

Bonner Bridge Update

Environmental Impact Statement

TIP Project No. B-2500

Dare County, North Carolina

NEW OREGON INLET BRIDGE PROPOSED

Both Bonner Bridge Replacement and NC 12 Overwash Issues Addressed

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is proposing to build a new bridge to replace the existing Bonner Bridge over Oregon Inlet prior to the end of its reasonable service life. Four corridors were evaluated for the replacement bridge. The corridors are shown in the figure on page 3. Corridor Alternative 4 would minimize natural resource impacts and would bypass three locations on NC 12 regularly threatened by overwash. Corridor Alternative 1 would minimize costs but may not be compatible with the management strategies of the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. Corridor Alternatives 2 and 3 are no longer under consideration because of higher cost and natural resource impacts.

The NCDOT and a multi-agency team studied the four bridge corridors before Alternatives 1 and 4 were selected for more detailed evaluation. The corridors were evaluated for their potential impacts to natural resources, including federally protected species, wetlands and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAVs), costs, construction method, and compatibility with Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and National Park Service plans and policies. All of the corridors begin on Bodie Island at the northern endpoint of the existing bridge near the Oregon Inlet Marina and the U.S. Coast Guard Station.

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Citizens Informational Workshops

Citizen Informational Workshops are scheduled for June 26th in Rodanthe and Buxton. These workshops will provide the public an opportunity to learn more about the proposed bridge and discuss concerns with NCDOT. Two workshop locations will make it more convenient for property and business owners on Hatteras Island to attend one of the workshops.

One workshop will be held at the community center in Rodanthe. The other workshop will be held at Cape Hatteras Secondary School in Buxton. Both workshops will be informal, with the public welcome to drop in any time between 4 and 7 pm to view displays and ask questions about the project. Study team members will be on hand to discuss the project with you.

The same information will be available at both workshops. If you cannot attend one of the workshops you may write the study team or call the toll-free project information line with your comments or questions. See the last page of this newsletter for the names and numbers of study team contacts.

Bulletin Board

Bonner Bridge Citizens Informational Workshops Scheduled for June 26, 2003 4:00 - 7:00 PM

RODANTHE
Rodanthe Waves Salvo Community Center
23186 Myrna Peters Road
Rodanthe, NC 27968

BUXTON
Cape Hatteras Secondary School (Auditorium)
48576 Highway 12
Buxton, NC 27920



Contacting the Study Team

This newsletter is being sent to individuals who have requested to be on the Bonner Bridge Study mailing list, property owners on Hatteras Island, and individuals who are on mailing lists maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, and the National Park Service, Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

If you have any questions or wish to be added to our newsletter mailing list, please call John Page or Liz Kovasckitz on our toll-free project information line, 1-866-803-0529. If you call outside of normal business hours, please leave a message and someone will return your call. You may also write the study team at:

Mr. John Page, AICP, CEP
Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc.
909 Aviation Parkway, Suite 1500
Morrisville, NC 27560

or

Ms. Jennifer Harris, PE
NC Department of Transportation
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1548

We hope to see you at one of the Citizens Informational Workshops on June 26th!



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Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

NC 12 on Hatteras Island is regularly threatened by shoreline erosion and overwash. Three areas, known as "hot spots" are especially vulnerable. A new bridge located in Corridor Alternative 1 would connect existing NC 12 from the tip of Bodie Island to south of the first hot spot, known as the Canal Zone. The approximately six-mile long bridge would cost substantially less to construct than a new bridge located in Corridor Alternative 4 but would have greater potential impacts to wetlands and waterfowl feeding areas.

The Canal Zone hot spot is located within the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. The Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, shown by the shaded area in the figure on page 3, extends from the tip of Hatteras Island to Rodanthe. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must find the bridge compatible with Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge management strategies in order to construct the new bridge within Corridor Alternative 1. Early coordination efforts between NCDOT and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicate that a new bridge in Corridor Alternative 1 is not likely to be determined compatible with Refuge management strategies. Additional information on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service compatibility determinations can be found on their website at <http://policy.fws.gov/603fw2.html>.



A new bridge in Corridor Alternative 4 would connect existing NC 12 from just north of the emergency ferry dock in Rodanthe to the southern tip of Bodie Island. The approximately 17-mile long bridge would minimize impacts to important

natural resources such as wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, and bird feeding areas. It would bypass the Canal Zone hot spot and two additional hot spots on NC 12 that are currently subject to frequent ocean overwash. Relocating NC 12 on structure in the Pamlico Sound west of Hatteras Island would eliminate the inconvenience and economic loss that results when substantial overwash occurs. In addition, a bridge in the Pamlico Sound will place NC 12 outside the Refuge.

Why is a New Bridge Needed?

A NCDOT Bridge Inspection Report for June 2002 rated the condition of the existing bridge as "poor". Additional maintenance and rehabilitation is needed to keep the bridge open until the new bridge is built. A new bridge is necessary because the existing Bonner Bridge is reaching the end of its reasonable service life and continued demand for convenient daily travel and emergency access across Oregon Inlet is expected.

What is the Status of the Study?

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the replacement of Bonner Bridge was approved in 1993. Public hearings were held early in 1994. The preferred alternative was to con

Public Involvement Opportunities

Citizens Informational Workshops are just one public involvement opportunity. Other opportunities for the public to be informed, ask questions, or make suggestions are:

- Newsletters will be mailed periodically during the study to inform citizens of project findings and upcoming events.
- Small Group Meetings with community groups or organizations can be arranged. The study team will meet with you at your request to discuss specific issues. Organization(s) sponsoring these meetings are responsible for arranging a meeting location and notifying participants.
- Toll-free Project Information Line provides direct contact between citizens and the study team.
- Study team members may also be contacted through the mail by writing to one of the contacts listed on the back page of the newsletter.

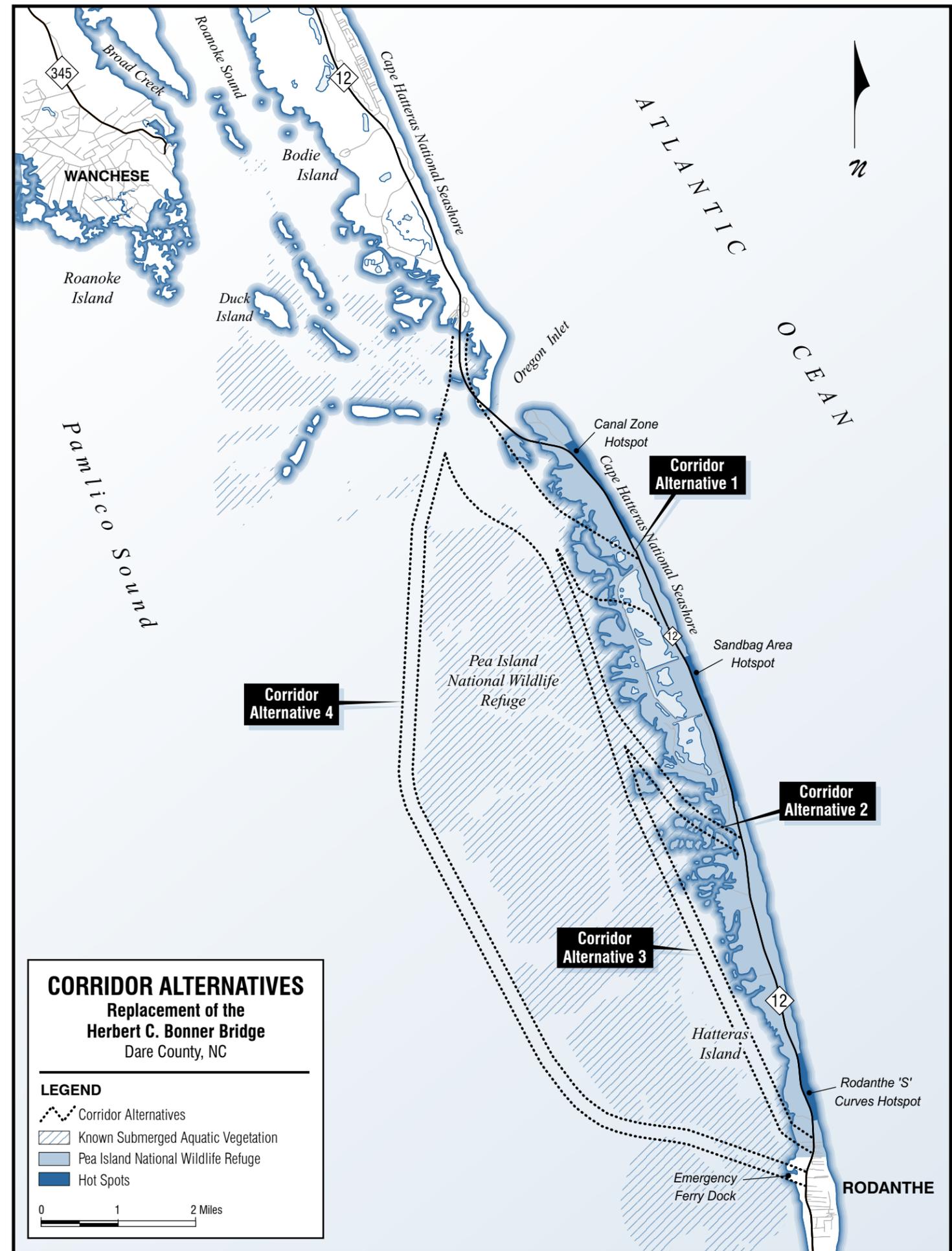
struct a new bridge immediately west of the existing bridge. A Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) will be prepared to evaluate additional bridge corridors, and will recommend a new preferred alternative for the proposed Bonner Bridge replacement. The project study team will assess natural resource, historic architecture, archaeological, coastal movement, and community data before determining the best corridor for the new bridge. Results from natural resource and community studies and compatibility with Pea Island National Wildlife management strategies will be considered in selecting the best location for the new bridge. Public comments at the workshops will also be an important component of the decision-making process.

What are the Next Steps?

The next steps for the study team are to select the agency preferred alternative and develop the preliminary designs, assess the impacts, and write the supplemental DEIS.

NCDOT's goal is to open the new bridge to traffic by 2010. In order to meet this goal, the following schedule must be met:

Supplemental Draft EIS	February 2004
Final EIS	February 2005
Record of Decision	May 2005
Begin Right-of-Way Acquisition	August 2005
Begin Construction	August 2006



CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES
Replacement of the
Herbert C. Bonner Bridge
Dare County, NC

LEGEND

- Corridor Alternatives
- ▨ Known Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
- ▨ Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge
- Hot Spots

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