



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT
69A HAGOOD AVENUE
CHARLESTON SC 29403**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Waccamaw River, Horry County, South Carolina Flood Risk Management Study
Horry County, South Carolina**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (Corps) has conducted an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment (IFR/EA) dated May 2026, for the Waccamaw River Basin Flood Risk Management Study addresses flood reduction opportunities and feasibility in Horry County, South Carolina. The final recommendation is contained in the report of the Chief of Engineers.

The IFR/EA, incorporated herein by reference, evaluated various alternatives that would reduce flood risk in the study area. The recommended plan is the National Economic Development (NED) Plan and includes:

- Addition of relief bridge (cross drains) at Hwy 501 business, Hwy 501 bypass, and Hwy 905 in Conway, SC, to increase conveyance through these areas where potential bottlenecking is occurring
- Removal of two weirs along Socastee Creek—both 40 foot wide and 10ft tall, concrete sheet pile and with a rip rap 2-ft layer—in Socastee, SC.

In addition to a “no action” alternative, action alternatives were evaluated across four distinct flood focus areas. The alternatives included floodwalls, benching, relief bridges (cross drains), a detention pond with a diversion canal, barrier removal, a floodgate, highway elevation, nonstructural alternatives including elevations and acquisitions, and comprehensive plans which included structural and nonstructural measures (see Chapter 3 of the IFR/EA entitled “Plan Formulation and Evaluation”). These alternatives, including the no action alternative, were evaluated and compared, and alternatives C3 and S3 were selected.

For all alternatives, the potential effects were evaluated, as appropriate. A summary assessment of the potential effects of the recommended plan are listed in Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of Potential Effects of the Recommended Plan

Resource	Less than significant Effects	Less than significant Effects as a Result of Mitigation	Resource Unaffected by Action
Land Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Air Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geologic Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Biological Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Effects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Resource	Less than significant Effects	Less than significant Effects as a Result of Mitigation	Resource Unaffected by Action
Aesthetics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

All practicable and appropriate means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental effects were analyzed and incorporated into the recommended plan. Best management practices (BMPs) as detailed in the IFR/EA will be implemented, if appropriate, to minimize impacts.

Means of avoidance and minimalization may include:

(1) Relief bridge (cross drain) design considerations for those preferred by bats, where appropriate (i.e., would not create an ecological trap), which include parallel box beam and prestressed girder type bridges. Consideration will include potential to install bat boxes, bat condos, or bat roosts to provide habitat enrichment. Design will also consider benefits to fish, such as shorter culverts to ensure better sunlight, and deep enough water and ridges to allow an easier transition. O&M manuals should also include regular inspection for maintenance and to ensure debris and obstructions do not impede movement.

(2) Erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) outlined in South Carolina Department of Environmental Services' (SCDES) Stormwater BMP Handbook will be incorporated into all construction actions to prevent introduction of sediment and pollutants into waterways.

(3) Contractor will be provided with Nationwide Standard Conservation Measures (USFWS 2015) and informed of necessary protections for migratory birds and compliance with Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

No compensatory mitigation is required as part of the recommended plan.

Public review of the draft IFR/EA and FONSI was completed on 9 October 2024. All substantial comments submitted during the public review period were responded to in the IFR/EA.

Pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the recommended plan may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the federally listed West Indian manatee or any designated critical habitat. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) concurred with the Corps' determination on 16 December 2024.

Pursuant to section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reached a determination of no historic properties affected for the recommended plan. The Corps consulted with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Tribes with interests in the study area. No immediate concerns were raised from Tribes in regard to the recommended plan. The Tribes are to be notified if Native American artifacts and/or human remains are located during the ground disturbance phase of the project. The SHPO concurred with the Corps' no effect determination via letter dated September 19, 2025.

Pursuant to the Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended, the discharge of dredged or fill material associated with the recommended plan has been found to be compliant with the section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230). The work is to be conducted under the recommended plan is consistent with the types of activities authorized by Nationwide Permit 14 and 53. The issuance of NWP involves a programmatic review rather than a project-specific 404(b)(1) analysis. While a project-specific 404(b)(1) analysis is not required for NWPs,

individual projects must still comply with the general and regional conditions specified in the NWP.

Pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that essential fish habitat may be affected by the actions, and consultation requirements of sections 305(b)(2) through (4) of the MSA occurred following the procedures outlined in 50 CFR § 600.920(f). A letter from NMFS was received on 27 September 2024 in which NMFS concurred with the finding of no significant adverse effects to EFH and provided no conservation recommendations.

USACE has determined that relief bridge construction is eligible for authorization under NWP 14 and barrier removal in Socastee is eligible for authorization under NWP 53. On 25 September 2024, a 401 WQC application was sent to the BOW (via email). On 3 October 2024, the BOW returned a letter (via email) stating that the Department has determined that there is reasonable assurance that the work authorized will be conducted in a manner consistent with the certification requirements of Section 401 of the CWA. All conditions associated with NWP 14 and 53 will be adhered to and applied to action design and specifications.

Conditions under the Recommended Plans have been considered by USACE and determined to be eligible for authorization under Nationwide Permits 14 and 53 for the relief bridge (cross-drains) in Conway and the barrier removal in Socastee, respectively. A BCM Federal Coastal Zone Consistency Certification Request was submitted on SCDES Online Services ePermitting on 13 September 2024. Conditional concurrence from DES that the General Certification is authorized for these actions was received via a 4 November 2024 letter.

Per coordination via email with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service South Carolina, the action of installing relief bridges in Conway is exempt from the requirement for consultation under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). For the weir removal component of the Recommended Plan, NRCS has stated that the area is urban and the FPPA does not apply. No further consultation is necessary.

Technical, environmental, economic, and cost effectiveness criteria used in the formulation of alternative plans were those specified in the Water Resources Council's 1983 Economic and Environmental Principles and Guidelines for Water and Related Land Resources Implementation Studies. All applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and local government plans were considered in evaluation of alternatives. Based on this report, the reviews by other Federal, State and local agencies, Tribes, input of the public, and the review by my staff, it is my determination that the recommended plan would not cause significant adverse effects on the quality of the human environment; therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Date

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Commander and District Engineer