Appendix C: DOT-Funded Positions Involved in Extensive, Multi-Agency Process Improvement Efforts

North Carolina's Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP)

North Carolina's Ecosystem Enhancement Program was established by an MOA between NCDOT and the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and is now led by the former Environmental Director at the DOT, who oversees 50 other staff addressing DOT impacts and mitigation needs. NCDOT does not consider these positions to be part of its funded position program with resource agencies.

EEP was designed to protect the state's natural resources while dealing with a rapidly expanding transportation program with a high volume of new alignments, impacting an estimated 6,000 acres of wetlands and million feet of streams over a seven year period. The program considers long-range projections of road-building and other development-related impacts in conjunction with environmental data to determine high-priority watersheds for restoration, and conducts both broad-scale and in-depth planning in these areas.

EEP evolved from a multi-year effort by NCDENR, NCDOT, the Corps, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, USEPA, and USFWS to streamline the project delivery process for transportation improvement projects, to reduce environmental impacts in concert with avoidance and minimization and to produce the most environmentally beneficial mitigation possible with public dollars. A year of multi-agency process improvement workshops determined that compensatory mitigation should be "de-coupled" from individual permits and project reviews, and performed on a watershed basis, with mitigation projects constructed in advance of permitted impacts. The program has been endorsed at the highest levels of the participating agencies, particularly at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

WSDOT's Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee

In March 2001, the Washington State Legislature authorized the state's Environmental Permit Streamlining Act to coordinate and streamline the environmental permitting process for transportation projects. In 2003, the legislature extended the expiration date of the interagency Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC) through March 2006, to sustain focus on achieving both the transportation and environment goals of the state.

The Committee includes senators and representatives from the state legislature, state agencies, local government, and business, trade and environmental organizations. Federal and tribal agencies are also invited to participate. Goals adopted by the TPEAC in 2002 included reducing the cost of environmental mitigation and increasing the environmental benefit, reducing the redesign of transportation projects, reducing the time required to obtain permits, and increasing the number of project permits that receive programmatic approval. TPEAC subcommittees focused on developing multi-agency programmatic permits.

➢ The local government task developed training and outreach opportunities, and evaluated programmatic permit needs and variations in how exemptions are granted for routine maintenance projects under the Shoreline Management Act.

➢ The Watershed Based Mitigation Subcommittee completed characterization work that benefited four I-405 projects and three projects on SR 520. The work included establishing the critical needs for the watershed.

➢ The Permit Delivery Subcommittee is currently in the second phase of developing a web-based Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA). The MAP team and WSDOT's northwest regional office are currently using this phase. JARPA has many links to rules and guidance for various agencies and can be used to submit applications to several agencies electronically.

➢ TPEAC provided money to the Tulalip Tribe to develop a model NEPA consultation process that could be used by other tribes in developing their own consultation process.

TPEAC products are being applied to Pilot Projects and 14 transportation projects of "statewide significance." Key TPEAC products include:

➢ Watershed Based Mitigation Subcommittee to Develop a Work Plan to Evaluate Applications of Watershed Processes to Stormwater Mitigation Resolution (1/03)

➢ Interagency Auditing Procedure for Environmental Compliance Resolution (1/03)

➢ Environmental Compliance Assurance Procedures for Maintenance and Ferries Projects and Activities Resolution (1/03)

➢ Environmental Compliance Assurance Procedure for Construction Projects and Activities (12/02)

The committee has also adopted a number of other resolutions, some of which relate to staffing and training.

➢ Statewide Environmental Training Plan and Estimated Costs (12/02)

➢ Identifying SSHIAP as a Tool for Use in Making Permit Decisions and Evaluating Mitigation Options (12/02)

➢ Approving the Watershed Subcommittee's Recommended Criteria for Selecting Test Cases (5/02)

➢ Planning Resolution Endorsement of Revisions to the NEPA/404 Merger Agreement and TPEAC Review of Implementation (5/02)

➢ Revised One-Stop Permitting Process Resolution (5/02)

➢ Compliance, Training, and Reporting Resolution Approving the Training, Compliance, and Reporting Sub-Committee's Goal and Objectives (5/02)

➢ Adoption of a Mission Statement for the Planning Sub-Committee Resolution (4/02)

➢ Approving the Programmatic Sub-Committee's Recommended Staff Scenario for the Programmatic Approach Resolution (4/02)

➢ Approving the Watershed Sub-Committee's Recommended Approach for Developing Watershed-Based Mitigation Resolution (includes Report) (4/02)

➢ Programmatic Report "Norming to Performing" (3/02)

- ➤ [Endorse and support funding of Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group Infrastructure that Allows Restoration Project Development](#) (1/02)

- ➤ [Performance Measure Resolution](#) (1/02)

- ➤ [Create Planning Subcommittee Resolution](#) (12/01)

- ➤ [Supporting Continued Funding of SSHIAP Resolution](#) (12/01)

- ➤ [Approve Streamlining Pilot Projects](#) (12/01)

- ➤ [Dispute Resolution Process](#) (10/01)

- ➤ [Rules of Interaction](#) (10/01)

The major success of TPEAC has been bringing the various agencies and groups to the table to keep an open dialog regarding transportation needs, projects and problems. While TPEAC sunsets in March of 2006, the committee is currently looking at how to keep regular communications in place and continue positions temporarily funded by this mechanism.

FDOT Interagency Environmental Technical Advisory Teams Role in ETDM

The 36 positions FDOT is funding at various agencies enables these agencies to participate on Environmental Technical Advisory Teams (ETATs) in each FDOT district. Each ETAT representative has the responsibility to coordinate internally at their agency and represent responses and positions to FDOT and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). ETATs perform environmental screens at two stages, one of the long-range plan and another of FDOT's Work Program, considerably earlier in the process than environmental agency input occurred in the past. During planning, the ETAT role is advisory. The team gives input on regulatory and planning programs and priorities, avoidance and minimization options, and alignment and mitigation alternatives. Indirect and cumulative effects are evaluated on a project and system-wide basis in connection with the planning screen, so that the interrelationship between land use, ecosystem management, and mobility plans can be considered in integrated planning across the agencies. As the planning screening event improves the consideration of mitigation and corridor alternatives, DOT estimation of project costs improves as well.

The ETAT programming screen occurs before projects enter the FDOT Work Program. The screen initiates the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for projects that have not been categorically excluded. The ETAT input provides agency scoping input to satisfy NEPA and other pertinent laws that are addressed during the NEPA process. ETAT members coordinate with FDOT's project managers during project development and coordinate within their agency to issue construction permits simultaneously with the federal NEPA approvals, including the Record of Decision. As a project advances into the design phase, the ETAT continues to provide project input and technical assistance to the project sponsor to satisfy permit requirements under multiple environmental laws.

The interagency operating agreement clarifies up front that certain information will not be available in Project Development, and decisions are expected to be made without a complete set of construction plans, profile and grade, detailed cross sections, pipe size and other final drainage control structure details and calculations, or maps, plans, or details requiring design survey. The ETAT members identify technical studies needed for permitting at an early stage, and then