

Appendix A

Agency Correspondence

A. AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Asheville Field Office
160 Zillicoa Street
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

September 21, 1995



Mr. H. Franklin Vick, P.E., Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
Division of Highways
North Carolina Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611-5201

Dear Mr. Vick:

Subject: Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Improvement of
US 321 from SR 1500 (Blackberry Road) to US 221 in Blowing
Rock, Caldwell and Watauga Counties, North Carolina. TIP
No. R-2237C

In your letter of August 3, 1995 (received August 10, 1995), you informed us that an environmental impact statement would be prepared for the subject project and you requested our comments. The following comments are provided in accordance with the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 661-667e), and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) (Act).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is familiar with this project and provided comments on September 20, 1993, on the August 1993 Environmental Assessment. At that time, the Service stated that we "concur with the selection of the preferred alternative for this project, which involves widening of the existing alignment." We also pointed out that we do "not support the various Blowing Rock Bypass alternatives...based on increased habitat fragmentation and greater impacts to streams." At this time, the Service still prefers widening the existing alignment.

The Service does not have any additional natural resources issues to be evaluated in the study of bypass alternatives other than those listed in your letter. However, we are enclosing an updated list of federally protected endangered and threatened species known from Caldwell and Watauga Counties that may occur within the area of influence of the proposed bypass. The legal responsibilities of a Federal agency or their designated non-Federal representative under Section 7 of the Act are on file with the Federal Highway Administration. The enclosed pages also contain a list of other species of Federal concern that are currently under status review by the Service which may occur in the project impact

CALDWELL COUNTY

FEDERALLY PROTECTED SPECIES

ARACHNIDS

Spruce-fir moss spider (Microhexura montivaga) - Endangered

PLANTS

Spreading avens (Geum radiatum) - Endangered

Blue Ridge goldenrod (Solidago spithamea) - Threatened

Heller's blazing star (Liatris helleri) - Threatened

OTHER SPECIES OF FEDERAL CONCERN

MAMMALS

Alleghany woodrat (Neotoma magister)

INSECTS

Diana fritillary butterfly (Speyeria diana)

PLANTS

A liverwort (Bazzania nudicaulis)*

A liverwort (Plagiochila sullivanii var. sullivanii)*

Bent avens (Geum geniculatum)

Gray's lily (Lilium grayi)

Mountain bittercress (Cardamine clematitis)

No common name (Verberna riparia)

Sweet pinesap (Monotropsis odorata)

*Indicates no specimen from Caldwell County in at least 20 years.

WATAUGA COUNTY

FEDERALLY PROTECTED SPECIES

MAMMALS

Carolina northern flying squirrel (Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus) -
Endangered

Virginia big-eared bat (Plecotus townsendii virginianus) - Endangered

PLANTS

Roan Mountain bluet (Hedyotis purpurea var. montana) - Endangered

Spreading avens (Geum radiatum) - Endangered

Blue Ridge goldenrod (Solidago spithamea) - Threatened

Heller's blazing star (Liatris helleri) - Threatened

OTHER SPECIES OF FEDERAL CONCERN

MAMMALS

Alleghany woodrat (Neotoma magister)
Appalachian cottontail (Sylvilagus transitionalis)*

BIRDS

Cerulean warbler (Dendroica cerulea)

REPTILES

Bog turtle (Clemmys muhlenbergii)

AMPHIBIANS

Hellbender (Cryptobranchus alleganiensis)

FISHES

Kanawha minnow (Phenacobius teretulus)

CLAMS

Green floater (Lasmigona subviridis)
Tennessee heelsplitter (Lasmigona holstonia)

INSECTS

Diana fritillary butterfly (Speyeria diana)

PLANTS

A liverwort (Bazzania nudicaulis)*
Bent avens (Geum geniculatum)
Bog bluegrass (Poa paludigena)*
Butternut (Juglans cinerea)
Gray's lily (Lilium grayi)
Gray's saxifrage (Saxifraga caroliniana)
Mountain bittercress (Cardamine clematidis)
Tall larkspur (Delphinium exaltatum)

*Indicates no specimen from Watauga County in at least 20 years.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Blue Ridge Parkway
400 BB&T Building
One Pack Square
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7617

September 11, 1995



Mr. H. Franklin Vick, P.E., Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Post Office Box 25201
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611-5201

Subject: Environmental Impact Statement of the Proposed Improvements of US 321 from SR 1500 (Blackberry Road) to US 221 in Blowing Rock, North Carolina (State Project No. 8.T731301; TIP No. R-2237C)

Dear Mr. Vick:

This is in response to your letter of August 3 concerning subject project in Caldwell and Watauga Counties. Based on the information provided in your letter, we believe this project will not encroach on Blue Ridge Parkway lands or significant viewsheds.

We would, however, like to reiterate our earlier concern: we would object to any bypass that would adversely impact Parkway lands or viewsheds and/or significantly alter or impact Parkway natural, cultural, or visual resources. Should new alternatives be reviewed or discussed that impact Parkway lands or views, please advise Gary Johnson, Chief, Resource Planning and Professional Services at 704/271-4779 ext. 210 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Gary Everhardt
Superintendent



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Blue Ridge Parkway
400 BB&T Building
One Pack Square
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L3027

April 23, 1996

Mr. H. Franklin Vick, P.E., Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Post Office Box 25201
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611-5201



Dear Mr. Vick:

This letter is to provide comments and to express our current understanding of proposed State Project No. 8.T731301, TIP No. R-2237C involving improvement of US 321 from SR 1500 to US 221 in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. In an earlier response to your project scoping request, we expressed little concern for this project because it did not appear that it would involve Parkway lands for right-of-way or have significant impacts on the Parkway's primary resource, its scenic viewshed. However, at this time it does appear that alternative alignments being studied could directly and/or indirectly impact both Parkway lands and the scenic viewshed.

As NCDOT works through Phase II-Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for this project, described in the enclosure, there are a number of policy and impact analysis points that we will need to have fully considered on all alternatives potentially affecting the Parkway. Policy and impact considerations are organized by type of alignment alternative: 1) US 321 Bypass Intersecting Parkway; 2) US 321 Bypass Adjacent to Parkway.

If you have questions or comments about the information included in the enclosure, please contact Mr. Gary Johnson, Chief, Division of Resource Planning and Professional Services at 704/271-4779 ext. 210. Also we would like to be briefed on the status of this project, the alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS, and how Section 4(f) is going to be accomplished.

Sincerely,

Gary Everhardt
Superintendent

Enclosure

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY POLICY AND IMPACT ANALYSIS ATTACHMENT

Right-of-Way Authority

NCDOT would need additional right-of-way in order to construct a realigned segment of US 321 on National Park Service (NPS) property. The new alignment would follow (1) an existing alignment for a State deed-reserved secondary road; (2) an existing primary state or US highway alignment; or (3) an entirely new alignment not presently reserved by deed.

Existing deed-reserved public roads: Each public primary and secondary road that crosses the Blue Ridge Parkway or occupies some portion of NPS land is specifically reserved in a deed of donation conveying lands from the State to the United States for Parkway construction. In most cases, the deeds of donation do not provide for amending reservations to provide additional width. Deed clauses calling for "modifications as may hereinafter be agreed upon" refer to road relocations and not to enhancement of rights-of-way.

Acquiring highway right-of-way through equal-value exchange: Public Law 87-76 authorizes the NPS to accept certain lands and property interests through exchanges "of approximately equal value." No exchange will be considered under this authority if there is "no demonstrable benefit to the United States"; therefore, we could only accept high priority lands listed in the Parkway's approved Land Protection Plan. Usually, such lands have appurtenant access to, or across, the Parkway motor road, or some other highly significant value. Most contiguous lands adjacent to public highway projects would not be acceptable.

Interstate and Defense Highway System: Under Title 23, U.S.C., Congress has authorized the Secretary of Transportation to make arrangements with the NPS Director for a right-of-way on NPS land for National Defense Highways, if the Secretary deems such use to be "reasonably necessary."

The applicant, NCDOT, would "consult with local officials of the National Park Service (Blue Ridge Parkway) to ascertain whether or not the use or appropriation of the lands for right-of-way purposes is consistent with the Service's management program and agree to such measures as may be necessary to maintain program values."

Title 23 provides for mitigation, including lands to be obtained and conveyed to the United States, among other measures. Such lands need not be listed in the Land Protection Plan; however, the Parkway Superintendent must approve the mitigation plan.

We believe that Title 23 would be the appropriate authority, either to provide right-of-way for an entirely new alignment or to expand on an existing deed-reserved road to accommodate a relocated segment of US 321 on NPS lands.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as Amended, and,

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as Amended

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a unit of the National Park Service. The 469 mile-long corridor as defined by its boundary is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and is also being considered for National Historic Landmark designation. Therefore, Section 106 and Section 4(f) are applicable under the jurisdiction of the Blue Ridge Parkway for any project that proposes to intersect or cross Parkway lands at an existing or a new location.

Section 4(f) declares that the Secretary of the Department of Transportation shall cooperate and consult with the Secretary of the Interior and shall not approve any program or project requiring use of any lands from a public park or recreational area, public wildlife or waterfowl refuge, or public or privately-owned historical site of national, state or local significance unless the following two provisions are met: 1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative; and, 2) such programs or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm. NCDOT will have to evaluate each of the alternative bypass alignments that require the use of Parkway lands and determine if the amount and location of those lands will impair resource values and/or use of the Blue Ridge Parkway, in whole or in part, for its intended purpose. Certainly the "no other feasible and prudent alternative" test will be looked at very critically by the Service before concurrence would ever be granted.

Environmental Issues, Affected Environment and Impact Topics

The environmental impact statement (EIS) will need to include the following subject areas at a minimum to allow us to reasonably compare the potential relative affects of each alternative.

SCENIC RESOURCES

- Landscape character
- Scenic quality
- Visual intrusions

CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Historic Parkway landscape setting
- Historic rural setting
- National Register of Historic Places values
- National Historic Landmark values
- Historic sites and features
- Archeological resources
- Ethnographic resources

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Threatened, endangered and sensitive species
- Wetlands, riparian areas and floodplains
- Wildlife
- Soils and soil erosion
- Air quality
- Water quality
- Prime and unique farmlands

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Visitor safety
- Traffic volumes and circulation
- Commuter and local traffic

SOCIOECONOMIC

- Regional access and circulation
- Regional visitor services
- Regional visitor expenditures

Cumulative Impact Analysis

The need for cumulative impact analysis is cited numerous times in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The Council on Environmental Quality's definition of cumulative impact states that cumulative impact is "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time." What this translates into for the US 321 bypass project is that the impacts to Parkway resources caused by this project need to be analyzed and discussed in the context of all of the road improvement projects completed along the Parkway since its construction and projects now proposed in the Transportation Improvement Plan that will diminish Parkway values.

Impact Mitigations

Resource mitigation actions to protect or restore Parkway resources that would be impacted must be addressed in the EIS. A mitigation plan would also be needed to identify those lands that would replace the Parkway lands converted from park to highway uses. Mitigation lands should be in addition to lands needed in order to protect the intersection road corridor or to provide access ramps, etc. If possible, lands acquired in mitigation should be Priority I lands identified in the Parkway's Land Protection Plan.

A new and widened highway corridor crossing or intersecting the Parkway would need to include protective buffer mitigations to eliminate the possibility of nonconforming roadside development that would be visible from the Parkway.

US 321 BYPASS ADJACENT TO THE PARKWAY ALTERNATIVES(S)

Congress authorized the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway and established it as the first Rural National Parkway in America to provide a recreational destination oriented scenic motor road to link Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Parks. Much of the Blue Ridge Parkway's significance as a unit of the National Park System relates to its scenic viewshed that encompasses roughly 500,000 acres of forested mountain slopes, rural pastoral landscapes and two urban areas. The Parkway follows a 469 mile-long scenic corridor along mountain crests, mountain side slopes and valley bottoms where both the motor road and 275 parking overlooks combine to provide an unparalleled view of Southern Appalachian scenery.

Constructive Use of a Section 4(f) Resource

As a unit of the National Park System, the Blue Ridge Parkway qualifies as a "protected resource." We believe the Parkway's viewshed and its associated scenic quality and value are integral determinants of the park's national significance and qualify for protection under constructive use of Section 4(f). US 321 bypass improvements that would be located to run parallel to- and down slope from- the Parkway could substantially diminish the value of that portion of the Parkway's scenic viewshed.

Viewshed Mapping

In 1994, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Design Research Laboratory at North Carolina State University entered into a cooperative agreement to map visually sensitive lands adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway. To date 90 miles of Parkway viewshed have been mapped around Asheville, North Carolina and Roanoke, Virginia. Information on these maps identifies which lands are visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway and those visible lands are then classified into six sensitivity zones. The higher the sensitivity rating of a zone, the greater the potential there is for visual impacts to occur from development.

Viewshed mapping has not been accomplished for the Blowing Rock portion of the Parkway. This viewshed sensitivity mapping methodology is now the accepted standard for the Parkway and is actively being used to evaluate proposed projects occurring on adjacent lands. Your utilization of this methodology through NC State to map the area around Blowing Rock would expedite the evaluation of potential impacts for each of the alternatives. At the most it would cost \$5,000 to produce the maps.

1208

NORTH CAROLINA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
116 WEST JONES STREET
RALEIGH NORTH CAROLINA 27603-8003

10-04-95

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW COMMENTS

MAILED TO

FROM

N.C. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
FRANK VICK
PLANN. & ENV. BRANCH
TRANSPORTATION BLDG./INTER-OFF

MRS. CHRYS BAGGETT
DIRECTOR
N C STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SCOPING - PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO US 321 FROM SR 1500 (BLACKBERRY RD.) TO US 221 IN BLOWING ROCK TIP #R-2237C

SA1 NU 96E42200129 PROGRAM TITLE - SCOPING

THE ABOVE PROJECT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE NORTH CAROLINA

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS. AS A RESULT OF THE REVIEW THE FOLLOWING

IS SUBMITTED () NO COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED

(X) COMMENTS ATTACHED

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL THIS OFFICE (919) 733-7232.

cc: REGIONS D & E





North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
William S. Price, Jr., Director

September 13, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: H. Franklin Vick, P.E., Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
Division of Highways
Department of Transportation

FROM: David Brook *David Brook*
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

SUBJECT: Improve US 321 from SR 1500 to US 221
in Blowing Rock, Caldwell and Watauga
Counties, R-2237C, State Project
8.T731301, 96-E-4220-0129

We have received information concerning the above project from the State Clearinghouse.

We understand that a survey of historic architectural resources located within the project's area of potential effect will be conducted for this project. We look forward to reviewing the survey results once the fieldwork is complete.

There are no known archaeological sites within the proposed project area. Based on our present knowledge of the area, it is unlikely that any archaeological resources which may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places will be affected by the project construction. We, therefore, recommend that no archaeological investigation be conducted in connection with this project.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

DB:slw

cc: ✓ State Clearinghouse
Nicholas Graf
B. Church
T. Padgett





North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James B. Hunt Jr., Governor
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

July 9, 1997

Nicholas L. Graf
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Department of Transportation
310 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, N.C. 27601-1442



Re: US 321 Bypass of Blowing Rock, Caldwell and Watauga Counties, A-2237C, Federal Aid Project No. NHF-321(1), State Project 8.T731301, ER 97-9323

Dear Mr. Graf:

Thank you for your letter of June 4, 1997, transmitting the historic structures survey report by Mattson, Alexander & Associates concerning the above project.

The following properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

Bollinger-Hartley House. This property is listed in the National Register under Criterion C as an intact example of the bungalow style that developed as a popular house design for local residents during the tourist boom of the early twentieth century.

Green Park Historic District. This property is listed in the National Register under Criterion A because of its local significance in the area of social history and under Criterion C because of its local significance in the areas of architecture and landscape design.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the criterion cited:

Green Park Historic District boundary expansion. The boundaries of the district should be expanded to include the Young-Shaw-Steele House (east side of SR 1536, north of Wonderland Drive, Blowing Rock). The house is a substantially intact version of the Craftsman-style cottages that arose throughout the Green Park summer colony in the 1920s. The Young-Shaw-Steele House is separated from the district by only one noncontributing property, and clearly marks the northern end of the historic Green Park development.



Nicholas L. Graf
July 9, 1997, Page 2

Five Points (A. L. Shuford House), east side of Green Hill road, approximately 0.2 mile south of junction with Fairway Court, Blowing Rock. This house is a well-preserved example of the often-sophisticated rustic resort architecture built in Blowing Rock during the interwar years, and is eligible under Criterion A for social history and Criterion C for architecture. We believe the proposed boundaries are appropriate for this property.

The following properties are determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

Estes-Craig House, north side of SR 1535, at junction with Green Hill Road, Blowing Rock vicinity. This property lacks special historic or architectural significance.

(former) Blowing Rock Negro Community Church, east side of Opossum Hollow Road, approximately 0.75 mile south of junction with US 321, Blowing Rock. Although the church has important social history, it has undergone extensive alteration and no longer retains sufficient integrity to meet National Register criteria.

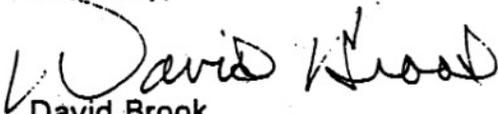
Bolick House and Outbuildings, south side of Bailey Camp Road, approximately 0.3 mile south of junction with US 321, Blowing Rock vicinity. This property lacks special historic or architectural significance.

The report meets our office's guidelines and those of the Secretary of the Interior.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

Sincerely,



David Brook
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DB:slw

cc: ✓ H. F. Vick
B. Church
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

James B. Hunt Jr., Governor
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

May 30, 2000

John Page
Parsons Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
909 Aviation Parkway
Morrisville, NC 27560

Re: US 321 Improvements at Blowing Rock, TIP No. R-2237C, Watauga County, ER 00-9270

Dear Mr. Page:

Thank you for your letter of March 15, 2000, concerning the above project.

We apologize for the delay in our response.

We have reviewed the information provided and determined that we concur with the proposed study areas for all five proposed alternatives.

At the November 4, 1999, meeting Renee Gledhill-Earley, of our office, requested that a mass transit alternative be included as part of the study concerning this project. According to the current document, a mass transit alternative has not been added to the project. We still believe a mass transit alternative needs to be studied in addition to the existing five alternatives.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

Sincerely,

Renee Gledhill-Earley

David Brook
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DB:scb

cc: W. Gilmore

Table with 4 columns: Location, Mailing Address, Telephone/Fax, and a fourth column with organizational categories like ADMINISTRATION, ARCHAEOLOGY, RESTORATION, SURVEY & PLANNING.

State of North Carolina
Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW — PROJECT COMMENTS

Reviewing Office: <i>W3RD</i>	
Project Number: <i>96-0129</i>	Due Date: <i>9/22/95</i>

After review of this project it has been determined that the EHNR permit(s) and/or approvals indicated may need to be obtained in order for this project to comply with North Carolina Law.

Questions regarding these permits should be addressed to the Regional Office indicated on the reverse of the form.

All applications, information and guidelines relative to these plans and permits are available from the same Regional Office.

PERMITS	SPECIAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES or REQUIREMENTS	Normal Process Time (statutory time limit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit to construct & operate wastewater treatment facilities, sewer system extensions, & sewer systems not discharging into state surface waters.	Application 90 days before begin construction or award of construction contracts. On-site inspection. Post-application technical conference usual.	30 days (90 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> NPDES - permit to discharge into surface water and/or permit to operate and construct wastewater facilities discharging into state surface waters.	Application 180 days before begin activity. On-site inspection. Pre-application conference usual. Additionally, obtain permit to construct wastewater treatment facility-granted after NPDES Reply time, 30 days after receipt of plans or issue of NPDES permit-whichever is later.	90-120 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Use Permit	Pre-application technical conference usually necessary.	30 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Well Construction Permit	Complete application must be received and permit issued prior to the installation of a well.	7 days (15 days)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dredge and Fill Permit	Application copy must be served on each adjacent riparian property owner. On-site inspection. Pre-application conference usual. Filling may require Easement to Fill from N.C. Department of Administration and Federal Dredge and Fill Permit.	55 days (90 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Permit to construct & operate Air Pollution Abatement facilities and/or Emission Sources as per 15A NCAC 21H.0600.	N/A	60 days (90 days)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Any open burning associated with subject proposal must be in compliance with 15A NCAC 2D.0520.	N/A	60 days (90 days)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition or renovations of structures containing asbestos material must be in compliance with 15A NCAC 2D.0525 which requires notification and removal prior to demolition. Contact Asbestos Control Group 919-733-0820.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Complex Source Permit required under 15A NCAC 2D.0800.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 must be properly addressed for any land disturbing activity. An erosion & sedimentation control plan will be required if one or more acres to be disturbed. Plan filed with proper Regional Office (Land Quality Sect.) at least 30 days before beginning activity. A fee of \$30 for the first acre and \$20.00 for each additional acre or part must accompany the plan.		20 days (30 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> The Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 must be addressed with respect to the referenced Local Ordinance:		(30 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mining Permit	On-site inspection usual. Surety bond filed with EHNR. Bond amount varies with type mine and number of acres of affected land. Any area mined greater than one acre must be permitted. The appropriate bond must be received before the permit can be issued.	30 days (60 days)
<input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina Burning permit	On-site inspection by N.C. Division Forest Resources if permit exceeds 4 days.	1 day (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Ground Clearance Burning Permit - 22 counties in coastal N.C. with organic soils	On-site inspection by N.C. Division Forest Resources required. "If more than five acres of ground clearing activities are involved, inspections should be requested at least ten days before actual burn is planned."	1 day (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Oil Refining Facilities	N/A	90-120 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dam Safety Permit	If permit required, application 60 days before begin construction. Applicant must hire N.C. qualified engineer to: prepare plans, inspect construction, certify construction is according to EHNR approved plans. May also require permit under mosquito control program. And a 404 permit from Corps of Engineers. An inspection of site is necessary to verify Hazard Classification. A minimum fee of \$200.00 must accompany the application. An additional processing fee based on a percentage of the total project cost will be required upon completion.	30 days (60 days)

PERMITS		SPECIAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES or REQUIREMENTS	Normal Process Time (statutory time limit)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permit to drill exploratory oil or gas well	File surety bond of \$5,000 with EHNR running to State of N.C. conditional that any well opened by drill operator shall, upon abandonment, be plugged according to EHNR rules and regulations.	10 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Geophysical Exploration Permit	Application filed with EHNR at least 10 days prior to issue of permit Application by letter. No standard application form.	10 days (N/A)
<input type="checkbox"/>	State Lakes Construction Permit	Application fee based on structure size is charged. Must include descriptions & drawings of structure & proof of ownership of riparian property.	15-20 days (N/A)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	401 Water Quality Certification	N/A	60 days (130 days)
<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMA Permit for MAJOR development	\$250.00 fee must accompany application	55 days (150 days)
<input type="checkbox"/>	CAMA Permit for MINOR development	\$50.00 fee must accompany application	22 days (25 days)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Several geodetic monuments are located in or near the project area. If any monuments need to be moved or destroyed, please notify: N.C. Geodetic Survey, Box 27687, Raleigh, N.C. 27611		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Abandonment of any wells. If required, must be in accordance with Title 15A, Subchapter 2C.0100.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Notification of the proper regional office is requested if "orphan" underground storage tanks (USTS) are discovered during any excavation operation.		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Compliance with 15A NCAC 2H.1000 (Coastal Stormwater Rules) is required.		45 days (N/A)
* Other comments (attach additional pages as necessary, being certain to cite comment authority): <i>em - 7-8-95</i> <i>Ann 9-12-95</i>			

REGIONAL OFFICES

Questions regarding these permits should be addressed to the Regional Office marked below.

Asheville Regional Office
59 Woodfin Place
Asheville, NC 28801
(704) 251-8208

Mooresville Regional Office
919 North Main Street, P.O. Box 950
Mooresville, NC 28115
(704) 663-1699

Washington Regional Office
1424 Carolina Avenue
Washington, NC 27889
(919) 946-6481

Winston-Salem Regional Office
8025 North Point Blvd.
Suite 100
Winston-Salem, NC 27106
(919) 896-7007

Fayetteville Regional Office
Suite 714 Wachovia Building
Fayetteville, NC 28301
(919) 486-1541

Raleigh Regional Office
3800 Barrett Drive, Suite 101
Raleigh, NC 27609
(919) 733-2314

Wilmington Regional Office
127 Cardinal Drive Extension
Wilmington, NC 28405
(919) 395-3900

State of North Carolina
Department of Environment,
Health and Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Management

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Jonathan B. Howes, Secretary
A. Preston Howard, Jr., P.E., Director



October 2, 1995

MEMORANDUM

To: Melba McGee
Through: John Dorney *JD*
From: Eric Galamb *EG*
Subject: Scoping Comments for improvements to US 321
Caldwell and Watauga Counties
TIP # R-2237C
EHNR No. 96-0129, DEM No. 11048

The Division of Environmental Management is responsible for the issuance of the Section 401 Water Quality Certification for activities which impact waters of the state including wetlands. On November 9, 1994, DEM commented favorably on the FONSI for this project since impacts to wetlands and waters were only 1.56 acres. If a bypass of Blowing Rock is studied the following information should be included in the document:

- A) The purpose and need should be clearly stated. DEM has been informed that the Town of Blowing Rock is a destination. Therefore, a clearer justification for the bypass is needed.
- B) The area has a high potential for mountain bogs. DOT should attempt to avoid this habitat in order to protect bog turtles. If a bog cannot be avoided, DOT should survey for bog turtles and the results should be included in the document.
- C) A number of streams in the study area have a water supply classification (Middle Fork South River, and Aho Branch). DOT should avoid these streams to the extent practicable to protect the existing uses.
- D) The answers to the attached checklist should be included in the document.

The subject project will have significant wetland and water impacts should an alternative other than the upgrade existing alternative be chosen.

DOT is reminded that the 401 Certification could be denied unless water quality concerns are satisfied. Questions regarding the 401 Certification should be directed to Eric Galamb (733-1786) in DEM's Water Quality Environmental Sciences Branch.

cc: Asheville COE
Leigh Cobb, DOT
us321.com

State of North Carolina
Department of Environment,
Health and Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Management

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Jonathan B. Howes, Secretary
A. Preston Howard, Jr., P.E., Director



MEMORANDUM

To: Melba McGee
From: Eric Galamb *EG*
Subject: Water Quality Checklist for EA/EIS Documents

The Water Quality Section of the Division of Environmental Management requests that the following topics be discussed in the EA/EIS documents:

- A. Identify the streams potentially impacted by the project. The stream classifications should be current.
- B. Identify the linear feet of stream channelization/relocations. If the original stream banks were vegetated, it is requested that the channelized/relocated stream banks be revegetated.
- C. Number of stream crossings.
- D. Will permanent spill catch basins be utilized? DEM requests that these catch basins be placed at all water supply stream crossings. Identify the responsible party for maintenance.
- E. Identify the stormwater controls (permanent and temporary) to be employed.
- F. Please ensure that sediment and erosion control measures are not placed in wetlands.
- G. Wetland Impacts
 - i) Identify the federal manual used for identifying and delineating jurisdictional wetlands.
 - ii) Have wetlands been avoided as much as possible?
 - iii) Have wetland impacts been minimized?
 - iv) Mitigation measures to compensate for habitat losses.
 - v) Wetland impacts by plant communities affected.
 - vi) Quality of wetlands impacted.
 - vii) Total wetland impacts.

- viii) List the 401 General Certification numbers requested from DEM.
- H. Borrow/waste areas should avoid wetlands to the maximum extent practicable. Prior to the approval of any borrow/waste site in a wetland, the contractor shall obtain a 401 Certification from DEM.
- I. Did NCDOT utilize the existing road alignments as much as possible? Why not (if applicable)?
- J. Please provide a detailed discussion for mass-transit as an option.
- K. To what extent can traffic congestion management techniques alleviate the traffic problems in the study area?
- L. Please provide a conceptual mitigation plan to help the environmental review. The mitigation plan may state the following:
1. Compensatory mitigation will be considered only after wetland impacts have been avoided and minimized to the maximum extent possible.
 2. On-site, in-kind mitigation is the preferred method of mitigation. In-kind mitigation within the same watershed is preferred over out-of-kind mitigation.
 3. Mitigation should be in the following order: restoration, creation, enhancement, and lastly banking.

DEM is also concerned about secondary wetland impacts. For DEM to concur with an alternative in the mountains or the piedmont, DOT will need to commit to full control of access to the wetland parcels or DOT to purchase these parcels for wetland mitigation.

Please note that a 401 Water Quality Certification cannot be issued until the conditions of NCAG 15A: 01C.0402 (Limitations on Actions During NCEPA Process) are met. This regulation prevents DEM from issuing the 401 Certification until a FONSI or Record of Decision (ROD) has been issued by the Department requiring the document. It is recommended that if the 401 Certification application is submitted for review prior to the sign off, the applicant states that the 401 should not be issued until the applicant informs DEM that the FONSI or ROD has been signed off by the Department.

Written concurrence of 401 Water Quality Certification may be required for this project. Applications requesting coverage under our General Certification 14 or General Permit 31 (with wetland impact) will require written concurrence. Please be aware that 401 Certification may be denied if wetland or water impacts have not been avoided and minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

us311.sco

Clayton, North Carolina
September 8, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Melba McGee, Office of Leg. Affairs

FROM: Don H. Robbins, Staff Forester *DHR*

SUBJECT: DOT EIS Scoping for Improvements of US 321 from SR 1500 in Caldwell County to US 221 in Blowing Rock in Watauga County (Both Widening and Bypass Considerations)

PROJECT: #96-0129 and TIP # R-2237C

DUE DATE: 9-22-95

We have reviewed the above subject scoping notice of August 3, 1995 and have the following comments:

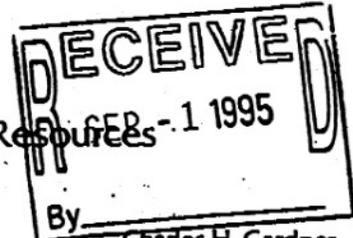
1. We are not in favor of any bypass alternatives for Blowing Rock because of very high anticipated impacts to woodland.
2. We only favor a widening alternative for US 321 through Blowing Rock.
3. Since woodland is involved, the EIS should address the following -
 - a. The total forest land acreage by types and merchantability aspects that would be taken out of forest production as a result of new right-of-way purchases and all construction activities for each alternative.
 - b. The productivity of the forest soils as indicated by the soil series that would be involved within the proposed project.
 - c. The impact upon existing greenways within the area of the proposed project.
 - d. The provisions that the contractor will take to sell any merchantable timber that is to be removed. This practice is encouraged to minimize the need for piling and burning during construction. If any burning is needed, the contractor should comply with all laws and regulations pertaining to debris burning.
 - e. The provisions that the contractor will take during the construction phase to prevent erosion, sedimentation and construction damage to forest land outside the right-of-way and construction limits. Trees outside the construction limits should be protected from construction activities to avoid:
 1. Skinning of tree trunks by machinery.
 2. Soil compaction and root exposure or injury by heavy equipment.
 3. Adding layers of fill dirt over the root systems of trees, a practice that impairs root aeration.
 4. Accidental spilling of petroleum products or other damaging substances over the root systems of trees.

We would hope that the project would have the least possible impacts to the forest and related resources in that area.

pc: Warren Boyette - CO
File



State of North Carolina
 Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources
 Division of Land Resources



James G. Martin, Governor
 William W. Cobey, Jr., Secretary

PROJECT REVIEW COMMENTS

By Charles H. Gardner
 Director

Project Number: 9. County: WATAUGA

Project Name: _____

Geodetic Survey

This project will impact 15 geodetic survey markers. N.C. Geodetic Survey should be contacted prior to construction at P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, N.C. 27611 (919) 733-3836. Intentional destruction of a geodetic monument is a violation of N.C. General Statute 102-4.

This project will have no impact on geodetic survey markers.

Other (comments attached)

For more information contact the Geodetic Survey office at (919) 733-3836.

Reviewer: C. Max Manna Date: 9-11-95

Erosion and Sedimentation Control

No comment

This project will require approval of an erosion and sedimentation control plan prior to beginning any land-disturbing activity if more than one (1) acre will be disturbed.

If an environmental document is required to satisfy Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements, the document must be submitted as part of the erosion and sedimentation control plan.

If any portion of the project is located within a High Quality Water Zone (HQW), as classified by the Division of Environmental Management, increased design standards for sediment and erosion control will apply.

The erosion and sedimentation control plan required for this project should be prepared by the Department of Transportation under the erosion control program delegation to the Division of Highways from the North Carolina Sedimentation Control Commission.

Other (comments attached)

For more information contact the Land Quality Section at (919) 733-4574.

Reviewer: David Ward Date: 9/6/95

State of North Carolina
Department of Environment,
Health and Natural Resources
Division of Soil and Water Conservation



James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Jonathan B. Howes, Secretary
C. Dewey Botts, Director

September 5, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Melba McGee
FROM: David Harrison *DH*
SUBJECT: Proposed Improvements of US 321 from SR 1500 to US 221
in Blowing Rock, Watauga and Caldwell Counties.
Project No. 96-0129.

The Environmental Impact Statement should include information on soils in the study area and potential impacts to Prime, Unique, and Important Farmlands.

DOT may want to contact the Wilkesboro Soil Survey Office (NRCS), (910) 667-7108, for information on the Watauga and Caldwell county soil surveys. Our regional soil scientist, John Allison, (704) 251-6208, may also have information they may need.

DH/tl

State of North Carolina
Department of Environment,
Health and Natural Resources
Legislative & Intergovernmental Affairs



James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Jonathan B. Howes, Secretary
Henry M. Lancaster II, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chrys Baggett
State Clearinghouse

FROM: Melba McGee ✓
Environmental Review Coordinator

RE: 96-012^g Scoping US 321 from SR 1500 to US 221 in Blowing Rock,
Caldwell County

DATE: October 3, 1995

The Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources has reviewed the proposed information. The attached comments are for your consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to review.

attachments

RECEIVED

OCT 4 1995

N.C. STATE CLEARINGHOUSE



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

301 North Wilmington Street, Education Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

BOB ETHERIDGE
State Superintendent

August 23, 1995



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. H. Franklin Vick, P.E., Manager

FROM: Gerald H. Knott, Consulting Architect, Facility Management *GAK*

SUBJECT: State Project No. 8.T7311301; TIP No. R-2237C

Enclosed is the response from Watauga County to our impact inquiry.

/ed
Enclosure



Watauga County Board of Education

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
P.O. BOX 1790 BOONE N.C. 28607 TEL: (704) 264-7190 FAX: (704) 264-7196

AUG 22 1995

August 17, 1995

Gerald H. Knott
Consulting Architect
Facility Management
Department of Public Instruction
301 North Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

Dear Mr. Knott:

This is in reference to your letter of August 14, 1995, relative to the proposed improvement of US Highway 321 to US 221 in Blowing Rock. There will be no negative impact on the existing Blowing Rock Elementary School or any of the school bus routes.

If I can be of further help, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 704-264-7190.

Best regards,

C. David Greene
Superintendent

1b

Public Schools of North Carolina

State Board of Education
Jay Robinson, Chairman

Department of Public Instruction
Bob Etheridge, State Superintendent

September 5, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. H. Franklin Vick, P.E., Manager

FROM: Gerald H. Knott, Consulting Architect, Facility Management

SUBJECT: State Project No. 8.T731301; TIP Project R-2237C



Enclosed is the response from Caldwell County to our impact inquiry.

/ed
Enclosure





Caldwell County Schools

1914 Hickory Blvd., S^W
Lenoir, NC 286
Telephone 704-728-840
Fax 704-728-0012

Dr. Tom McNeel, Superintendent

August 29, 1995

SEP - 5

Mr. Gerald H. Knott, Consulting Architect
Facility Management
NC Department of Public Instruction
301 North Wilmington Street
Education Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-2825

Dear Mr. Knott:

To the best of our knowledge, the improvement of US 321 from SR1500 (Blackberry) to US 321 in Blowing Rock will not affect school bus transportation or any proposed school site.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Earl E. Bradshaw
Associate Superintendent

EEB:cp



☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

512 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-1188, 919-733-3391
Charles R. Fullwood, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Melba McGee, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs
Dept. of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources

FROM: Stephanie E. Goudreau, Mt. Region Coordinator
Habitat Conservation Program

Stephanie E. Goudreau

DATE: September 21, 1995

SUBJECT: State Clearinghouse Project No. 96-0126, Scoping comments for proposed improvement of US 321 from SR 1500 to US 221 in Blowing Rock, Caldwell and Watauga Counties, TIP #R-2237C.

This correspondence responds to a request by you for our review and preliminary comments regarding a proposal by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to improve US 321 from SR 1500 (Blackberry Road) to US 221 in Blowing Rock. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for this project.

The NCDOT proposes to improve US 321 for a distance of 4.3 miles in Caldwell and Watauga Counties. Both a widening alternative and bypass alternatives are being considered. Biological staff of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) previously commented on segments of this project in memoranda to you dated 3 September 1993 and 2 November 1994.

In order for biological staff of the NCWRC to provide a meaningful review, the EIS prepared for this project should include the following information:

- 1) Description of fishery and wildlife resources within the project area, including a listing of federally or state designated threatened, endangered, or special concern animal and plant species. Contact is the Mr. Steven Hall of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (919/733-7701).

Recent fish sampling by the NCWRC (1988 and 1989) in the Yadkin River near NC 268 revealed that the river supports smallmouth bass, redbreast sunfish, and 13 nongame species in this area. Brook trout and rainbow trout were collected by the NCWRC in 1989 much farther upstream near the river's confluence with Dennis Creek. Other streams near the project corridor that support trout are Mulberry Creek, Johns River, and possibly

Kirby Creek. Various streams and their tributaries crossed by the roadway likely contain mostly nongame fish species, although some may support trout.

- 2) Description of waters and/or wetlands affected by the project.
- 3) Project map identifying waters and wetland areas. Identification of wetlands may be accomplished through coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If the Corps is not consulted, the person delineating wetlands should be identified and criteria listed.
- 4) Description of project activities that will occur within waters and wetlands, such as fill, stream crossings or channel modifications. Acreages of waters and wetlands impacted by alternative project designs should be listed. Project sponsors should indicate whether the Corps has been contacted to determine the need for a 404 Permit under the Clean Water Act. Contact is Mr. Steve Chapin at 704/271-4014.
- 5) Description of project site and non-wetland vegetative communities.
- 6) The extent to which the project will result in loss, degradation, or fragmentation of wildlife habitat.
- 7) Any measures proposed to avoid or reduce impacts of the project or to mitigate for unavoidable habitat losses.
- 8) A list of document preparers which shows each individual's professional background and qualifications.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this information to the NCDOT in the early planning stages of this project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 704/652-4257.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 704/652-4257.

cc: Mr. Chris Goudreau, District 8 Fisheries Biologist
Mr. Joe Mickey, District 7 Fisheries Biologist
Mr. Jack Mason, District 8 Wildlife Biologist
Mr. David Sawyer, District 7 Wildlife Biologist
Ms. Janice Nicholls, USFWS



☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

512 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-1188, 919-733-3391
MEMORANDUM Charles R. Fullwood, Executive Director

TO: John Page, Project Manager
NCDOT Planning and Environmental Branch

FROM: Ron Linville, Regional Coordinator
Habitat Conservation Program 

DATE: February 15, 2000

SUBJECT: Review of U S 321 NEPA/404 Project Alternatives, Caldwell and Watauga Counties

Biologists with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) have reviewed information provided by the applicant relating to the subject project. We familiar with habitat values of the project area. These comments are provided in accordance with provisions of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 U.S.C. 466 et. seq.) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661-667d).

Construction of new roads has historically had a detrimental effect on habitat quality of streams in the mountains of North Carolina. Due to the high gradients that characterize these areas, sedimentation is an almost unavoidable consequence of land disturbing activities near streams. Disturbance of riparian vegetation degrades water quality by decreasing bank stability and removing shade, causing water temperatures to rise. Placing culverts in streams often disrupts natural width-depth profiles of streams, causing avoidance of affected stream segments by fishes and disrupting migrations.

The NCWRC is concerned about the potential impacts of the NC 321 improvements around Blowing Rock in Caldwell and Watauga Counties. Blowing Rock is uniquely located at the divide of 3 major watersheds – the New River, the Catawba River and the Yadkin River. As such, any further development activities have the potential to impact a large number of aquatic resources. Furthermore, many of the small, high-gradient streams of this region support brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), North Carolina's only native salmonid species. Brook trout distribution has been greatly reduced by habitat destruction and the introduction of non-native rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), which have displaced the brook trout throughout much of its original range. Consequently, protection of the remaining habitats of the brook trout is of utmost importance. Of the final three options presented by NCDOT (enhanced widening, bypass alternative 1, bypass alternative 4), the enhanced widening alternative is the most desirable from an aquatic resource protection standpoint.

Bypass alternative 4 will have the greatest impact on aquatic habitat of the three proposed options. Beginning at the southern terminus of the bypass and proceeding north, the bypass will cross over Bailey Camp Creek, which supports a wild brook trout population. The next drainage contains an unnamed tributary (UT) of the Yadkin River, which has a southern, middle, and northern fork. This UT supports a wild brook trout population downstream of the confluence of the three forks, but the forks themselves have not been sampled. The bypass will actually cross the middle fork of this tributary, and it will run close enough to the northern and southern forks that they may be affected by erosion during construction and altered surface flows resulting from increased surface imperviousness after the project is completed. Similarly, the bypass will run just west of the headwaters of Martin Branch, which supports a wild brook trout population. It will then run along a ridge separating the Middle Fork New River (including an UT Middle Fork New River that crosses the Blue Ridge Parkway near Green Cemetery) and an UT Aho Branch, creating the possibility of sediment flowing into either or both waters during construction. The UT Aho Branch also supports a wild brook trout population. The bypass will then cross Middle Fork New River and connect to NC 221/321 north of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Additionally, this section of the Middle Fork New River is Designated Public Mountain Trout Waters by the NCWRC and is managed under Hatchery Supported Regulations.

Bypass alternative 1, beginning at the route's southern terminus near the Watauga/Caldwell County line and proceeding north, will either cross the headwaters of or pass just west of the middle fork of the UT Yadkin River described in the previous paragraph. It will run close enough to the northern and southern forks that they may be affected by erosion during construction and altered surface flows resulting from increased surface imperviousness after the project is completed. This UT supports a wild brook trout population downstream of the confluence of the three forks, but the forks themselves have never been sampled. It will then cross over an UT Middle Fork New River east/southeast of Echo Park that supports a wild brook trout population. Additionally, several wetlands are known to exist along this tributary. Bypass 1 will then parallel and possibly cross an UT Middle Fork New River that enters the river just downstream of Chetola Lake. This UT Middle Fork New River supports a wild brook trout population. The bypass will connect to NC 221/321 just north of the junction of NC 321 Bypass and NC 221/NC 321 Business adjacent to the Middle Fork New River, which in this area is Designated Public Mountain Trout Waters by the NCWRC and is managed under Hatchery Supported Regulations.

Of the three proposed options, the enhanced widening alternative will have the least impact on aquatic resources. The NC 321 Bypass currently parallels the headwaters of the Middle Fork New River and the widening option may impact these waters. However, given that the majority of the NC 321 Bypass route is currently developed, the riparian corridor has already been altered and highway widening would have a minor impact on aquatic resources relative to the construction of Bypass routes 1 and 4, which pass through primarily undisturbed areas. Additionally, elevation gradients along the current NC 321 Bypass are minor in comparison to the steep gradients that characterize the majority of the areas to be affected by Bypass alternatives 1 and 4, which will decrease the possibility of sedimentation in the receiving waters. Most of the widening project will occur in the watershed of the Middle Fork New River, where impacts would be minimal due to previous development. However, for approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile east of the junction of NC 321 Business and NC 321 Bypass south of Blowing Rock, the current alignment appears to be on top of a ridge separating the Catawba and New River watersheds. It is not clear which watershed this area drains into, but if it does drain into the Catawba River watershed, there is a chance that the Johns River could be impacted. The Johns River is characterized by high quality habitat and has populations of wild brook trout found on USFS lands. Given that the Johns River is located well below the current alignment, and that widening

the current alignment would cause less disturbance than building a new road, the threats to the Johns River are minor in comparison to those facing the streams in the Yadkin and New River watersheds that will be affected by Bypass options 1 and 4. Nonetheless, the NCWRC would like to see every precaution taken to protect the water quality of the Johns River.

Our Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Section has no direct knowledge of any rare species occurrences within any of the proposed alignments; however, our data indicates that Hellbenders (SC), Tongue-tied minnows (SR), Kanawha minnows (SC), and Allegheny woodrats (SC) have been documented in the vicinity. In the case of each bypass alternative, an evaluation of habitats should indicate whether there is potential for these species to occur. In addition, the brook floater (*Alasmidonta varicosa* - T) occurs in the Johns River downstream of the Blowing Rock area, and the green floater (*Lasmigona subviridis* - E) occurs downstream from Blowing Rock in the New River drainage. Due to the nature of the proposed alternatives, it is clear that the "widen existing" road alternative is likely to disturb the least habitat and also result in the least impact from sedimentation upon all of the aquatic species above. The alternatives could also impact areas that could support endangered or threatened species or habitats. Additional studies would need to be accomplished in order to make a determination. Both the NC Natural Heritage Program and the US Fish and Wildlife Service should be involved.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and other agencies are aware of the negative impacts of increased impervious areas associated with urban development. The enhanced widening alternative provides a unique opportunity to provide an aesthetically pleasing roadway as well as to minimize pollutant loading into mountain waters. We recommend that the planners design the urban roadway corridor with stormwater management considerations. These should include innovative methodologies and considerations such as:

1. Rain garden designs and/or bioretention cells
2. Stream buffer protection measures
3. Best Management Practices including cold water release stormwater ponds for mountain trout watersheds (the NCWRC is available to provide wildlife habitat considerations for stormwater facilities)
4. Stream buffer protection
5. Curbing and guttering avoidance
6. Point sources and/or discharge points minimization by providing sheet flow through vegetated buffers (i.e. trees, shrubs, or wetlands)
7. Researching and considering sensitive watershed deicing methods

Therefore, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission supports widening the existing road. We are strongly opposed to the alternative bypasses. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this project. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 336/769-9453.

Cc: . David Cox, NCWRC
. Kin Hodges, NCWRC
. Doug Besler, NCWRC
. Bob Brown, NCWRC
. Chris McGrath, NCWRC
. Steve Lund, USACOE
. Eric Alsmeyer, USACOE
. Mark Cantrell, USFWS
. Frank McBride, NCWRC

Region D Council of Governments

EXECUTIVE ARTS BUILDING, FURMAN ROAD
P.O. BOX 1820, BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA 28607-1820

PHONE 704-265-5434
FAX 704-265-5439

1-800-735-2962 (TT)
1-800-735-8262 (VOICE)

Richard A. Fender
Executive Director

Renfro
Member of the Board
September 12, 1995

Philip Frye
Chairman
Attention: Ms. Leigh Cobb
Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh N.C. 27611-5201

Hard Blackburn
Secretary

Ward Hardin
Treasurer

Dear Ms. Cobb:

I am writing on behalf of the Region D Council of Governments Transportation Advisory Committee to provide the following comments on Phase I of the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on proposed improvements to US 321 from SR 1500 (Blackberry Road) to US 221 in Blowing Rock; State Project No. 8.T731301; Tip No. R-2337C.

Like many areas of the State, transportation issues are of considerable importance to the seven counties and included towns which comprise Region D. To this end, the Region D Executive Board has established a transportation advisory committee whose mission is to further the transportation needs of the region. To date, the committee has worked with the Small Cities Planning Branch of the Department of Transportation in the development of the Region D Regional Thoroughfare Plan, and has recently completed work on what we expect will form the basis of a regional transportation road system for Region D. Among the roads designated for inclusion on our proposed system is Hwy 321.

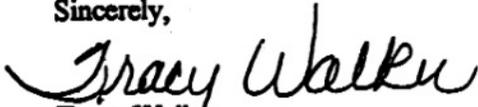
We consider Hwy 321 to be an important component of our proposed regional road system. It provides access not only to Watauga County, but to surrounding counties as well. As tourism plays such an important role in our region's economy, we feel that an adequate road network is a critical necessity. The proposed improvements to Hwy 321 will provide our region with a critical link to the rest of North Carolina.

For these reasons, the Region D Transportation Advisory Committee and The Region D Executive Board support the EIS process currently underway and support the concept of improving Hwy 321 in Watauga County to a multi-laned facility.



We thank you for the opportunity to make these comments. If the committee can be of assistance, or you require further information, you may contact Dick Fender or Bob Frye, Council staff, at (704) 265-5434.

Sincerely,



Tracy Walker,

Chairman Region D Transportation Advisory Committee

cc: John Renfro, Chairman Region D Executive Board
Dick Fender, Executive Director
Bob Frye, Director of Management Assistance

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Please review the attached notification and indicate your response. If your agency requires additional information, contact the applicant directly or call Region D Council of Governments' Clearinghouse. Please submit your response to the address below by the due date indicated.
Phone: (704) 265-5434

SCH Number 96-E-4220-0129 Date August 14, 1995 Response Date September 12, 1995

Please Sign and Return
This Page Only To:

Region D Council of Governments
Clearinghouse Coordinator
P.O. Box 1820
Boone, NC 28607

Reviewers:

Rufus Hallmark-Blowing Rock Mayor
Jim Ratchford-Watauga County Manager

Response: This agency has reviewed the notification and offers the following recommendation: (Check appropriate response/more than one can be checked)

No Comment

Favorable.

The project is in agreement with the goals and objectives of this agency's programs.

Unfavorable.

The project is not in agreement with the goals and objectives of this agency's programs.

Potential Problem (s).

Identify:

Comments:

The Board of County Commissioners in Watauga County has endorsed the 321 widening project on numerous occasions.

Reviewed by

Name: 

Agency: *Watauga Co.*

Date: *8/20/95*

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

Use review the attached notification and indicate your response. If your agency requires additional information, contact the contact directly or call Region D Council of Governments' Clearinghouse. Please submit your response to the address below by the date indicated.
Phone: (704) 265-5434

SCH Number 96-E-4220-0129 Date August 14, 1995 Response Date September 12, 1995

Please Sign and Return
This Page Only To:

Region D Council of Governments
Clearinghouse Coordinator
P.O. Box 1820
Boone, NC 28607

Reviewers:

Rufus Hallmark-Blowing Rock Mayor
Jim Ratchford-Watauga County Manager

September 11, 1995

Response: This agency has reviewed the notification and offers the following recommendation: (Check appropriate response/more than one can be checked)

No Comment

Favorable.

The project is in agreement with the goals and objectives of this agency's programs.

Unfavorable.

The project is not in agreement with the goals and objectives of this agency's programs.

Potential Problem(s). Identify: I am in general agreement with the total plan to improve traffic flow into and through the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina. However, high priority must be given to preserving the quality of life, economy, and quiet living within the town limits of Blowing Rock. Long range planning should find a way to bypass the town with through traffic, particularly that of heavy trucks and car traffic going other places beyond. The result of fourlaning through Blowing Rock would literally destroy the town as a place to live, survive and even exist as a desirable place to live, Blowing Rock Community is a small area of land and the integrity must be maintained at all costs.


Rufus E. Hallmark, Mayor

Reviewed by

Name:

Agency: Blowing Rock

Date:

9/11/95

Town Of Blowing Rock

1036 Main Street
Post Office Box 47
Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Telephone (704) 295-5200
Facsimile (704) 295-5202

March 22, 1996

Mr. H. Franklin Vick, PE
Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
Division of Highways
North Carolina Department of Transportation
PO Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611-5201



Dear Mr. Vick:

I am writing to express the current position of the Town Council of the Town of Blowing Rock with regard to the US 321 EIS Study and the alternative routes that are presently under consideration as a part of that study.

I attended the meeting of the Steering Committee for the US 321 EIS Study on February 1 in Raleigh. At that meeting, I heard about the work that has been undertaken with regard to the EIS Study, saw the alternative routes that are presently under consideration, and reviewed the data that has been generated as part of the analysis of the various alternatives.

Upon returning to Blowing Rock, I reviewed and discussed the material at length with my Town Council. Based upon that review and discussion, I am writing to officially record our strong concerns about the direction in which the study is proceeding:

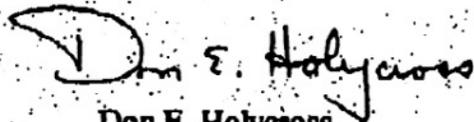
- a. The Council has examined the alternative routes for a bypass that are currently under review by the Department of Transportation and has found none of the routes to be acceptable. Because all of the alternatives would connect to existing Route 321 near Possum Hollow Road, each of the alternatives would have serious detrimental impacts on existing residential neighborhoods, the golf course, or other vital segments of the Blowing Rock area.
- b. The Department of Transportation needs to identify other viable alternatives for a bypass route around Blowing Rock. Those alternatives should not be restricted to the Blowing Rock/Possum Hollow corridor, and should include possible crossings of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

c. The study area should be expanded so that alternative routes that do not cross existing residential areas in Blowing Rock can be identified and examined.

While additional attention and consideration need to be given to the bypass alternatives, as stated above, the Town Council also recognizes the necessity for improvements along the existing Route 321. Therefore, any project, even if it includes the construction of a bypass route, must include safety and aesthetic improvements along the existing route, including turning lanes, curb and gutter, sidewalks, etc.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns. If you have any questions concerning this letter or need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Don E. Holycross
Town Manager

cc: Wade Hoke, Division Engineer
Fred Eidson, Transportation Board Member

Town Of Blowing Rock

1036 Main Street
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Blowing Rock, NC 28605

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August 13, 1996

Mr. H. Franklin Vick, PE
Manager
Planning and Environmental Branch
Division of Highways
North Carolina Department of Transportation
PO Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611-5201

Dear Mr. Vick:

In March of this year, I wrote a letter to you that expressed the position of the Town Council of Blowing Rock with regard to the US 321 EIS Study and the alternative routes that were under consideration as a part of that study.

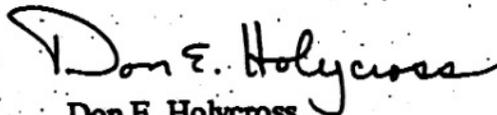
At that time, we indicated that none of the alternative routes for a bypass were acceptable. Because each of the alternatives would connect to existing Route 321 near Possum Hollow Road and would cut across or adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods, the Blowing Rock Assembly Grounds, or the Blowing Rock Country Club, the alternatives would have detrimental, unacceptable impacts on vital segments of the community. We requested that the Department of Transportation expand the study area and identify other by-pass alternatives that would not be restricted to the Blowing Rock/Possum Hollow corridor, including possible crossings of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Two weeks ago, Town Officials were provided with updated information on the bypass alternatives by Parsons Brinckerhoff and DOT staff members. Unfortunately, however, we found that there were no significant changes in the bypass alternatives from what we had examined in February and March. Therefore, it remains the position of the Town Council of Blowing Rock that none of the bypass alternatives are acceptable because they would cut across our community and would have serious, detrimental impacts on existing residential neighborhoods, the Blowing Rock Assembly Grounds, the Blowing Rock Country Club, or other vital segments of the Blowing Rock community. None of the alternatives truly "bypass" the community, but, instead, cut across the community in a harmful, disruptive manner. The Town Council cannot and will not support any of the alternatives as they are presently identified.

The Town recognizes that the Blue Ridge Parkway is an important national resource and that additional, at-grade crossings of the parkway should be discouraged, if not prohibited. However, a tunnel under the parkway should be examined as a possible alternative. A tunnel could be constructed with little or no visual impact on the parkway. While we recognize that a tunnel would be costly, it is important, in considering the construction of a new highway, that the best alternative be selected, not merely the most cost effective. It is imperative that an alternative that incorporates a crossing of the parkway be developed so that we can have a viable option to the widening of the existing highway. Without that additional alternative, DOT has not really presented the citizens of Blowing Rock with a viable option.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Don E. Holycross
Town Manager

cc: Governor Hunt
The Blowing Rocket
John Page, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Wade Hoke, Division Engineer
Fred Eidson, Transportation Board Member