

**UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT**

**HYDROLOGIC RESTORATION and IMPROVED WATER MANAGEMENT
PROJECT
ALLIGATOR RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
DARE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

Within the spirit and intent of the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other statutes, orders, and policies that protect fish and wildlife resources, I have established the following administrative record and have determined that the action of (describe action):

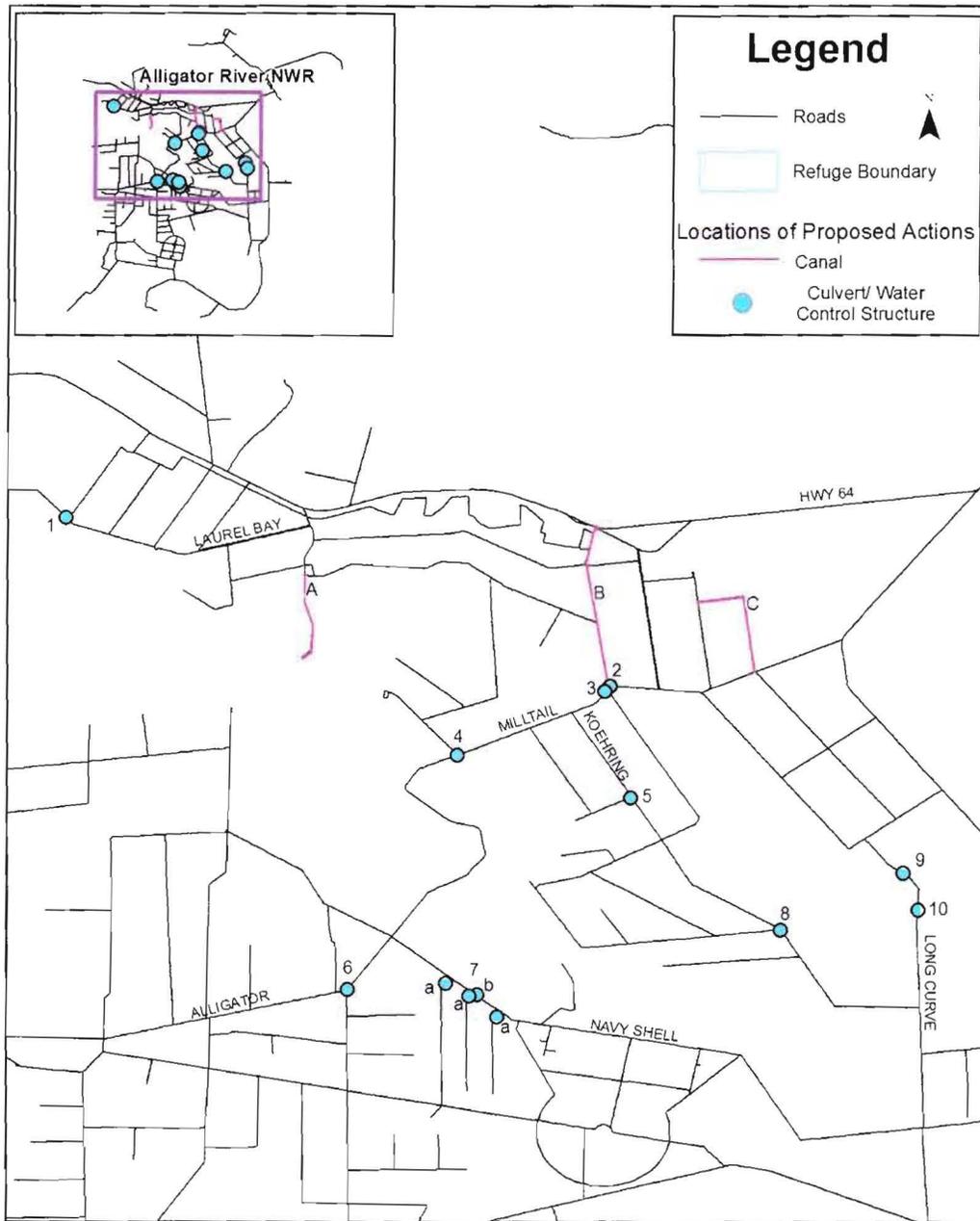
The proposed hydrologic restoration and improved water management actions are a combination of normal refuge activities and a cooperative effort between the ARNWR, The Nature Conservancy North Carolina Chapter (TNC), and the United States Air Force (USAF). The ARNWR, TNC, and USAF have partnered together to influence approximately 65,000 acres of land on the ARNWR and Dare County Bombing Range. Joint management efforts are intended to facilitate controlling drainage and provide for more water retention within the project area to reduce wildfire potential, improve firefighting readiness, and restore a water regime more closely resembling historic (pre-canal) conditions to benefit habitat preservation for local wildlife. Normal refuge activities are focused on improving water control and drainage in wetlands as well as the farming units of the refuge in support of management to provide quality habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds. This Environmental Action Statement (EAS) is intended only for those portions on ARNWR and, in 2 locations, at or near the Department of Defense (DOD) boundary line as shown in Figure 1.

This CD involves a total of 12 projects designed to improve water management capabilities on ARNWR and restore a more natural wetland hydrology to forested wetlands in various locations on habitat north of Milltail Creek. All sites involve activities ranging from cleaning debris and floating vegetation from existing canals and structures that are currently creating moderate to severe flow impediments to removing/replacing damaged structures within the same footprint. There will be one new structure in a new location. From one up to four cofferdams will be required for completing the repair/replacement work at some sites.

The source for all borrow material to construct cofferdams will come from the Stumpy Point Disposal Cell approximately 2.0 miles south of Stumpy Point and east of US 264. Material in the disposal cell is a product of dredging the Stumpy Point federal navigation channel and the North Carolina Emergency Ferry Channel. The material is clean, fine-to-medium grain size sand. Temporary fill used for the cofferdams will be removed to the maximum extent possible upon completion of construction.

The project will affect open water in various canals and small amounts of coastal wetland fringe along the canal banks. Most of these impacts will be of a temporary nature. However, there will be a relatively small amount of permanent impact since it is not possible to recover all of the cofferdam fill material.

Figure 1. Proposed water management actions on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Dare County, North Carolina.



Check One:

is a categorical exclusion as provided by 516 DM 2 Appendix 2 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1; 1.4(B)(2),(3). No further NEPA documentation will therefore be made.

is found not to have significant environmental effects as determined by the attached environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact.

is found to have significant effects and, therefore, further consideration of this action will require a notice of intent to be published in the Federal Register announcing the decision to prepare an EIS.

is not approved because of unacceptable environmental damage, or violation of Fish and Wildlife Service mandates, policy, regulations, or procedures.

is an emergency action within the context of 40 CFR 1506.11. Only those actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency will be taken. Other related actions remain subject to NEPA review.

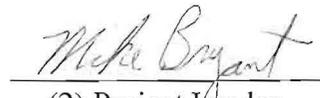
Other supporting documents (list):

1. Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan
2. Water Management Plan for Dare County bombing Range and Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

Signature Approval:


(1) Originator

6/4/2015
Date


(2) Project Leader

6/8/2015
Date

(3) AD/ARD

Date

(4) EC/REC

Date

NOTE: Signature requirements vary depending upon the type of action EA, EIS, of FONSI. Check file.