



☒ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☒

Gordon Myers, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Courtney Spears
Division of Coastal Management
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

FROM: Maria T. Dunn, Coastal Coordinator *Maria T. Dunn*
Habitat Conservation Division

DATE: August 9, 2019

SUBJECT: CAMA Dredge/Fill Permit Application for Town of Sunset Beach, Brunswick County, North Carolina.

Biologists with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) reviewed the permit application with regard to impacts on fish and wildlife resources. The project site is located within Canals A-D, Feeder Channel, Bay Area of Sunset Beach, South Jinks Creek on the east side of Sunset Beach, and 1600' of oceanfront beach between 5th and 12th Streets. Our comments are provided in accordance with provisions of the Coastal Area Management Act (G.S. 113A-100 through 113A-128), as amended, Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, as amended, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (48 Stat. 401, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

The Town of Sunset Beach proposes to perform navigation dredging at the above locations with varying widths and depths depending on the reach. Material excavated from Canals A-D, the Feeder Channel, and Bay Area of Sunset Beach would be conducted via bucket-to-barge and trucked to an approved upland disposal site. The South Jinks Creek area is stated to contain beach compatible material and is proposed to be placed on the oceanfront shoreline via pipeline routed around the inlet area and down the oceanfront beach. To minimize impacts to environmental resources, the applicant states a 10' buffer would be included adjacent coastal wetlands and work would be conducted between November 16 – April 30. Shellfish and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) surveys were conducted and a biological assessment was included to locate and assess resources. The Bay Area and South Jinks Creek are classified SA HQW by the Environmental Management Commission and are open to shellfish harvesting. Primary Nursery Areas (PNA) designated by the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) are in the vicinity but are not directly within the project proposal.

The NCWRC has reviewed the current project application and has comments regarding the proposal. Our agency has participated in several interagency meetings, site visits, and has provided comments during these occasions. Many measures to minimize the project's impacts to environmental resources have been incorporated since the project inception. We appreciate the applicant's coordination, cooperation and inclusion of more protective measures in this application.

One aspect of the project includes the beneficial placement of material along 1600' of oceanfront shoreline. The material would be dredged from South Jinks Creek and pipelined around the inlet spit to the shoreline between 5th and 12th Streets. The applicant states this material is beach compatible and that work would be conducted between November 16 – April 30 to minimize impacts to nesting sea turtles and aquatic marine resources.

The NCWRC requests placement of the material on the oceanfront shoreline and removal of equipment associated with nourishment occur outside an April 1 – November 15 moratorium to avoid impacts to numerous shore birds that use the bare sand area along the inlet spit. This area is used by several species for foraging and nesting throughout the month of April. Heavy equipment use and activities associated with the pumping of material from the South Jinks Creek area around the inlet to the beach would disturb these species. Scheduling the project so the dredging of South Jinks Creek and associated nourishment would occur first would ensure the work could be finished and equipment removed from the beach outside the requested moratorium. Excavating this area first may also prevent any suspended sediments from the other dredged areas from accumulating within the material proposed to be placed on the beach. Material placed on the beach must be compatible with native beach material. This includes grain size, percent fines, shell, rock, and color. Any material placed on the beach that is not compatible must be removed and the site remediated outside the April 1 – November 15 moratorium. Adherence to the April 1 – November 15 moratorium would also benefit marine resources in the adjacent PNA designated waters if applied to the entire project proposal.

The NCWRC appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on this permit application. If you need further assistance or additional information, please contact me at (252) 948-3916 or at maria.dunn@ncwildlife.org

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