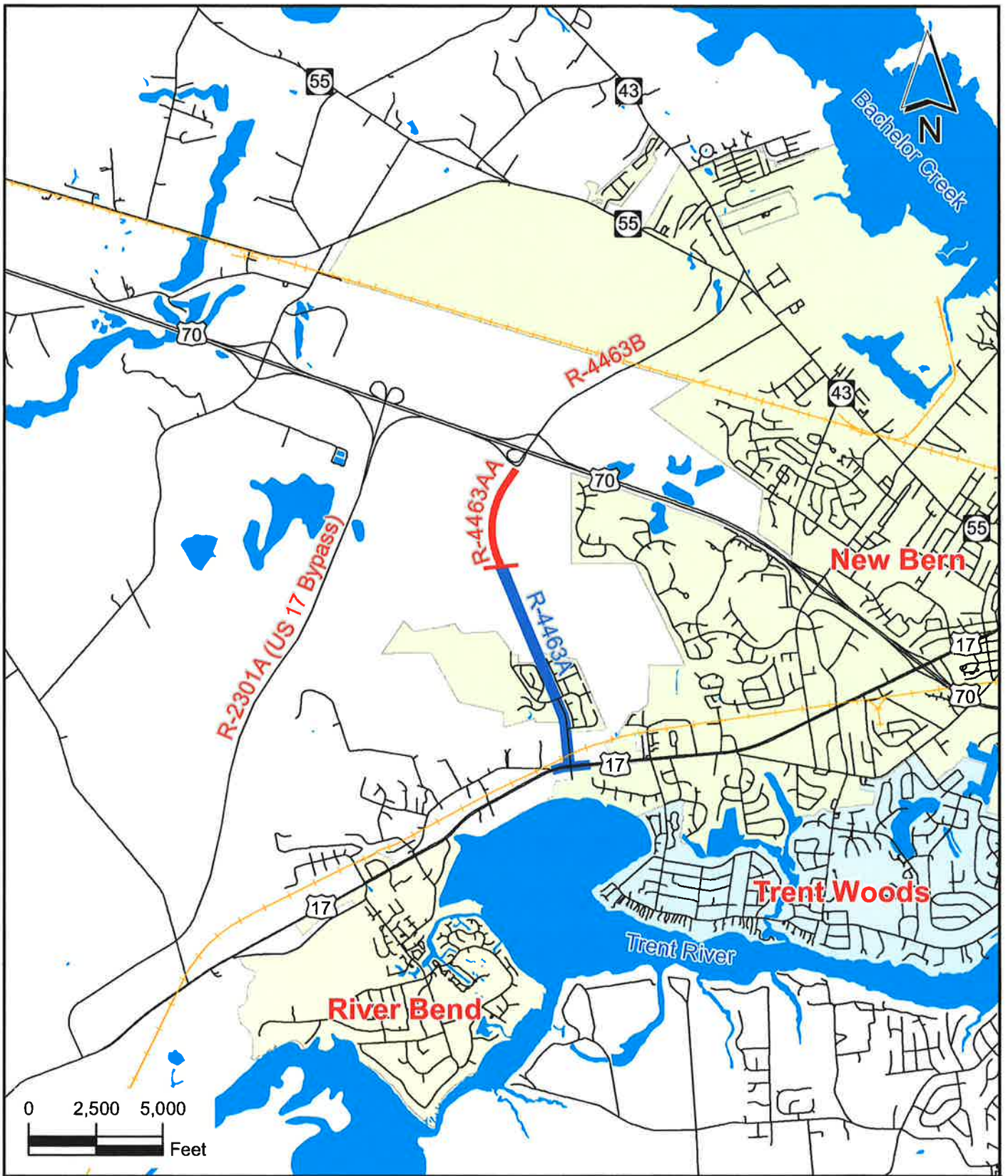
A detailed design noise study and additional public involvement will be complete prior to the construction of the remaining portion of R-4463A.

- ~~2. Wildlife crossing(s) for small animal passage will be constructed south of US 70 along the NC 43 Connector. The exact location(s) and sizing of wildlife crossing(s) will be addressed during the final design phase. Animal passage design will be subject to approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC).~~

The USFWS and the NCWRC have agreed (via emails dated February 16 & 20, 2007) that proposed wildlife crossings are no longer warranted for this project.

Project Development & Environmental Analysis Unit

- 1. Environmental surveys for the rough-leaf loosestrife will be conducted during the 2014 survey window (mid May-June).*



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

**VICINITY MAP
NC 43 CONNECTOR
FROM SOUTH OF US 70 TO US 70**

CRAVEN COUNTY
TIP PROJECT R-4463AA & R-4463A

County: CRAVEN

Div: 2 TIP#R-4463AA

WBS: 35601.1.3

Date: MAY 2014

**Figure
1**



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT

**R-4463AA DESIGN
NC 43 CONNECTOR
FROM SOUTH OF US 70 TO US 70**
GRAVEN COUNTY
TIP PROJECT R-4463AA



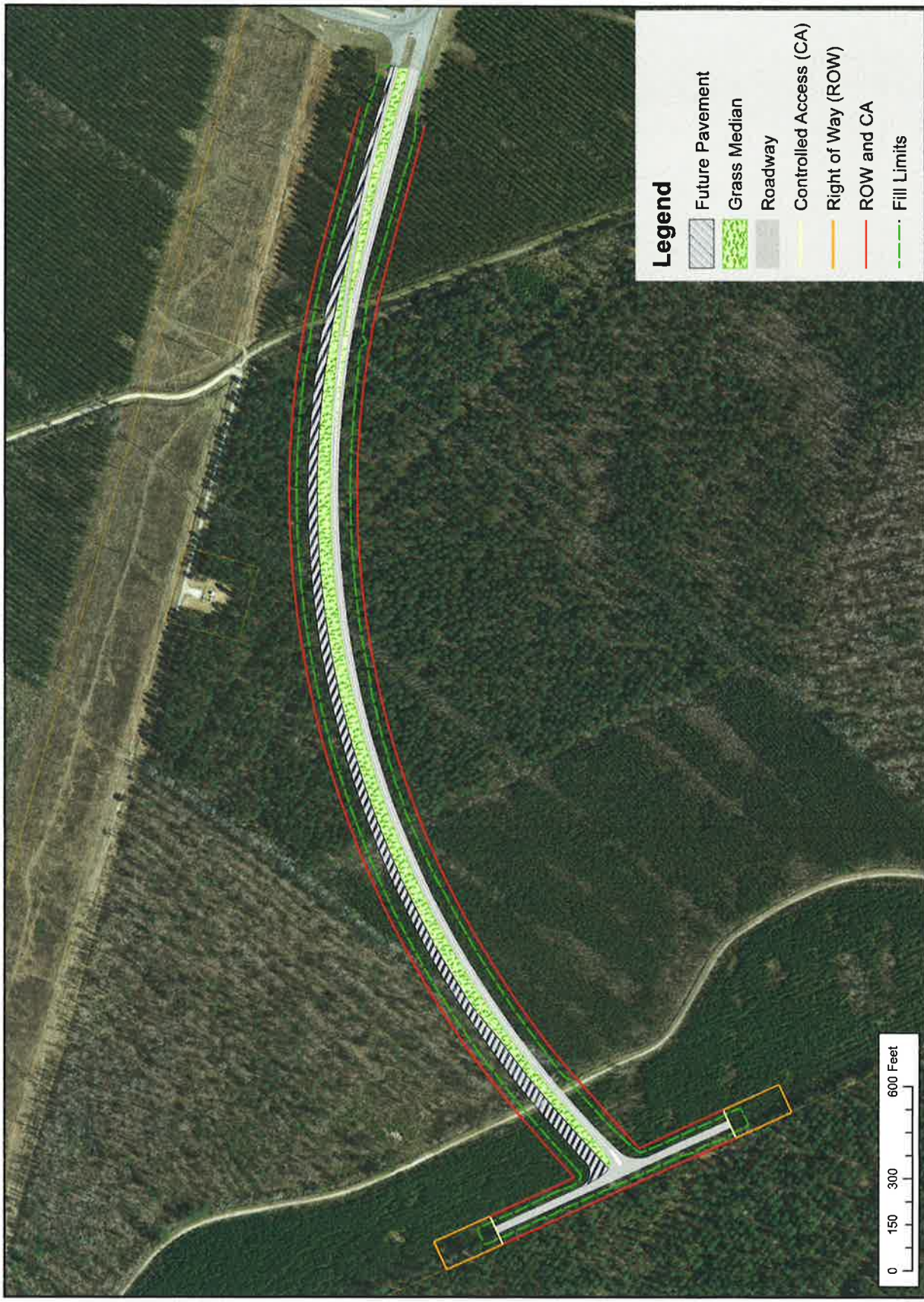
County: CRAVEN

Div: 2
TIP# R-4463AA








WBS: 35601.1.3

Date: MAY 2014

**Figure
2**



Legend

-  Future Pavement
-  Grass Median
-  Roadway
-  Controlled Access (CA)
-  Right of Way (ROW)
-  ROW and CA
-  Fill Limits