



COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

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**COASTAL MARSHLANDS PROTECTION ACT
STAFF'S FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

November 14, 2025

TO: Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee:
Commissioner Walter Rabon, Chairman
Mr. Chad Barrow
Mr. Brad Brookshire
Mr. Davis Poole
Dr. Valerie Hepburn

FROM: Department Staff to the Committee

APPLICANT: Garrow Alberson
City of Brunswick
525 Lakewood Avenue
Brunswick, GA 31520

AGENT: Sam Labarba
Labarba Environmental Services
139 Altama Connector, #161
Brunswick, GA 31525

LOCATION: Tidal Ditches, Glynn County, Georgia

PROJECT: The project is to maintain a portion of the Howard Coffin Park drainage ditches, construct and maintain a bank stabilization project, and replace a culvert within City of Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia.

ARMY CORPS NUMBER: SAS-2013-00402

APPLICABLE LAW: O.C.G.A. §12-5-280 *et seq.*, as amended, Coastal Marshlands Protection Act (CMPA) of 1970.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS: The Public Notice of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee (CMPC) ran from October 2, 2025 to October 31, 2025. One comment has been received in favor of the proposed project.

FINDINGS: Department Staff to the CMPC make the following findings regarding this application:

Project Scope and Justification: O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b): O.C.G.A § 12-5-286 (b) (8) requires a discussion of why the permit should be granted.

1. The existing drainage ditches, situated along the western boundary of Howard Coffin Park (HCP) and extending through the center of the park in an east-west alignment, have been identified as priority areas to ensure adequate stormwater conveyance and capacity, and to prevent upstream flooding within the Winsor Park neighborhood.
2. The ditches convey stormwater from Winsor Park in an area from Gloucester Street to the north to Palmetto Avenue on the southern end and as far west as Lee Street.
3. The stormwater enters the system through inlets in the streets and discharges into the ditches from connection pipes under Lanier Boulevard. The ditches drain to the east under Glynn Avenue into Clubbs Creek.
4. The existing GDOT pipe that flows to Clubbs Creek under Highway 17 impacts approximately 21.2sq.ft of coastal marshlands.
5. CMPA Permit #880 was issued September 19, 2025 for excavation of a large portion of the ditch on the upstream end of the system, closer to Lanier Boulevard. The project also includes the installation of three tide gates.
6. The proposed project is located on the easternmost ~350 linear feet of the drainage ditches and will focus on stabilization of the eroding ditch banks and restoring flow for proper conveyance of stormwater.
7. There is an existing, undersized, and perched culvert that bisects the project area that is exacerbating bank erosion. The existing culvert and associated access road that crosses the project area impacts approximately 69.1sq.ft. of coastal marshlands.
8. On the southeastern corner of the project area is a section of coastal marshlands that has propagated from prolonged and consistent tidal flooding in the drainage ditch. The flooding in this area has resulted in saltwater intrusion into upland park amenities.
9. The marshlands component of the proposed project includes excavation of silt, debris, and vegetation from the ditch channel, stabilization of the bank using a variety of nature based products, installation of an 8ft. x 30ft. bottomless box culvert, and construction of a 3ft. tall berm around the southeastern corner of the project area.
10. The excavation of accumulated silts within the ditches and bank shaping will be performed from the upland by backhoe and hauled by truck to an approved upland disposal site.
11. Prior to grading activities, existing vegetation within the project area will be carefully harvested and stored in a controlled environment to ensure its viability for reuse. This salvaged vegetation will be reinstalled into the Flexamat.
12. Approximately 9,997.7sq.ft. of coastal marshlands and uplands will be disturbed during grading of the site. On site materials will be used to create 2:1 and 3:1 slopes on the banks to facilitate the installation of several different types of stabilization techniques.
13. Section 1, the portion of the ditch west of the existing culvert, will be stabilized on the northern bank with approximately 1,015.3sq.ft. of DredgeSox. In this location the DredgeSox system will provide a soft and stable shoreline that will reduce the risk of the newly graded bank collapsing and will facilitate regrowth of jurisdictional vegetation.
14. On the southern bank of Section 1, approximately 922.4sq.ft. of Flexamat will be installed on the bank along with 433.7sq.ft. of rip rap to secure the toe and prevent scouring. The Flexamat and rip rap toe protection provides a more robust stabilization method along this portion of Section 1 because of the accelerated degradation of the banks and minimal vegetative cover.

15. Accounting for overlap in materials, stabilization of Section 1 of the ditch will result in approximately 2,158.9sq.ft. of total impacts to jurisdictional coastal marshlands.
16. Immediately east of Section 1 of the project area is the existing access road culvert. This undersized, perched pipe will be replaced with a 30ft. long, 8ft. x 5ft. box culvert. The proposed box culvert will impact approximately 209.8sq.ft. of coastal marshlands.
17. Section 2 of the project is the portion of the ditch between the proposed culvert and the existing GDOT pipe inlet that runs underneath U.S. 17 to Clubbs Creek. This portion of the ditch system exhibits gentler bank slopes, established vegetation, oyster recruitment, and more upland buffer between the channel and upland infrastructure.
18. The proposed stabilization techniques for Section 2 will include a softer stabilization approach than Section 1 with more nature-based materials such as oyster bags and tables, coir logs, and coir mats.
19. The western end of Section 2 will be stabilized with an upper layer of Flexamat (1,932.4sq.ft.) with a rip rap toe (178.9sq.ft.) directly adjacent to the outlet of the proposed box culvert to protect from scouring during high flows.
20. Downstream, the lower layer of rip rap will transition to oyster tables, a table like structure that promotes oyster recruitment, (400.1sq.ft.) on the north and south bank.
21. Further downstream, the upper layer of Flexamat will transition into a combination of coir logs and coir mats (1,677.2sq.ft.) at the higher elevations of the graded bank with a toe of oyster bags (582.4sq.ft.) closer to the ditch channel.
22. The coir mat/coir log and oyster bag toe technique will be similar on both the north and south bank for the middle part of Section 2, although the area of transition will be slightly different on each bank.
23. Finally, at the far downstream end of Section 2 the GDOT pipe will be stabilized with Flexamat (195sq.ft.) and rip rap (103.8sq.ft.).
24. Accounting for overlap in the materials, stabilization of Section 2 will result in approximately 4,320.9sq.ft. of total impacts to coastal marshlands.
25. Section 3 of the proposed stabilization project encompasses the area that has been subject to prolonged tidal flooding and has created a salt pan type area. Approximately 356.1sq.ft. of DredgeSox will be used to create a ~3ft. high vegetated berm to encapsulate the area and prevent further saltwater encroachment into the park.
26. An 82sq.ft. bubbler box will be installed at the southern end of the salt pan area, outside of CMPA jurisdiction, to facilitate stormwater drainage to the ditch in a controlled manner.
27. Stabilization of Section 3 will result in approximately 356.1sq.ft. of total impacts to coastal marshlands.
28. Total proposed impacts to coastal marshlands will be approximately 7,045.7sq.ft. (0.16 acres) with 226.7cu.yds. of material.

O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286 (b) (8) requires a discussion of why the permit should be granted.

29. The existing drainage ditches, situated along the western boundary of Howard Coffin Park and extending through the center of the park in an east-west alignment, have been identified as priority areas to ensure adequate stormwater conveyance and capacity, and to prevent upstream flooding within the Winsor Park neighborhood. The proposed project is located on the easternmost ~350 linear feet of the drainage ditches and will focus on stabilization of the eroding ditch banks and restoring flow for proper conveyance of stormwater. There is an existing, undersized, and perched culvert that bisects the project area that is exacerbating the

already active bank erosion. This section of the ditch is experiencing greater erosion due to the poorly designed culvert, proximity to impervious surfaces, and accelerated tidal exchange. The proposed project is to stabilize the eroding banks of the ditch using nature-based solutions and to improve stormwater conveyance from residential areas by excavation of accumulated sediments and installing a new box culvert.

Application Form, Applicant Name and Address, Project Plans, Plat, Deed or other instrument, Written permission to carry out project by owner of land, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(1-4):

30. Applicant has submitted the application form, name and address, project plans, plats, and deed.

Adjoining Landowners, Non-refundable application fee, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286 (b)(5,7):

31. The applicant owns the adjoining property on three sides. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) owns the Right-of-Way to the east of the project area. The applicant has provided an approval letter from GDOT as part of the permit application.
32. A non-refundable application fee of \$500.00 was submitted with the application.

Local Government Zoning, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(6):

33. A letter has been received from the City of Brunswick Planning, Development, and Codes Department stating that the proposed project does not conflict with any zoning requirements. The letter is not conditioned.

Alternative Sites Description and Feasibility 12-5-286 (b)(8):

34. The project cannot be accomplished at an alternate site. The applicant is proposing maintenance and improvements to the existing system. The existing stormwater ditch must be maintained and stabilized to function with its original purpose to convey stormwater from the adjacent residential neighborhood to the east.

Landfill, Hazardous Waste Inquiry, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(9):

35. Applicant has reviewed the Hazardous Site Index maintained by Georgia Environmental Protection Division. There are no landfills or hazardous waste sites at the proposed project locations.

Water Quality Certification, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(b)(10):

36. A 401 Water Quality Certification has been issued in conjunction with two (2) Nationwide Permits, #3 and #54.

Adherence to Erosion and Sediment Control Responsibilities, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286 (b)(11):

37. Applicant has stated the intention to adhere to soil and erosion control responsibilities.

Notification of Proposed Project, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(d)(e):

38. Adjacent property owners and interested parties who have requested to be placed on the mailing list were notified in writing of the proposed project. The public notice of the Coastal Marshlands Protection Committee (CMPC) ran from October 2, 2025 to October 31, 2025. One comment has been received in favor of the proposed project.

Public Interest Considerations, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-286(g):

39. In passing upon application for a permit, the CMPC shall consider the public interest.

- a) **The design of the project is such that no unreasonably harmful obstruction to or alteration of the natural flow of navigational water within the affected area will arise as a result of the proposal.** The proposed project is not located in navigable waters as the maintenance and stabilization activities are confined to the easternmost portion of the drainage ditch system. The proposed project will not unreasonably obstruct or alter the flow of tidal waters in the existing ditches. Removal of accumulated materials will improve both tidal and stormwater flows. The installation of the bank stabilization will prevent further erosion of the banks and protect upland structures.
- b) **The design of the project is such that no unreasonably harmful or increased erosion, shoaling of the channels, or stagnant areas of water will be created.** The proposed project is not expected to increase erosion, shoaling of channels, or create stagnant areas of water. The purpose of the project is to mitigate flooding and prevent scour and erosion of existing tidally influenced drainage ditch.
- c) **The proposal will not unreasonably interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, and clams or any marine life or wildlife or other natural resources including but not limited to water and oxygen supply.** The proposed project is not expected to interfere with the conservation of fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, and clams or any marine life. The impacts during construction would be short-term and minor and the completed project would result in reduced erosion by stabilizing the banks and increased tidal flows that would improve water and oxygen supply and provide a net benefit to the marine ecosystem.

Restriction on granting of permits; size restriction; activities and structures considered contrary to the public interest, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-288 (a) and (b):

40. The proposed drainage improvement project cannot be satisfied using an alternative non-marshland site.

Leasing of state owned marshland or water bottoms, O.C.G.A. § 12-5-287:

41. The drainage improvement project will not result in a need for a water bottoms lease.

O.C.G.A. § 12-5-288(b) requires that the amount of marshlands to be altered are minimum in size.

- 42. Approximately 9,997.7sq.ft. of coastal marshlands and uplands will be disturbed during grading of the site.
- 43. Accounting for overlap in materials, stabilization of Section 1 of the ditch will result in approximately 2,158.9sq.ft. of total impacts to jurisdictional coastal marshlands.
- 44. Accounting for overlap in the materials, stabilization of Section 2 of the ditch will result in approximately 4,320.9sq.ft. of total impacts to coastal marshlands.
- 45. Stabilization of Section 3 of the project area will result in approximately 356.1sq.ft. of total impacts to coastal marshlands.
- 46. Total proposed impacts to coastal marshlands will be approximately 7,045.7sq.ft. (0.16 acres) with 226.7cu.yds. of material.

Determining Project Boundaries, Rule 391-2-3-.02(3):

47. The marshlands component of the proposed project includes excavation of silt, debris, and vegetation from the ditch channel, stabilization of the bank using a variety of nature based products, installation of a bottomless box culvert, and construction of a 3ft. tall berm around the southeastern corner of the project area. Total proposed impacts to coastal marshlands will be approximately 7,045.7sq.ft. (0.16 acres) with 226.7cu.yds. of material.
48. The project does not have an upland component. as it does not qualify under 391-2-3-.02, Regulation of Upland Component of a Project.

RECOMMENDATION: Should the Committee determine that the proposed project is in the public interest, Department staff recommends the following STANDARD and SPECIAL conditions:

COASTAL MARSHLANDS PROTECTION ACT STANDARD CONDITIONS

1. The project must comply, as applicable, for areas permitted herein, with all other federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, and regulations and the applicant must obtain all licenses and permits prior to commencement of construction.
2. This permit does not resolve actual or potential disputes regarding ownership of, rights in or over the property upon which the subject project is proposed, and shall not be construed as recognizing or denying any such rights or interests.
3. All plans, documents and materials contained in this permit application, required by Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970, as amended O.C.G.A. § 12-5-280 et seq. are a part of this permit and conformance to such plans, documents, and materials are a condition of this permit. No change or deviation from these plans, documents, and materials shall be permitted without prior notification and approval by the Department or CMPC.
4. No further encroachment or construction shall take place within state jurisdiction, except as permitted by the CMPC. Any modification of the plans or structure in the jurisdictional area must be reviewed and approved by the Department or the CMPC, as necessary, prior to construction.
5. No construction or alteration of a project may commence until the expiration of 30 days following the date on which the application is approved; provided however that if a timely appeal is filed, no construction or alteration may commence until all administrative and judicial proceedings are terminated.
6. The permit must be posted onsite within 24 hours of beginning construction.
7. A copy of these and all permit conditions must be supplied to the person in charge of construction. All contractors and subcontractors are responsible for strict adherence to all permit conditions.
8. All Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be used to prevent any erosion and sedimentation at the site. No unauthorized equipment, materials, or debris may be placed in, disposed of, or stored in jurisdictional areas. Any visible alterations in the marsh topography will be restored immediately using low-impact hand tools. Any damage to the marsh vegetation that has not recovered naturally during the next growing season will be repaired by a method acceptable to the Department.
9. If the permitted improvements are damaged, fall into disrepair, become dilapidated, or are not meeting their expected usefulness and are not maintained at a serviceable level, it is the

responsibility of the owner to remove the improvements. A new permit will be required to retain and repair the structure, improvement, or asset if it loses its structural integrity and is no longer serviceable.

10. The CMPC is not bound in the future to protect any improvement or asset authorized by the permit.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

1. Permittee may be required to provide a post-construction survey to the Department upon completion of the permitted activity. Such survey shall comply with the Georgia Plat Act O.C.G.A. 15-6-67 *et seq.*
2. Erosion control structures, such as silt fences, must be maintained during construction and removed immediately once construction is complete at each individual site.
3. Only native coastal vegetation shall be planted in the project area.