ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
OF THE PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION
FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE
SALISBURY NATIONAL CEMETERY
ANNEX
SALISBURY, ROWAN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
425 I STREET, NW
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PREPARED BY:
TTL Associates, Inc.
FEBRUARY 20, 2018
LEAD AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
COOPERATING AGENCIES: None
TITLE OF PROPOSED ACTION: Proposed Land Acquisition for the Salisbury National Cemetery Annex Expansion
AFFECTED JURISDICTION: Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina
POINT OF CONTACT: Ms. Brigette Banks, VA Project Manager, Office of Real Property, 425 I Street, NW, Rm. 6W219E, Washington DC 20001; Email: brigette.banks@va.gov; Tel.: (202) 632-5914
PROPOUNENTS: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)

DOCUMENT DESIGNATION: Draft Environmental Assessment (EA)

ABSTRACT: This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates the Proposed Action of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to acquire approximately 35 acres of land adjacent to the existing Salisbury National Cemetery Annex (SNCA), located at 501 Statesville Boulevard, in Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina for the future expansion of the cemetery. This EA discusses two alternatives: (1) Preferred Action Alternative – Acquire approximately 35 acres of land located contiguous, across Grants Creek, to the west of the SNCA for the future expansion of the SNCA; and (2) the No Action Alternative. This EA evaluates possible effects to aesthetics; air quality; cultural resources; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; wildlife and habitat; noise; land use; floodplains, wetlands, and coastal zone management; socioeconomics; community services; solid and hazardous materials; transportation and parking; utilities; and environmental justice. The EA concludes there would be no significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, to the local environment or quality of life associated with implementing the Preferred Action Alternative, provided the avoidance, management, and mitigation (if necessary) measures, and best management practices identified in this EA are implemented. VA does not plan to design or develop the proposed cemetery expansion for approximately 10 to 15 years. A supplemental NEPA analysis will be conducted at the time of the cemetery expansion design. The avoidance, management and mitigation (if necessary) measures identified in this EA would be incorporated into that future process and analysis. Therefore, this EA concludes that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate, and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts associated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s) proposed acquisition of approximately 35 acres of land for the future expansion of the existing Salisbury National Cemetery Annex (SNCA), located at 501 Statesville Boulevard, Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina. As a Federal action, preparation of this EA is required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and 38 CFR Part 26 (Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions). This EA has also been prepared in accordance with the VA NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects dated September 2010.

VA intends to acquire the 35-acre Site in 2018 and maintain the land as unimproved until such date when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary (estimated approximately 10 to 15 years). At that time and as part of the design process, VA will perform a supplemental NEPA analysis to reanalyze and reevaluate the potential effects of the construction and operation of the expanded cemetery at the Site. VA will incorporate the avoidance, management, and mitigation measures identified in this EA into that future design process and supplemental NEPA analysis to minimize potential adverse environmental effects.

This approach is fully consistent with the NEPA and CEQ Regulations. In cases such as these, the CEQ Regulations establish and recommend a “tiered” approach to the environmental impact analysis process: “Agencies are encouraged to tier their environmental (documents)...to focus on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review....Tiering may also be appropriate for different stages of actions” (40 CFR Part 1502.20). These regulations specify that such potentialities (i.e., the ultimate construction and operation of the expanded SNCA) should be introduced, but can be deferred to future analyses and documentation when they have “ripened,” or when more complete information becomes available.

As such, this EA assesses the potential effects of acquiring the Site for the ultimate expansion of the SNCA, and preliminarily assesses the effects of the future proposed construction and operation of the cemetery on the Site. Potential effects of the construction and operation of the proposed expanded SNCA on the Site will be reanalyzed and reevaluated in a subsequent NEPA analysis concurrent with Site design, when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary.

PROPOSED ACTION

VA’s Proposed Action is to acquire land adjacent to the existing SNCA for the future expansion of the cemetery. The future SNCA expansion would provide VA additional capacity to meet the burial needs of Veterans and their families in the region.

Currently, there are no design plans for the proposed SNCA expansion, as VA estimates the SNCA contains adequate space for burials for the next 10 to 15 years. However, additional land would be needed in the future. VA would follow the VA National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Facilities Design Guide in the SNCA expansion design. VA intends to acquire the Site in 2018 and maintain the land as unimproved until such date when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary, at which time the expanded cemetery design would be conducted.
PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide a National Cemetery of sufficient size and capacity to serve the projected needs of Veterans in the Salisbury, North Carolina area.

A larger, expanded SNCA is needed to continue to serve the needs of Veterans and their families in North Carolina. The SNCA is the only National Cemetery in North Carolina that is open to new interments; the three remaining National Cemeteries in the State have reached capacity and are closed for new burials. Although VA estimates adequate space remains at the existing SNCA for burials for the next 10 to 15 years, additional land would be needed in the future.

One of the primary objectives of the VA burial program is to ensure that burial needs of Veterans and eligible family members are met. NCA further defines this objective on the assumption that the burial needs of a Veteran are met if they have reasonable access to a burial option (whether for caskets, remains or cremated remains, either in-ground or in columbarium) in a National or State Veterans Cemetery within 75 miles of the Veteran’s place of residence. The Proposed Action would provide VA additional capacity needed to meet its burial objectives for eligible Veterans in North Carolina.

ALTERNATIVES

The SNCA is the only National Cemetery in North Carolina that is open to new interments and, although VA estimates adequate space remains for burials for the next 10 to 15 years, additional land, preferably adjacent to the SNCA, would be needed to meet the burial needs of area Veterans in the future. Approximately 35 acres of land contiguous to the west of the SNCA (the Site) has been offered (via donation) to VA by the Rowan County YMCA. After identifying the opportunity to acquire additional land adjacent to the existing SNCA for future expansion, and considering the likely development of the Site by others if the Site is not acquired by VA, VA concluded that acquiring the Site in the short term, while available, would secure land necessary to meet its long-term cemetery needs. No other sites were offered to VA or identified as available for acquisition.

This EA examines in-depth two alternatives, the Preferred Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative, defined as follows:

• **Preferred Action Alternative**: VA would acquire approximately 35 acres of land contiguous to the west of the SNCA, across Grants Creek, for the future expansion of the SNCA. VA would maintain the land as unimproved until expansion of the SNCA is necessary (approximately 10 to 15 years).

• **No Action Alternative**: Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. Veterans and their families residing in North Carolina would continue to use the SNCA until space is no longer available. In the future, VA would likely seek other land to expand the SNCA, but may not be able to acquire land contiguous with the SNCA. The Site likely would be developed by others for another purpose.

The Preferred Action Alternative effectively provides additional land necessary to meet the long-term cemetery requirements of VA. The No Action Alternative would not enable VA to provide adequate, long-term cemetery facilities in North Carolina. However, the No Action Alternative is assessed in this EA to provide a comparative baseline analysis, as required under the CEQ Regulations.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The approximately 35-acre Site is contiguous to west of the SNCA, across Grants Creek. The Site is primarily unimproved wooded land and includes three cleared utility easements in the eastern (two
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sets of high voltage electrical transmission lines and towers), western (two petroleum pipelines and telecommunications lines), and northern (sanitary sewer) portions. Grants Creek forms the eastern boundary of the Site and a tributary of Grants Creek flows across the northern portion of the Site. A railroad right-of-way forms the southern Site boundary and McCoy Road is located along the western Site boundary.

The Site has been unimproved land since at least 1948. The Site was primarily unimproved farmland and/or vacant land with small wooded areas along Grants Creek, the tributary of Grants Creek, and a wetland area in the eastern portion of the Site from at least 1948 to 1960 and has gradually become reforested since the 1960s. High voltage electrical transmission lines and towers have been present in the eastern portion of the Site since at least 1960 and petroleum pipelines have crossed the western portion of the Site since at least 1965.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Both considered alternatives are evaluated in this EA to determine their potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effect(s) on the physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic aspects of the affected site and its region of influence (ROI). Technical areas evaluated include:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Noise
- Land Use
- Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management
- Socioeconomics
- Community Services
- Solid and Hazardous Materials
- Transportation and Parking
- Utilities
- Environmental Justice

The Preferred Action Alternative would result in the impacts identified throughout Section 3 of this EA. These include potential adverse impacts to aesthetics, air quality, soils, hydrology and water quality, wildlife and habitat, noise, land use, wetlands and floodplains, solid and hazardous materials, transportation, utilities, and environmental justice. With the exception of potential wetlands (Waters of the US) and floodplains impacts, all of these impacts are less-than-significant and would be further reduced through careful implementation of the general Best Management Practices (BMPs), management measures, and compliance with regulatory requirements as identified in Section 5.

The Preferred Action Alternative could result in adverse impacts to wetlands/Waters of the US and floodplains. Grants Creek, which forms the Site’s eastern boundary, and a tributary to Grants Creek that crosses the northern portion of the Site, are Waters of the U.S. The eastern portion of the Site also includes an approximately 2 to 3-acre wetland, that is also likely a Water of the U.S. The eastern portion of the Site along Grants Creek and most of the northern portion of the Site along the tributary are also included within the 100-year floodplain of Grants Creek. These floodplain areas total approximately 15 acres. An approximately 4.3-acre area of the Site along Grants Creek is also subject to a Conservation Easement, which restricts its development and the removal or alteration of vegetation. The 2 to 3-acre Wetland and Conservation Easement area are both located within the 100-year floodplain. VA anticipates that through environmentally sensitive site design and following good engineering practices, potential impacts to Waters of the US (including wetlands), floodplains, and the Conservation Easement, would be avoided, to the extent possible. VA anticipates that the cemetery expansion design would maintain a buffer of undisturbed land around the identified Waters of the US and floodplains, with the exception of constructing a new bridge in the eastern portion of the Site across Grants Creek to connect the existing SNCA with the expanded cemetery area. The bridge would have minor impact on the floodplain and Waters of the U.S. VA would obtain all necessary permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA)), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (Section 401 of the CWA), and City of Salisbury (floodplains), as applicable, for the bridge and any other...
development within the floodplain. By minimizing development within the floodplain areas and by following the permit requirements and implementing general BMPs for activities within the floodplains, Waters of the US/wetlands and floodplain impacts would be less-than-significant. These measures would be fully developed as part of future efforts, concurrent with the cemetery design.

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. Veterans and their families residing in North Carolina would continue to use the SNCA until space is no longer available. The Site likely would be developed for other uses by others. Impacts would result from that new development, the specific nature of which would depend on the development.

The EA also examines the potential cumulative effects of implementing each of the considered alternatives. This analysis finds that the Preferred Action Alternative, with the implementation of the avoidance, management and mitigation (if necessary) measures specified in this EA, would not result in significant adverse cumulative impacts to onsite or regional natural or cultural resources, and would maintain the socioeconomic environment of the area through long-term provision of required cemetery facilities. The No Action Alternative would not produce these potential positive socioeconomic gains. No significant cumulative effects are identified.

AGENCY AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

VA consulted with the following agencies during the preparation of this EA: US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO), North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP), Salisbury Community Planning Services Department (SCPSD), Salisbury Engineering Department (SED), Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department (SPRD), Salisbury Public Services Department (SPSD), and Salisbury – Rowan Utilities Department (SRUD).

VA received responses from several agencies regarding the Proposed Action. The following summarizes that input, which VA used to focus this EA’s analysis:

- The USEPA provided general comments and recommendations regarding the Proposed Action and the preparation of this EA. In addition, the USEPA noted that Waters of the U.S. and jurisdictional wetlands may exist along the Site perimeter and that the Proposed Action should avoid and minimize, to the extent practicable, the placement of fill into jurisdictional Waters of the U.S., which include wetlands and streams. The USEPA also requested copies of the Draft and Final EA.

- The USACE stated that VA should retain the services of a qualified environmental consultant to delineate the extent of any waters and wetlands within the limits of the proposed work area and then plan the subject work to avoid and minimize impacts to those aquatic resources. The USACE also noted that USACE authorization is required for discharges of dredged and/or fill materials into Waters of the U.S. and adjacent wetlands in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

- The USFWS indicated that the nearest documented Northern Long-Eared Bat maternity site or hibernacula is located more than 60 miles from the Site. The USFWS stated that the low probability of an “incidental take” of Northern Long-Eared Bats (a Federally-listed threatened species) occurring as a result of the Proposed Action is discountable and concluded that the Proposed Action is “not likely to adversely affect” Northern Long-Eared Bats. The USFWS stated that the Proposed Action would result in the removal/loss of minimal suitable Northern Long-Eared Bat habitat and the probability of bats using the project area is very low; however, the
USFWS requested that all tree felling be conducted between August 15 and May 15 to further lessen the likelihood of the Proposed Action adversely affecting this species.

The USFWS also stated that, although they do not object to the Proposed Action, they are concerned about potential floodplain and stream impacts. The USFWS indicated that direct and indirect floodplain development should be avoided and recommended naturally vegetated buffers be created and/or maintained along all perennial and intermittent streams.

- The **NCNHP** provided records for rare species, important natural communities, natural areas, and/or conservation/managed areas within one mile of the Site. The NCNHP stated that the eastern approximately 4.3 acres of the Site includes a North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund Easement (Conservation Easement), which restricts development, subdivision, and removal or alteration of vegetation. No rare species, important natural communities, or natural areas were identified within 1,500 feet of the Site by the NCNHP.

- The **NCDEQ Division of Waste Management Superfund Section** identified six properties with known environmental impacts within one mile of the Site and recommended a file review for each of the six properties to ensure that appropriate precautions are incorporated into any construction activities that encounter potentially contaminated soil or groundwater. Based on a review of the available information, these facilities are located at least 1,000 feet from the Site and are unlikely to have impacted the environmental integrity of the Site.

- The **NCDEQ Solid Waste Section** stated that they do not anticipate that the Proposed Action would have an adverse impact on the surrounding community and are not aware of any situations in the community that would impact the project from a solid waste perspective. The Solid Waste Section stated that efforts should be made to minimize the generation of waste, recycle materials, use recycled materials, and dispose of wastes properly.

- The **NCDEQ** indicated that an erosion & sedimentation control plan and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction stormwater permit would be required for the cemetery development. The NCDEQ also stated that a Section 401 Water Quality Certification/Section 404 Permit would likely be required and that potential stream impacts should be determined prior to construction.

- The **North Carolina SHPO** indicated that they conducted a review of the Preferred Action Alternative and are aware of no historic resources that would be affected by the project.

Received agency information and comments have been fully incorporated and addressed in this EA. Copies of relevant correspondence can be found in Appendix A.

VA identified one Native American Tribe (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) as having possible ancestral ties to the Proposed Action's ROI and invited this Tribe to provide input on this Proposed Action. As of the date of this EA, no response has been received from the consulted tribe.

VA, as the Federal proponent of this Proposed Action, will publish and distribute the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period as announced by a Notice of Availability (NOA) published in the Salisbury Post, a local newspaper of general circulation. Review copies will also be made available for public review at the local public library. Based on comments received from the public review of the Draft EA, VA will respond to provided comments within the Final EA and will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), presuming that there are no substantive public comments that would warrant additional analysis.
CONCLUSIONS

The analysis performed in this EA concludes there would be no significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, to the local environment or quality of life associated with the Preferred Action Alternative, provided the general BMPs, management measures, and avoidance/mitigation measures (for wetlands/Waters of the U.S. and floodplains) described in this EA are implemented. This EA’s analysis determines, therefore, that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is unnecessary for the Preferred Action Alternative, and that a FONSI is appropriate.
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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This Section provides the reader with necessary introductory and background information concerning the Proposed Action for proper analytical context; identifies the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action; describes the Federal decision to be made concerning the Proposed Action; and identifies relevant environmental documents. Section 4 provides a summary of public and agency involvement (and key issues and concerns identified). Section 11 identifies Federal, State, and local regulations applicable to the Proposed Action.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s), a Federal executive agency, Proposed Action. VA's Proposed Action is to acquire land adjacent to the Salisbury National Cemetery Annex (SNCA), located at 501 Statesville Boulevard in Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina for the future expansion of the cemetery.

Preparation of this EA is required in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 ([NEPA]; 42 United States Code [USC] 4321 et seq.), the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500-1508), and 38 CFR Part 26 (Environmental Effects of the Department of Veterans Affairs Actions). This EA has been prepared in accordance with VA’s NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (2010).

VA intends to acquire the approximately 35-acre Site in 2018 and maintain the land as unimproved until such date when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary (estimated approximately 10 to 15 years). At that time and as part of the design process, VA will perform a supplemental NEPA analysis to reanalyze and reevaluate the potential effects of the construction and operation of the cemetery at the Site. VA would incorporate the avoidance, management, and mitigation (if necessary) measures identified in this EA into that future design process and supplemental NEPA analysis to minimize potential adverse environmental effects.

This approach is fully consistent with the NEPA and CEQ Regulations. In cases such as these, the CEQ Regulations establish and recommend a “tiered” approach to the environmental impact analysis process: "Agencies are encouraged to tier their environmental (documents)...to focus on the actual issues ripe for decision at each level of environmental review....Tiering may also be appropriate for different stages of actions” (40 CFR Part 1502.20). These regulations specify that such potentialities (i.e., the ultimate construction and operation of the expanded SNCA) should be introduced, but can be deferred to future analyses and documentation when they have “ripened,” or when more complete information becomes available.

As such, this EA assesses the potential effects of acquiring the Site for the ultimate expansion of the SNCA, and preliminarily assesses the effects of the future proposed construction and operation of the cemetery on the Site. Potential effects of the construction and operation of the proposed expanded SNCA on the Site will be reanalyzed and reevaluated in a subsequent NEPA analysis concurrent with Site design, when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary.
This EA examines two alternatives, the Preferred Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative as defined below:

- **Preferred Action Alternative:** Acquire approximately 35 acres of unimproved land contiguous, across Grants Creek, to the west of the SNCA for the future expansion of the SNCA. VA would maintain the land as unimproved until expansion of the SNCA is necessary (approximately 10 to 15 years).

- **No Action Alternative:** Do not implement the Proposed Action as identified (do not acquire land now for the future expansion of the SNCA) and continue to operate the SNCA until such time as additional land is needed. In the future, VA would likely seek other land to expand the SNCA, but may not be able to acquire land contiguous with the SNCA.

### 1.2 Background

VA is proposing to acquire approximately 35 acres of land adjacent to the SNCA, via donation from the Rowan County YMCA. The approximately 35-acre Site is contiguous to west of the SNCA, across Grants Creek. The majority of the Site is unimproved wooded land and includes three cleared utility easements in the eastern, northern, and western portions. Grants Creek is located along the eastern boundary of the Site and a tributary of Grants Creeks flows across the northern portion of the Site. The Site location and features are depicted on Figures 1 through 4.

The original, approximately 12.5-acre Salisbury National Cemetery, located at 202 Government Road, approximately one mile southeast of the SNCA, has reached its capacity for burials. VA established the 40-acre SNCA on land adjacent to the WG Hefner VA Medical Center in 1999. VA estimates adequate space remains for burials at the SNCA for the next 10 to 15 years; however, additional land would be needed in the future. The Site is currently available and has been offered to VA via donation by the Rowan County YMCA. VA would acquire the Site in 2018 and maintain the land as unimproved until such date when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary. At that time and prior to any construction, VA would complete a supplemental NEPA analysis, as part of the expanded cemetery design process.

### 1.3 Purpose and Need

The **purpose** of the Proposed Action is to provide a National Cemetery of sufficient size and capacity to serve the projected needs of Veterans in the Salisbury, North Carolina area.

A larger, expanded SNCA is needed to continue to serve the needs of Veterans and their families in North Carolina. The SNCA is the only National Cemetery in North Carolina that is open for new interments; the three remaining National Cemeteries in the State have reached capacity and are closed for new burials. Although VA estimates adequate space remains at the SNCA for burials for the next 10 to 15 years, additional land would be needed in the future.

One of the primary objectives of the VA burial program is to ensure that burial needs of Veterans and eligible family members are met. NCA further defines this objective on the assumption that the burial needs of a Veteran are met if they have reasonable access to a burial option (whether for caskets, remains or cremated remains, either in-ground or in columbarium) in a National or State Veterans Cemetery within 75 miles of the Veteran’s place of residence. The Proposed Action would provide VA additional capacity needed to meet its burial objectives for eligible Veterans in North Carolina.
1.4 Decision-Making

This EA has been prepared to identify, analyze, and document the potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects associated with VA's proposed acquisition of approximately 35 acres of land adjacent to the SNCA for the future expansion of the cemetery.

VA, as a Federal agency, is required to incorporate environmental considerations into their decision-making process for the actions they propose to undertake. This is done in accordance with the regulations identified in Section 1.1.

In accordance with the NEPA regulations described above, this EA: allows for public input into the Federal decision-making process; provides Federal decision-makers with an understanding of potential environmental effects of their decisions, before making these decisions; identifies measures the Federal decision-maker could implement to reduce potential adverse environmental effects; and documents the NEPA process.

Ultimately, VA will decide, in part based on the analysis presented in this EA and after having taken potential physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects into account, whether VA should implement the Proposed Action, and, as appropriate, carry out management, avoidance, and mitigation (if necessary) measures to reduce effects to the environment.
FIGURE 3
TOPOGRAPHIC LOCATION MAP
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED SNCA EXPANSION
SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

PREPARED FOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON D.C.

TTL PROJECT NO. 15079.02
FIGURE 4
AERIAL LOCATION MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED SNCA EXPANSION
SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

PREPARED FOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON D.C.

TTL PROJECT NO.
15079.02

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED SALISBURY NATIONAL CEMETERY ANNEX EXPANSION
SALISBURY, ROWAN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 2018
1.5 Related Environmental Documents

Related environmental documents include:


SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This Section provides the reader with necessary information regarding the Proposed Action and its alternatives, including those that VA initially considered, but eliminated, and the reasons for eliminating them. The screening criteria and process developed and applied by VA to hone the number of reasonable alternatives are described, providing the reader with an understanding of VA’s rationale in ultimately retaining the Preferred Action Alternative, that best meets VA’s purpose of and need for the Proposed Action, for analysis.

2.2 Proposed Action

VA’s Proposed Action is to acquire land adjacent to the existing SNCA for the future expansion of the cemetery. The future SNCA expansion would provide VA additional capacity to meet the burial needs of Veterans and their families in the region.

Currently, there are no design plans for the proposed SNCA expansion, as VA estimates that adequate space remains for burials for the next 10 to 15 years. However, additional land would be needed in the future. VA would follow the VA’s National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Facilities Design Guide in the SNCA expansion design.

VA would acquire the Site in 2018, via donation from the Rowan County YMCA, and maintain the land as unimproved until such date when the expansion of the SNCA becomes necessary. At that time and prior to any construction, VA would conduct the expanded cemetery design.

Based on the NCA Facility Design Guide, the proposed SNCA expansion would, at minimum, include the following components:

- A road connecting to the existing SNCA via a bridge over Grants Creek. Roadways would be approximately 28 feet wide and would wind throughout the cemetery in harmony with the natural grade and environmental features of the land. Roadways would loop back around the property to maintain a complete, simple traffic pattern around the cemetery. All of the roadways would have a speed limit of 15 miles per hour (mph).

- Permanent committal shelters would be constructed for ceremonies (there are no grave-side ceremonies at National Cemeteries). These shelters would be designed and located where there are scenic views, maximum weather protection, and minimal potential for noise disruption.

- The acquired land would be developed in phases. Each phase would develop enough gravesites and columbarium niches as needed to accommodate approximately 10 years of burial demand. Cremation sites, casket gravesites, and columbarium would be developed in each subsequent phase. The size of each phase, and the total number of phases, is currently unknown.
• Environmentally constrained areas, such as wetlands and floodplains, and areas that are otherwise difficult to develop (e.g., steeper slopes) would be left undeveloped and remain as scenic locations at the cemetery. The utilized portions of the Site would be developed to within 20 feet of the Site boundaries.

• The standard for NCA design is to achieve on-site cut-and-fill soil balance as much as practical. Proposed development would primarily be located in relatively level areas, following natural contours to the extent possible. Areas may be minimally leveled to develop a consistent grade with each phase. Development would include the installation of grave sites, which would consist of gravel base, drainage piping, and pre-placed concrete vault/crypt system. Approximately 20-22 inches of soil would be placed on top of each vault/crypt. This design would provide the most space-efficient option. Each grave site would be marked with a small, upright marble headstone.

• Utilities, including potable and irrigation water, sewer, electric, and other supporting infrastructure would be extended throughout the site, as required.

Prior to construction, VA would obtain all applicable Federal, State, and local permits for the proposed cemetery development from appropriate government authorities. VA would avoid any significant onsite environmental resources through sensitive site design, including avoidance of significant natural resources.

2.3 Alternatives Analysis

The NEPA, CEQ Regulations, and 38 CFR Part 26 require that all reasonable alternatives to be rigorously explored and objectively evaluated. Alternatives that are eliminated from detailed study must be identified along with a brief discussion of the reasons for eliminating them. For purposes of analysis, an alternative was considered “reasonable” only if it would enable VA to accomplish the primary mission of providing a suitable expanded cemetery site that meets the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action, including availability at a price consistent with the fair market value based on an independent appraisal. “Unreasonable” alternatives would not enable VA to meet the purpose of and need for the Proposed Action.

2.3.1 Alternatives Development

The SNCA is the only National Cemetery in North Carolina that is open to new interments and, although VA estimates that adequate space remains for burials for the next 10 to 15 years, additional land, preferably adjacent to the SNCA, would be needed to meet the burial needs of area Veterans in the future. The approximately 35-acre Site is contiguous to the west of the SNCA across Grants Creek has been offered to VA, via donation, by the Rowan County YMCA. After identifying the opportunity to acquire additional land adjacent to the existing SNCA for future expansion, and considering the likely development of the Site by others if the Site is not acquired by VA, VA concluded that acquiring the Site in the short term, while available, would secure land necessary to meet its long-term cemetery needs. No other sites were offered to VA or identified as available for acquisition.

2.3.2 Evaluated Alternatives

This EA examines in-depth two alternatives, the Preferred Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative, defined as follows:

Preferred Action Alternative

VA would acquire approximately 35 acres of land contiguous to the west of the SNCA, across Grants Creek, for the future expansion of the SNCA. VA would maintain the land as
unimproved until expansion of the SNCA is necessary (approximately 10 to 15 years). The Preferred Action Alternative would be implemented as described in Section 2.2.

The Preferred Action Alternative effectively provides additional land necessary to meet the long-term cemetery needs of VA.

**No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action Alternative, the Proposed Action would not be implemented. Veterans and their families residing in North Carolina would continue to use the SNCA until space is no longer available. In the future, VA would likely seek other land to expand the SNCA, but may not be able to acquire land contiguous with the SNCA. The Site likely would be developed for other uses by others in accordance with local zoning and/or planning regimes.

While the No Action Alternative would not satisfy the purpose of or need for the Proposed Action, this alternative was retained to provide a comparative baseline against which to analyze the effects of the Proposed Action, as required under the CEQ Regulations (40 CFR Part 1502.14). The No Action Alternative reflects the *status quo* and serves as a benchmark against which the effects of the Proposed Action can be evaluated.

**2.3.3 Alternatives Eliminated From Detailed Consideration**

As described in Section 2.3.1, VA was presented the opportunity to acquire additional land adjacent to the west of the existing SNCA, via donation from the Rowan County YMCA, for future expansion of the SNCA. VA concluded that acquiring the Site in the short-term, while available, would secure the land necessary to meet its long-term cemetery needs. No other sites were offered to VA or identified as available for acquisition.
SECTION 3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1 Introduction

This Section describes the baseline (existing) physical, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions of the approximately 35-acre proposed SNCA expansion Site, located west of the existing SNCA in Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina (see Figures 1-4) and its general vicinity, with emphasis on those resources potentially affected by the Proposed Action. Appendix C provides photographs, with captions, of the Site and its surroundings. Under each resource area (Sections 3.2 through 3.16), the potential direct and indirect effects of implementing the Preferred Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative are identified. Potential cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 3.17.

In this EA, impacts are identified as either significant, less than significant (i.e., common impacts that would not be of the context or intensity to be considered significant under the NEPA or CEQ Regulations), or negligible impact. As used in this EA, the terms “effects” and “impacts” are synonymous. Where appropriate and clearly discernible, each impact is identified as either adverse or positive.

The CEQ Regulations specify that in determining the significance of effects, consideration must be given to both “context” and “intensity” (40 CFR 1508.27):

- **Context** refers to the significance of an effect to society as a whole (human and national), to an affected region, to affected interests, or to just the locality. In other words, the context measures how far the effect would be “felt.”

- **Intensity** refers to the magnitude or severity of the effect, whether it is beneficial or adverse. Intensity refers to the “punch strength” of the effect within the context involved.

In this EA, the significance of potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects has been determined through a systematic evaluation of each considered alternative in terms of its effects on each individual environmental resource component.

Resource areas considered in this EA are as follows:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Wildlife and Habitat
- Noise
- Land Use
- Floodplains, Wetlands and Coastal Zone Management
- Socioeconomics
- Community Services
- Solid and Hazardous Materials
- Transportation and Parking
- Utilities
- Environmental Justice
3.2 Aesthetics

The approximately 35-acre Site is situated in a mixed use area located approximately 1.75 miles northwest of the center of Salisbury, North Carolina. The Site is primarily unimproved wooded land and includes three cleared utility easements. The eastern utility easement includes two sets of high voltage electrical transmission lines and towers. Grants Creek forms the eastern Site boundary, a railroad right-of-way forms the southern Site boundary, and South McCoy Road is located along the western Site boundary.

The area adjoining to the north of the Site is currently occupied by residences, including single family homes along East Colonial Drive (north of the western portion of the Site) and condominiums (north of the eastern portion of the Site). The area adjoining to the east across Grants Creek is occupied by the SNCA. The area adjoining to the south is currently occupied by unimproved wooded land and railroad tracks, with commercial and light industrial properties farther to the south. The area adjoining to the west beyond South McCoy Road is currently occupied by a residential neighborhood. The surrounding land uses are depicted on Figure 4.

3.2.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

VA’s initial activities, acquisition and passive maintenance of the Site, would produce no aesthetics effects, as no changes to the Site would occur. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site would produce visual changes, including tree clearing, and the installation of roads, maintained grassy burial areas, and possibly some small, single-story structures. VA would develop the Site in concert with the Site’s natural topography and features. The cemetery would be developed in the south-central portion of the Site, which is at a higher elevation than the remainder of the Site. Northern and eastern portions of the Site, located within the 100-year floodplain, would likely remain mostly undeveloped and would provide a natural buffer area around much of the cemetery. No abrupt change to landscape or skyline would occur as a result of the Proposed Action.

Future cemetery expansion plans would be designed to comply, to the extent practicable, with Salisbury Land Development Ordinance (SLDO). By complying with this ordinance, and given that the proposed cemetery would be designed to blend with the existing topography and landscape, no significant adverse aesthetics effects would occur.

3.2.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no adverse aesthetics impacts would result from VA’s actions. Should the Site ultimately be developed for another use by others, aesthetics impacts could result from that changed land use.

3.3 Air Quality

Ambient Air Quality

The ambient air quality in an area can be characterized in terms of whether or not it complies with the primary and secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The Clean Air Act, as amended (CAA and CAAA) requires the USEPA to set NAAQS for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. NAAQS are provided for the following principal pollutants, called “criteria pollutants” (as listed under Section 108 of the CAA):

- Carbon monoxide (CO)
- Lead (Pb)
- Nitrogen oxides (NOx)
Ozone ($O_3$)
Particulate matter (PM), divided into two size classes: -
  Aerodynamic size less than or equal to 10 micrometers (PM$_{10}$) -
  Aerodynamic size less than or equal to 2.5 micrometers (PM$_{2.5}$) -
Sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$)

Areas are designated by the USEPA as “attainment”, “non-attainment”, “maintenance”, or “unclassified” with respect to the NAAQS. Regions in compliance with the standards are designated as “attainment” areas. In areas where the applicable NAAQS are not being met, a “non-attainment” status is designated. Areas that have been classified as "non-attainment", but are now in compliance can be re-designated "maintenance" status if the state completes an air quality planning process for the area.

According to the USEPA Green Book (dated December 2017), portions of Rowan County, including the City of Salisbury, were designated as a marginal non-attainment area for 8-hour ozone (2008) from 2012 to 2014, but reached attainment status and were redesignated as a maintenance area for 8-hour ozone in August 2015. Rowan County is in full attainment of the remaining NAAQS.

Greenhouse Gases (GHG) and Climate Change

In August 2016, the CEQ released its Final Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and the Effects of Climate Change in National Environmental Policy Act Reviews (GHG Guidance Document), which describes how Federal agencies should consider the effects of GHG emissions and climate change in their NEPA decision-making documents. The guidance indicates that Federal agencies should consider both the potential effect of a proposed action on climate change, as indicated by its estimated GHG emissions, and the implications of climate change for the environmental effects of a proposed action. The guidance indicates that the agency analysis should be commensurate with the projected GHG emissions and climate impacts of the proposed action. It recommends that agencies consider 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions on an annual basis as a threshold below which quantitative analysis of GHG is not recommended.

State and Local Regulations

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Division of Air Quality (DAQ) coordinates State-wide air compliance and enforcement activities. DAQ oversees air compliance and enforcement data management and provides required data to the USEPA. Responsibilities also include the coordination of air enforcement Statewide and conducting special projects in air compliance assurance.

The DAQ Compliance and Enforcement Section provides the public and units of local, State, and Federal government with measurements of pollutant concentration levels in the ambient air – ambient air being generally defined as that portion of the atmosphere near ground level and external to buildings or other structures (NCDEQ 2017).

The City of Salisbury and Rowan County do not maintain air pollution ordinances.

Conformity with State Implementation Plans

The General Conformity Provision of the CAA of 1970 (42 USC 7401 et seq.; 40 CFR Parts 50-87) Section 176(c), including the USEPA’s implementation mechanism, the General Conformity Rule (40 CFR Part 51, Subpart W), prohibits the Federal government from conducting, supporting, or approving any actions that do not conform to a USEPA-approved State Implementation Plan (SIP). A SIP is a state's self-authored blueprint for achieving and maintaining compliance with the goals of the CAA. Federal agencies prepare written
Conformity Determinations for Federal actions in or affecting NAAQS non-attainment areas or maintenance areas when the total direct and indirect emissions of non-attainment pollutants (or their precursors) exceed specified thresholds. Conformity with the SIP is demonstrated if project emissions fall below threshold values.

According to the USEPA Green Book, Rowan County reached attainment status for 8-hour ozone (2008) in 2015 and is currently considered a maintenance area for 8-hour ozone. Rowan County is in full attainment of the remaining NAAQS.

### 3.3.2 Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive air quality receptors in the vicinity of the Site include the residences adjoining to the north and west of the Site (see Figure 4). No other sensitive air quality receptors were identified within the immediate Site area.

### 3.3.3 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

During the first 10 to 15 years of Site ownership by VA, the Site would remain undeveloped with no air quality impacts. Future construction and operation of the expanded cemetery would have less-than-significant direct and indirect, short-term and long-term impacts to the air quality environment around the Site. Impacts would include short-term (in phases) increased emissions during the construction of each expansion area of the cemetery and minor long-term increased emissions during the operation of the expanded cemetery.

Construction activities would be performed in accordance with Federal and State air quality requirements. Construction-related emissions are short-term, but may still have adverse impacts on air quality, primarily due to the production of dust. Dust can result from a variety of activities, including excavation, grading, and vehicle travel on paved and unpaved surfaces. Dust from construction can lead to adverse health effects and nuisance concerns, such as reduced visibility on nearby roadways. Implementing dust control measures (BMPs) significantly reduces dust emissions from construction. The amount of dust is dependent on the intensity of the activity, soil type and conditions, wind speed, and dust suppression activities used. Construction-related emissions also include the exhaust from the operation of construction equipment, including diesel particulate matter (DPM). The use of newer construction equipment with emissions controls and minimizing the time that the equipment is idling (BMPs) reduce construction equipment exhaust emissions. Implementation of BMPs, discussed in Section 5.0, would minimize these anticipated less-than-significant adverse, short-term, construction-related, air quality impacts.

During the operation of the expanded cemetery, there would be vehicular air emissions associated with interments at the Site. However, the rate of interments per week is not expected to increase from current levels at the SNCA; therefore, there would be no increase in traffic or associated emissions. As additional areas of the SNCA are developed and utilized, the number of visitors is likely to increase; however, the increased number of vehicle trips associated with visitors is likely to be minimal.

The Site is located in a maintenance area for 8-hour ozone (2008); as such, VA would be subject to the General Conformity Rule of the Clean Air Act. However, the minor air emissions associated with the Proposed Action are anticipated to be well below the de minimis level for 8-hour ozone. As such, a formal Conformity Determination is unlikely to be necessary. VA would secure any required, individual minor air emissions permits from the NCDEQ DAQ, as appropriate, and based on the Site design.

The Proposed Action would have a negligible contribution to long-term global climate change. Direct GHG emissions from the short-term use of vehicles and mechanical equipment during construction activities would cease after the construction has been completed. Indirect GHG
emissions from the minor increased vehicle traffic to and from the expanded cemetery are also anticipated to be less-than-significant. GHG emissions as a result of Proposed Action construction and operational activities are anticipated to be well below the threshold of 25,000 metric tons of CO2 annually.

3.3.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no air quality impacts associated with VA’s Proposed Action would occur. Should the Site ultimately be developed for another use, air quality impacts could result from that changed land use, and would depend upon the nature of the development.

3.4 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are the physical evidence of our heritage. Cultural resources include: historic properties as defined in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), cultural items as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), archeological resources as defined in the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), sacred sites as defined in EO 13007 to which access is provided under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), and collections as defined in 36 CFR Part 79, Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Collections. Requirements set forth in NEPA, NHPA, ARPA, NAGPRA, AIRFA, 36 CFR Part 79, EO 13007, and Presidential Memorandum on Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments define the basis of VA’s compliance responsibilities for management of cultural resources. Regulations applicable to VA’s management of cultural resources include those promulgated by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and the National Park Service (NPS).

3.4.1 Architectural and Archaeological Resources

Row 10 Historic Preservation Solutions (Row 10) conducted an Initial Cultural Resources Impact Prediction (ICRIP) for the proposed expansion of the SNCA at the Site in June 2017. The ICRIP included a walking survey of the Site, a limited pedestrian survey and windshield survey of adjacent areas within one mile of the Site, and a records and literature search of North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) files for the Site and immediate surrounding area.

The ICRIP indicated that the Site is undeveloped and does not possess any buildings, objects, or structures that are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The ICRIP identified one NRHP-listed building, two properties eligible for listing in the NRHP, and one potentially eligible historic district in the Site vicinity. The NRHP-listed Grubb-Sigmon-Weisiger House is located approximately 0.25-mile north of the Site, the NRHP-eligible WG Hefner VAMC is located approximately 0.35-mile east of the Site, and the NRHP-eligible SNCA is located east of the Site. In addition, the ICRIP noted that the unevaluated, but potentially NRHP-eligible Milford Hills neighborhood district, is located north and west of the Site. The ICRIP indicated that the SHPO has no records of previous archaeological investigations at the Site. Previous investigations identified two archaeological sites within one mile of the Site, but neither was determined to be eligible for further investigation for inclusion in the NRHP. The ICRIP concluded that the Proposed Action would have no adverse effect on the identified listed or eligible for listing historic properties.

In October 2017, VA submitted the findings of the ICRIP to the SHPO for review. In a letter dated November 16, 2017, the SHPO stated that they conducted a review of the Preferred Action Alternative and that they were aware of no historic resources that would be affected by the project.
3.4.2 Native American Consultation/Coordination

For all Federal proposed actions, Federal agencies are required to consult with Federally-recognized Native American Tribes in accordance with the NEPA, the NHPA, the NAGPRA, and EO 13175. One Federally-recognized tribe, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, was identified as having possible ancestral ties to the Site area by the Native American Consultation Database (NACD), and was invited by VA to participate in the EA process as a Sovereign Nation per EO 13175. A coordination and consultation letter was sent to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in November 2017 (Appendix B). As of the date of this EA, no response has been received from the tribe.

3.4.3 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Based on the findings and conclusions of the ICRIP and the SHPO’s review of the project, no adverse impacts to NRHP-listed or eligible historic properties would occur as a result of the Proposed Action. Cultural resources impacts would be less-than-significant.

3.4.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no cultural resources impacts by VA would occur. No significant cultural resources were identified at the Site. As such, should the Site be developed by others, no significant adverse effects to cultural resources would likely occur.

3.5 Geology and Soils

A review of the Salisbury and Rowan Mills, North Carolina United States Geological Survey (USGS) Topographic Quadrangles (both dated 2016) indicates that surficial topography at the Site is moderately sloping with elevations ranging from approximately 690 feet above mean sea level (amsl) in the south-central portion to approximately 650 feet amsl in the eastern and northern portions. A higher elevation ridge runs from the south-central portion of the Site to the northeast, most of the way across the Site. The ridge slopes both east towards Grants Creek and north towards the tributary of Grants Creek.

According to A Tapestry of Time and Terrain, published by the USGS and dated 2000, Rowan County is located in the Piedmont Uplands physiographic section of the Piedmont physiographic province of the Appalachian Highlands physiographic region. The Piedmont Uplands consist of northeast-southwest trending belts of Precambrian to Paleozoic metamorphic rocks that are highly deformed and bordered by faults. The most common rock types are slate, phyllite, marble, quartzite, greenstone, schist, amphibolite, and gneiss.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, the Site contains five soil types identified as Chewacla loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded (northern and eastern portions), Cecil sandy clay loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded (north-central and east-central portions), Cecil sandy clay loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded (south-central portion), Warne loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded (southwest corner), and Urban land (southern boundary). Site soils are illustrated in Figure 5.

Professional Service Industries, Inc. (PSI) conducted a geotechnical investigation of the Site in June 2017. The geotechnical investigation included 25 soil borings across the Site to planned depths of approximately 15 feet below ground surface (bgs). Soils beneath the topsoil layer generally consisted of clayey or sandy silt. Soils were typically more clayey beneath the topsoil and coarser grained (silt, sandy silt, silty sand) at greater depths. Weathered bedrock was encountered in two soil boings (in the western portion of the Site) at depths of approximately 9 and 14 feet bgs.
Rowan County, North Carolina is located in an area with minimal estimated risk for earthquakes. Central North Carolina does not have active faults and is not located on a tectonic plate boundary (USGS Earthquake Hazards Program, 2017).

### 3.5.1 Prime and Unique Farmland Soils

Prime and Unique Farmlands are regulated in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (7 USC 4201, et seq.) to ensure preservation of agricultural lands that are of statewide or local importance. Soils designated as prime farmland are capable of producing high yields of various crops when managed using modern farming methods. Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer, pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion. Unique farmlands are also capable of sustaining high crop yields and have special combinations of favorable soil and climate characteristics that support specific high-value foods or crops.

According to the USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey, the Chewacla loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, frequently flooded (northern and eastern portions of the Site) is characterized as prime farmland, if drained and either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season. The Cecil sandy clay loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes, moderately eroded (north-central and east-central portions) is characterized as farmland of statewide importance. The Cecil sandy clay loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, moderately eroded (south-central portion), is characterized as prime farmland. The Warne loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded (southwest corner) is characterized as prime farmland, if drained. The remaining Site soils (urban land) are not characterized as prime farmland. Site soils are illustrated in Figure 5.

### 3.5.2 Soil Erosion and Stormwater Management

Section 402 of the Clean Water Act established the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program to limit pollutant discharges into streams, rivers, and bays. In North Carolina, the NCDEQ Division of Energy Mineral, and Land Resources (DEMLR) administers the program. Construction projects involving clearing, grading or excavation that result in an area of disturbance of one or more acres, and activities that result in the disturbance of less than one acre if it is part of a larger common plan of development or sale must obtain and comply with the General Permit to Discharge Stormwater under NPDES for Construction Activities, including the development and implementation of a site-specific Erosion and Sedimentation Control (E&SC) Plan. The E&SC outlines the steps that an operator must take to comply with the permit, including water quality and quantity requirements, to reduce pollutants in the stormwater runoff from the construction site. The E&SC Plan also specifies all potential pollutant sources that could enter stormwater leaving the construction site and covers methods used to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff during and after construction.

The City of Salisbury operates under a NPDES Phase 2 Permit that allows for discharge into Grants Creek and other surface waters and maintains authority to issue NPDES permits within these watersheds. The City Engineer (Stormwater Services Division) reviews all development plans for adequacy of stormwater management design and approval of NPDES permits. Regulation of E&SC in Salisbury’s jurisdiction is the responsibility of Rowan County, which requires the submission and approval of an E&SC Plan to Rowan County and the Rowan County Soil and Water Conservation District (RCSWCD) in accordance with Chapter 18 (Soil Erosion and Sedimentation) of the Rowan County Code of Ordinances (RCOO). The City of Salisbury also maintains E&SC through Section 9.3 (Sedimentation and Erosion Control) of Chapter 9 (Environmental Protection) of the Salisbury Land Development Ordinance (SLDO).
3.5.3 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

The Preferred Action Alternative is anticipated to result in less-than-significant impacts to geology and soils. No significant changes to topography or drainage are expected at the Site. The proposed cemetery expansion would be designed in concert with the natural topography and current drainage patterns. Paved areas would be designed to drain to a suitable, on-site, properly engineered and designed stormwater management system.

During the construction of the expanded cemetery, less-than-significant, direct and indirect, short-term soil erosion and sedimentation (E&S) impacts would be possible as roads, grave sites, and other cemetery components are constructed. Construction activities would disturb the soil surface. Exposure of the soils has the potential to result in discharges of sediment-laden runoff to Grants Creek (and its tributary). However, such potential adverse E&S effects would be prevented through utilization of appropriate BMPs as described in Section 5, including the development and implementation of the E&SC Plan and adherence to the terms of the NPDES permit. Permit standards would be adhered to during all construction activities.

No long-term E&S impacts would be anticipated due to the nature of the Proposed Action. There would be limited impervious surfaces associated with the cemetery development and long-term soil erosion impact would be managed by maintaining stormwater features associated with the proposed cemetery. On-site stormwater retention will be included in the expanded cemetery design.

The majority of the Site contains prime farmland, prime farmland if drained, and farmland of statewide importance soils. The Proposed Action would irreversibly convert these areas into nonagricultural use. As such, the Proposed Action is subject to the FPPA requirements. VA would be required to complete, in conjunction with the NRCS, a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (Form AD-1006). This process evaluates the relative value of the Site as farmland compared to other farmland in the area and assesses the Site by examining the Site, surrounding areas, and the programs and policies of the State or local government agency. Based on the characteristics of the Site and surrounding area, the proposed cemetery development is anticipated to have a less-than-significant adverse impact on farmland soils. The Site has not been farmed since the 1960s.

3.5.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to soils, topography, or geology by VA would occur. Should the Site be developed by others for another use, soils, topography, or geology impacts could result from that changed land use, and would depend upon the nature of the development.
FIGURE 5
SOILS MAP

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED SNCA EXPANSION
SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

PREPARED FOR
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TTL PROJECT NO. 15079.02
3.6 Hydrology and Water Quality

3.6.1 Surface Waters

The Site is located in the Grants Creek local watershed and is included in the larger Lower Yadkin sub-watershed of the Yadkin – Pee Dee River watershed. Grants Creek forms the eastern Site boundary; a tributary to Grants Creek is located in the northern portion of the Site. The Site slopes from an area of high elevation in the south-central portion of the Site to the east towards Grants Creek and to the north towards the tributary of Grants Creek.

Grants Creek flows generally north and northeast to the Yadkin River, located approximately 4 miles northeast of the Site. The tributary flows east across the northern portion of the Site to Grants Creek. Both Grants Creek and the tributary are considered to be Waters of the US under the jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). In addition, although not directly connected to Grants Creek, an approximately 2 to 3-acre forested wetland area in the eastern portion of the Site is located within the boundaries of the Grants Creek floodplain and would also likely be under the jurisdiction of the USACE. Refer to Section 3.10 for additional information pertaining to Waters of the US and wetlands.

The 2014 North Carolina Water Quality Assessment Integrated Report, issued by the NCDEQ, indicates the section of Grants Creek that flows adjacent to the Site has a category rating of 2 (supporting beneficial uses) and is classified as Class C – waters protected for uses as secondary recreation, fishing, wildlife and fish consumption, but not primary water contact recreation (Class B) or drinking water.

3.6.2 Groundwater

According to the Groundwater Atlas of the United States, the Site is underlain by crystalline rock aquifers included in the Piedmont aquifer system. According to Rowan County, the Site is not located in a Watershed Protection Overlay district.

Groundwater was encountered in 3 of the 25 Site geotechnical soil borings, at depths ranging from 9.5 to 12 feet bgs. Groundwater stabilized in these borings at depths of approximately 5.5 to 7.5 feet bgs. All of three of these borings were located near the tributary to Grants Creek or the Grants Creek floodplain.

3.6.3 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

The Preferred Action Alternative could result in direct or indirect adverse impacts to Grants Creek and/or its tributary as a result of soil erosion and sedimentation. However, as discussed in Section 3.5, VA would develop and implement a E&SC Plan, including an on-site stormwater management system. Soil erosion and sedimentation impacts would be less-than-significant.

VA anticipates that through environmentally sensitive site design and following good engineering practices, as well as consultation with pertinent Federal, State, and local regulatory agencies, potential impacts to Grants Creek and its tributary would be avoided or managed to less-than-significant levels. These surface waters, Waters of the US, would be avoided to the extent possible. VA anticipates that the cemetery expansion would include a buffer of undisturbed land around these surface waters, with the exception of constructing a new bridge across Grants Creek to connect the existing SNCA to the cemetery expansion area. VA would obtain a Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) permit from the USACE and a Section 401 of the CWA permit from the NCDENR Division of Water Resources (DWR) for the anticipated bridge and any other applicable Site development that would impact Waters of the U.S. Refer to Section 3.10 for additional information pertaining to Waters of the US and wetlands.
It is not anticipated that groundwater would be impacted by the proposed expanded cemetery. Based on the geotechnical investigation, groundwater at the Site is localized near the tributary to Grants Creek and the Grants Creek floodplain. Groundwater was not encountered in the southern and central portions of the Site where grave sites would be developed. Therefore, no significant dewatering is likely. The cemetery would be irrigated with water obtained from the municipal water system. As such, impacts to groundwater are anticipated to be less-than-significant.

Based on standard modern burial practices, it is unlikely that embalming fluid or other decomposition byproducts would be released into the soil and/or groundwater. The standard NCA design incorporates (for full casket burials) sub-surface concrete crypts, an entire section of which is installed during site construction. Using this technique, the caskets are not buried directly in the soil, but rather set in a pre-placed concrete crypt (established turf and soil temporarily removed, crypt lid removed, casket placed, followed by the reverse process to complete). Modern embalming fluids are markedly less toxic as the primary active ingredients are no longer arsenic based. Additionally, as selection of either cremation interment or columbaria placement increase, the potential for soil or groundwater contamination commensurately decreases as no embalming fluids are used.

### 3.6.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to hydrology or water quality by VA would occur. Should the Site be developed by others for another use, impacts would result from that new development, and would depend upon the nature of the development.

### 3.7 Wildlife and Habitat

#### 3.7.1 Vegetation and Wildlife

The Site was mostly cleared/agricultural land in the 1940s and 1950s that has become increasingly wooded since the 1960s. Other than within the three utility easements that cross the Site, the Site is predominantly wooded. The utility easements are heavily overgrown with herbaceous and scrub/shrub vegetation. The vegetation communities at the Site are capable of supporting a variety of wildlife species associated with mostly undisturbed natural areas.

The City of Salisbury maintains vegetation through Chapter 8 (Landscaping) of the Salisbury Land Development Ordinance (SLDO), including applicability and requirements regarding Landscape Plans, tree protection, preservation, and replacement, and landscaping standards and specifications.

#### 3.7.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

As part of the preparation of this EA, the USFWS and various State natural resources’ agencies were contacted to identify any potential for the presence of State or Federally-listed protected species on or in the vicinity of the Site. According to the USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) internet application, one Federally-listed endangered plant species (Schweinitz’s Sunflower) and one Federally-listed threatened mammal species (Northern Long-Eared Bat) were identified for the vicinity of the Site; however, no critical habitat was identified for either species in the Site vicinity.

According to the Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS) and internet-based NatureServer Species Explorer, Schweinitz’s Sunflowers are typically found in full to partial sun in areas with poor soils, such as thin clays that vary from wet to dry. Based on the identified habitat requirements, Schweinitz’s Sunflowers are not likely to occur at the Site. The ECOS and NatureServer Species Explorer indicated that Northern Long-Eared Bats require large tracts of intact wooded land in proximity to water resources.
According to the USFWS, the nearest documented Northern Long-Eared Bat maternity site or hibernacula is located more than 60 miles from the Site. The USFWS stated that there is a low probability of an “incidental take” of Northern Long-Eared Bats occurring as a result of the Proposed Action and concluded that the Proposed Action is “not likely to adversely affect” Northern Long-Eared Bats. The USFWS stated that the Proposed Action would result in the removal/loss of minimal suitable Northern Long-Eared Bat habitat and the probability of bats using the project area is very low; however, the USFWS requested that all tree felling be conducted between August 15 and May 15 to further lessen the likelihood of the Proposed Action adversely affecting this species.

The USFWS also stated that although they do not object to the Proposed Action, they are concerned about potential floodplain and stream impacts. The USFWS indicated that direct and indirect floodplain development should be avoided and recommended naturally vegetated buffers be maintained along all perennial streams and intermittent streams.

The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) provided records for rare species, important natural communities, natural areas, and/or conservation/managed areas within one mile of the Site. The NCNHP stated that the eastern approximately 4.3 acres of the Site includes North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund Easement (Conservation Easement), which restricts development, subdivision, and removal/alteration of vegetation. No rare species, important natural communities, or natural areas were identified within 1,500 feet of the Site by the NCNHP.

Information from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) indicated that the Rowan County YMCA (current Site owner) agreed to set aside the eastern approximately 4.3 acres of the Site, all within the Grants Creek floodplain, as a Conservation Easement to provide habitat for native plants and animals, to improve and maintain water quality, and to control runoff of sediment. The Conservation Easement limits activities on the approximately 4.3 acres to passive recreational use.

### 3.7.3 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and the initial 10 to 15-year passive management of the Site by VA would produce no direct wildlife and habitat effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site would have adverse effects on wildlife and habitat as trees are cleared and the Site is developed with the cemetery. However, based on input from the USFWS and NCNHP, Federal and State-protected species or their critical habitats are not likely to occur at the Site; therefore, wildlife impacts would be less-than-significant. In addition, as BMPs, VA would conduct seasonal tree clearing and would maintain natural buffers along Grants Creek and its tributary as recommended by the USFWS.

The eastern approximately 4.3 acres of the Site, located within the Grants Creek floodplain, has been set aside as a Conservation Easement to provide habitat for native plants and animals, to improve and maintain water quality, and to control runoff of sediment. Other than the construction of a bridge over Grants Creek that would connect the current SNCA to the proposed expanded cemetery, VA does not plan to develop or significantly alter the Conservation Easement area.

### 3.7.4 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by VA would occur. No impacts to vegetation or wildlife habitat would occur. Should the Site ultimately be developed by others for another use, impacts would result from that new development, and would depend upon the nature of the development.
3.8 Noise

The existing noise environment around the Site is relatively quiet with limited traffic noise from South McCoy Road and Old Wilkesboro Road. In addition, there is infrequent, but notable, noise associated with railroad tracks located adjoining to the south of the Site. No other notable noise-generating sources are present in the immediate vicinity of the Site. As such, the Site's noise environment can be characterized as similar to that of a suburban residential area.

The City of Salisbury maintains a noise ordinance (Article III of the SCO) that limits noise associated with construction activities to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. (Monday through Saturday) and no noise associated with construction activities on Sundays.

3.8.1 Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive noise receptors in the ROI of the Site include the residences adjoining to the north of the Site and residences west of the Site across South McCoy Road. The existing SNCA is also a sensitive noise receptor, but is owned and operated by VA.

3.8.2 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and the initial passive management of the Site by VA would produce no direct noise effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site would produce noise effects, as discussed below.

Based on the proposed future use of the Site as a cemetery, no significant long-term noise impacts would be anticipated. The Proposed Action would have short-term impacts to the existing noise environment during the cemetery expansion construction activities. Noise generating sources during construction activities would be associated primarily with standard construction equipment and construction equipment transportation. These increased noise levels could directly affect the neighboring area, including the residential properties located adjacent to the north and west of the Site.

Construction activities generate noise by their very nature and are highly variable, depending on the type, number, and operating schedules of equipment. Construction projects are usually executed in stages, each having its own combination of equipment and noise characteristics and magnitudes. Construction activities are expected to be typical of other similar construction projects and would include mobilization, site preparation, excavation, placing foundations, utility development, heavy equipment movement, and paving roadways.

The most prevalent noise source at typical construction sites is the internal combustion engine. General construction equipment using engines includes, but is not limited to: heavy, medium, and light equipment such as excavators; roller compactors; front-end loaders; bulldozers; graders; backhoes; dump trucks; water trucks; concrete trucks; pump trucks; utility trucks; cranes; and lube, oil, and fuel trucks.

Peak noise levels vary at a given location based on line of sight, topography, vegetation, and atmospheric conditions. In addition, peak noise levels would be variable and intermittent because each piece of equipment would only be operated when needed. However, peak construction noise levels would be considerably higher than the existing low noise levels. Relatively high peak noise levels in the range of 93 to 108 dBA (decibels, A-weighted scale) would occur in the active cemetery construction areas, decreasing with distance from the construction areas. Table 1 presents peak noise levels that could be expected from a range of construction equipment during proposed construction activities.
Generally speaking, peak noise levels within 50 feet of active construction areas and material transportation routes would most likely be considered “striking” or “very loud”, comparable to peak crowd noise at an indoor sports arena. At approximately 200 feet, peak noise levels would be loud - approximately comparable to a garbage disposal or vacuum cleaner at 10 feet. At 0.25 mile, construction noise levels would generally be quiet enough so as to be considered insignificant, although transient noise levels may be noticeable at times.

Combined peak noise levels, or worst-case noise levels when several loud pieces of equipment are used in a small area at the same time as described in Table 1, are expected to occur rarely, if ever, during the project. However, under these circumstances, peak noise levels could exceed 90 dBA within 200 feet of the construction area, depending on equipment being used.

Although noise levels would be quite loud in the immediate area, the intermittent nature of peak construction noise levels would not create the steady noise level conditions for an extended duration that could lead to hearing damage. Construction workers would follow standard Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements to prevent hearing damage.

Areas that could be most affected by noise from construction include those closest to the construction footprint, including the residential areas located north and west of the Site. The majority of the northern portion of the Site is located within the 100-year floodplain and would likely remain undeveloped, which would provide a natural noise buffer for the majority of the nearby residences. Indoor noise levels would be expected to be 15-25 decibels lower than outdoor levels.

Indirect impacts include noise from workers commuting and material transport. Area traffic volumes and noise levels would increase slightly as construction employees commute to and from work at the project area, and delivery and service vehicles (including trucks of various sizes) transit to and from the Site. Because trucks are present during most phases of construction and leave and enter the Site via local thoroughfares, truck noises tend to impact more people over a wider area. For this Proposed Action, persons in the residential areas near the Site would experience temporary increases in traffic noise during day-time hours. These effects are not considered significant because they would be temporary and similar to existing traffic noise levels in the area.

Table 1. Peak Noise Levels Expected from Typical Construction Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Peak Noise Level (dBA, attenuated)</th>
<th>Distance from Source (feet)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Truck</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>84-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dump Truck</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Mixer</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack-hammer</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scraper</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulldozer</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>87-102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generator</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crane</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>75-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loader</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>73-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grader</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>88-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pile driver</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forklift</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worst-Case Combined Peak Noise Level (Bulldozer, Jackhammer, Scraper)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined Peak Noise Level</th>
<th>Distance from Source (feet)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tipler 1976
Proposed operational activities at the expanded SNCA would include vehicle traffic to and from the Site, and use of powered equipment for grave site preparation, maintenance, and upkeep, and periodic (during day-time hours) ceremonial rifle discharges. These activities would not produce excessive noise, and would not produce a significant adverse noise impact on surrounding land uses. The facility would be a relatively quiet cemetery.

3.8.3 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the noise environment surrounding the Site would not be altered by VA. Should the Site be developed by others for another use, noise impacts would occur, the nature of which would depend on the Site development.

3.9 Land Use

The 35-acre Site is primarily unimproved wooded land and includes three cleared utility easements in the eastern (with two sets of high voltage electrical transmission lines and towers), western (two petroleum pipelines and telecommunication lines), and northern (sanitary sewer) portions of the Site. Grants Creek forms the eastern Site boundary, a railroad right-of-way forms the southern Site boundary, and McCoy Road is located along the western Site boundary. A tributary of Grants Creek crosses the northern portion of the Site.

The Site has been unimproved land since at least 1948. The Site was primarily unimproved farmland and/or vacant land with small wooded areas along Grants Creek, the tributary of Grants Creek, and a wetland area in the eastern portion of the Site from at least 1948 to 1960, and has gradually become reforested since the 1960s. High voltage electrical transmission lines and towers have been present in the eastern portion of the Site since at least 1960 and petroleum pipelines have crossed the western portion of the Site since at least 1965.

The area adjoining to the north of the Site is currently occupied by residences, including single family homes along East Colonial Drive (north of the western portion of the Site) and condominiums (north of the eastern portion of the Site). The area adjoining to the east across Grants Creek is occupied by the SNCA. The area adjoining to the south is currently occupied by unimproved wooded land and railroad tracks, with commercial and light industrial properties farther to the south. The area adjoining to the west beyond South McCoy Road is currently occupied by a residential neighborhood. Surrounding land uses are depicted on Figure 5.

Information obtained from the Salisbury Community Planning Services Department indicates the Site is currently zoned General Residential (northern portion) and Highway Business (southern portion). According to the Salisbury, North Carolina Land Development Ordinance, cemeteries are a permitted use in the Highway Business zoning district, but are not a permitted use in the General Residential zoning district. According to the Land Development Ordinance, applications for zoning variances are submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals for land uses not permitted within specific zoning districts.

The properties adjoining to the north and west of the Site are currently zoned General Residential (GRG) and Urban Residential (UR12). The property adjoining to the east (the SNCA) is zoned Hospital Services. The properties adjoining to the south are currently zoned Highway Business. The current zoning classifications of the Site and the surrounding area are depicted on Figure 6.

The eastern approximately 4.3 acres of the Site (within the Grants Creek floodplain) includes a Conservation Easement to provide habitat for native plants and animals, to improve and maintain water quality, and to control runoff of sediment. The Conservation Easement limits activities on the approximately 4.3 acres to passive recreational use.
3.9.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

The Preferred Action Alternative would have land use effects as the Site is converted from unimproved, mostly wooded land to a cemetery in approximately 10 to 15 years.

The proposed cemetery is a permitted use for the Highway Business district (southern portion of the Site), but is not a permitted use for the General Residential zoning district (northern portion of the Site). As a Federal agency, VA is not subject to local zoning regulations. However, the future use of the Site as a cemetery would also be generally consistent with the current surrounding land uses, including the adjoining SNCA.

The eastern approximately 4.3 acres of the Site, associated with Grants Creek floodplain, includes a Conservation Easement. The Conservation Easement limits activities on the approximately 4.3 acres to passive recreational use. Rowan County YMCA indicated that they will work with CWMTF to remove/modify the use restrictions of the Conservation Easement prior to transferring the Site to VA. Cemetery development within the Conservation Easement area would be avoided to the extent possible. VA anticipates development activities in the Conservation Easement area would be limited to the construction of a bridge connecting the existing SNCA to the proposed cemetery. Land use impacts associated with the proposed expanded cemetery development would be less-than-significant.

3.9.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no land use impacts due to VA’s Proposed Action would occur. The Site would likely be developed by others in accordance with local zoning regulations. The land use impacts (and associated community benefits) of any future proposed development would be dependent upon the use proposed.
FIGURE 6
CURRENT ZONING MAP

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES
3.10  Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management

3.10.1 Wetlands

This section discusses wetlands at or near the Site and surface waters (streams) as they pertain to wetlands. Additional information regarding surface waters is provided in Section 3.6.

The USFWS National Wetland Inventory (NWI) Online Wetland Mapper identified an approximately 2 to 3-acre forested wetland area in the eastern portion of the Site. In addition, Grants Creek along the eastern Site boundary and the tributary of Grants Creek crossing the north portion of the Site were identified as riverine systems on the NWI map. The locations of the surface water features are depicted on Figure 7.

Grants Creek flows generally north and northeast to the Yadkin River, located approximately 4 miles northeast of the Site. Grants Creek and its tributary that crosses the northern portion of the Site are considered to be Waters of the U.S. under the jurisdiction of the USACE. In addition, although not directly connected to Grants Creek, the forested wetland area in the eastern portion of the Site is located within the boundaries of the Grants Creek floodplain and would also likely be under the jurisdiction of the USACE.

The USACE recommended that a qualified environmental consultant should delineate the extent of any Waters of the US and wetlands within the limits of the Site and that VA should avoid and minimize impacts to those aquatic resources during the implementation of the Proposed Action. The USACE also stated that USACE authorization is required for discharges of dredged and/or fill materials into Waters of the US and adjacent wetlands in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

3.10.2 Floodplains

According to available FEMA floodplain mapping (FIRM Map Number 3710575000J, dated June 16, 2009), and the ALTA survey completed by R.B. Pharr & Associates for VA in June 2017, the eastern portion of the Site along Grants Creek and most of the northern portion of the Site along the tributary are located within the 100-year floodplain of Grants Creek. These floodplain areas total approximately 15 acres, approximately 4 acres of which are located within the Grants Creek floodway. Areas adjacent to the north and east of the Site are also included in the Grants Creek Floodway Area and/or 100-year floodplain. Floodplains are depicted on Figure 8.

The USFWS stated that direct and indirect floodplain development should be avoided. USFWS recommended that natural vegetation riparian buffers should be created and/or maintained along streams and within floodplains.

The City of Salisbury maintains a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Appendix C of the Salisbury Land Development Ordinance), which requires an approved Floodplain Development Permit for any development in identified Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA).
FIGURE 7
NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY MAP

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FIGURE 8  FLOODPLAINS MAP
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED SNCA EXPANSION
SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

TTL PROJECT NO. 15079.02

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PROPOSED SALISBURY NATIONAL CEMETERY ANNEX EXPANSION
SALISBURY, ROWAN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 2018
3.10.3 Coastal Zone

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) was promulgated to control nonpoint pollution sources that affect coastal water quality. The CZMA of 1990, as amended (16 USC 1451 et seq.) encourages States to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore or enhance valuable natural coastal resources such as wetlands, floodplains, estuaries, beaches, dunes, barrier islands, and coral reefs, as well as the fish and wildlife using those habitats. According to the North Carolina Division of Coastal Zone Management (DCZM), Salisbury, Rowan County is not located within a designated coastal zone (DCZM 2017).

3.10.4 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

The Site is not located within a designated coastal zone; the Preferred Action Alternative would have no coastal zone management effects. The development of the cemetery at the Site could impact wetlands/Waters of the US and floodplains, as discussed below.

Grants Creek flows along the eastern site boundary and a tributary to Grants Creek flows across the northern portion of the Site. Approximately 15 acres of the eastern and northern portions of the Site are located within the 100-year floodplain associated with Grants Creek. An approximately 2 to 3-acre forested wetland area is located within the 100-year floodplain in the eastern portion of the Site. VA anticipates that through environmentally sensitive site design and following good engineering practices, potential impacts to wetlands/Waters of the U.S. and floodplains would be avoided, to the extent possible. VA anticipates that the cemetery expansion design would maintain a buffer of undisturbed land around the identified Waters of the US and floodplains, with the exception of constructing a new bridge in the eastern portion of the Site across Grants Creek to connect the existing SNCA with the expanded cemetery area. The bridge would have minor impact on the floodplain and Waters of the U.S. VA would obtain all necessary permits from the USACE (Section 404 of the CWA), NCDEQ (Section 401 of the CWA), and City of Salisbury (floodplains), as applicable. By minimizing development within the floodplain areas and by following the permit requirements and implementing general BMPs for activities within the floodplains, Waters of the U.S./wetland and floodplain impacts would be less-than-significant. These measures would be fully developed as part of future efforts, concurrent with the cemetery design.

3.10.5 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no impacts to wetlands or floodplains by VA would occur. If the Site were to be developed by others, impacts from that new development could occur, the nature of which would depend on the development plans.

3.11 Socioeconomics

The following subsections identify and describe the socioeconomic environment of Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina. Presented data provide an understanding of the socioeconomic factors that have developed the area. Socioeconomic areas of discussion include the local demographics of the area, regional and local economy, local housing, and local recreation activities. Data used in preparing this section were collected from the 2010 Census of Population and Housing (US Census Bureau 2010), subsequent US Census Bureau data, and the US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

3.11.1 Demographics

Salisbury’s estimated population in 2016 was 34,001 citizens. Rowan County’s estimated population in 2016 was 139,933 citizens. The estimated population total for North Carolina was 10,146,788 residents in 2016. Population totals for Salisbury, Rowan County, and the State of North Carolina have increased from 1990 to 2016 (see Table 2).
Table 2. Population Totals for Salisbury, Rowan County, and North Carolina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2016 estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>6,628,637</td>
<td>8,049,313</td>
<td>10,146,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan County</td>
<td>110,605</td>
<td>130,335</td>
<td>139,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Salisbury</td>
<td>24,398</td>
<td>30,582</td>
<td>34,001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Baseline information identified that Salisbury has a higher African-American population and a slightly higher Hispanic or Latino population than that of Rowan County and the State of North Carolina (Table 3).

Table 3. Regional Population by Race and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>All Individuals</th>
<th>White (%)</th>
<th>African-American (%)</th>
<th>American Indian and Alaska Native (%)</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander (%)</th>
<th>Other Race (%)</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino* (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>10,146,788</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan County</td>
<td>139,933</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>34,001</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The six percentages reported by the US Census Bureau for each geographic region may total more than 100% because individuals may report more than one race.

* People of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race.


According to the 2010 US Census statistics, Salisbury and Rowan County have a lower percentages of persons with bachelor’s degrees or higher than the State of North Carolina as a whole. Educational attainment data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Educational Attainment: Salisbury, Rowan County and North Carolina

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Salisbury (%)</th>
<th>Rowan County (%)</th>
<th>North Carolina (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (incl. equivalency)</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>85.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.11.2 Employment and Income

According to City-Data.com (http://www.city-data.com/), the region’s employment is primarily centered on health care, and social services (22 percent), manufacturing (12.5 percent), retail trade (11.5 percent), educational services (10 percent), accommodation and food services (7.5 percent), construction (3.5 percent), and finance and insurance (3 percent).

Unemployment rates for Salisbury, Rowan County, and North Carolina are similar, as depicted in Table 5. Median household and per capita incomes for Salisbury and Rowan County residents are lower than that of the rest of North Carolina. The City of Salisbury has a higher population below the poverty level than that of Rowan County and North Carolina as a whole.
### Table 5. Regional Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of Households</th>
<th>Median Household Income ($)</th>
<th>Per Capita Income ($)</th>
<th>Population Below Poverty Level (%)</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate (%) June 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>3,775,581</td>
<td>46,868</td>
<td>25,920</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan County</td>
<td>51,612</td>
<td>43,069</td>
<td>21,706</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>12,650</td>
<td>36,701</td>
<td>21,120</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#### 3.11.3 Commuting Patterns

Residents of Salisbury and Rowan County are largely dependent on personal automobiles for transportation to and from work. Other methods of transit include public transportation, carpooling, and walking. Local commuting times are approximately 21 to 24 minutes (one-way) due to the size and population density of Salisbury and Rowan County. Public transportation in Salisbury is provided by Salisbury Transit (City of Salisbury). The nearest public transportation stops (Bus Route 3) are located at the W.G. Hefner VA Medical Center (Stop 8) and the northern entrance to the SNCA (Stop 8b).

#### 3.11.4 Housing

Rates of owner-occupied housing in Salisbury are lower than Rowan County and North Carolina and median housing values in Salisbury and Rowan County are lower than the rest of North Carolina (see Table 6).

### Table 6. Regional Housing Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total Housing Units</th>
<th>Occupied (%)</th>
<th>Owner-Occupied (%)</th>
<th>Median Value ($)</th>
<th>Renter-Occupied (%)</th>
<th>Median Contract Rent ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>4,327,528</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>154,900</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan County</td>
<td>60,211</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>128,300</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>14,626</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>121,600</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>723</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#### 3.11.5 Protection of Children

Because children may suffer disproportionately from environmental health risks and safety risks, EO 13045, Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks, was introduced in 1997 to prioritize the identification and assessment of environmental health risks and safety risks that may affect children and to ensure that Federal agencies’ policies, programs, activities, and standards address environmental risks and safety risks to children. This section identifies the distribution of children and locations where numbers of children may be proportionately high (e.g., schools, childcare centers, family housing, etc.) in areas potentially affected by the Proposed Action.

Children are not regularly present at the Site, which is unimproved wooded land and contains no recreation areas. Children are present on the northerly and westerly neighboring...
residential properties. The percentage of the population under age 18 is slightly lower within Salisbury as compared to Rowan County and North Carolina (see Table 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Population Under 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>10,146,788</td>
<td>2,425,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan County</td>
<td>139,933</td>
<td>33,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salisbury</td>
<td>34,001</td>
<td>7,718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau 2016 estimates.

3.11.6 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and passive maintenance of the Site by VA would produce no socioeconomic effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site is not likely to have adverse socioeconomic effects.

Construction of the proposed cemetery expansion is anticipated to result in short-term positive socioeconomic impacts to local employment and personal income. Construction of the SNCA expansion would potentially provide additional temporary construction jobs in the private sector, thus providing short-term socioeconomic benefit to the area. However, due to the intermittent and finite nature of these construction projects, no long-term impacts to the construction labor force are anticipated. The Proposed Action would result in long-term positive socioeconomic impacts by providing a regionally proximate National Cemetery of sufficient size to US Veterans and their families.

No adverse health or safety risks to children are anticipated to result from construction or operation of the expanded cemetery at the Site. Children would only be present at the Site as visitors. Construction areas would be secured to prevent unauthorized access by children from the nearby residential areas. The construction contractor would limit and control construction dust and noise, thereby minimizing adverse effects to children in the area.

3.11.7 Effects of the No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would result in no new construction and no increased short- or long-term economic benefit due to VA’s action. Under the No Action Alternative, VA would not secure land necessary to meet the long-term cemetery needs for the region, which could result in a significant adverse, long-term, indirect impact to US Veterans and their families. The Site would likely be developed in the future by others, for another use, which would result in temporary construction jobs and possible long-term employment. The nature and degree of the socioeconomic impacts would depend on the development.

3.12 Community Services

The Site is located within the Rowan-Salisbury School System (RSSS) District. The RSSS includes 20 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 8 high schools. (RSSS, 2017).

The Salisbury Police Department provides police protection to the Site and its vicinity. The Salisbury Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services to the Site and its vicinity. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Salisbury Street Management Division provide local road and bridge maintenance to the Site and its
vicinity. Other than the W.G. Hefner VA Medical Center, located approximately 1,500 feet east of the Site and the Novant Health Rowan Medical Center, located approximately 1.4 miles east of the Site, no medical facilities are located in the Site vicinity.

Public transportation in Salisbury is provided by Salisbury Transit. The nearest public transportation stops (Bus Route 3) are located at the W.G. Hefner VA Medical Center (Stop 8) and the northern entrance to the SNCA (Stop 8b).

There are no developed recreational facilities in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

3.12.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

No significant additional load is expected to be placed on the fire or police departments as the result of the Preferred Action Alternative. Use of other public or community services as a result of the proposed SNCA expansion is not expected. As such, the Proposed Action is expected to have a negligible impact on local public services.

3.12.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no community services effects from VA’s actions would occur. Should the Site be developed in the future by others, impacts are likely to occur, depending upon the developed use.

3.13 Solid and Hazardous Materials

Hazardous and toxic materials or substances are generally defined as materials or substances that pose a risk (i.e., through either physical or chemical reactions) to human health or the environment.

TTL conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for the Site on behalf of VA in July 2017. The Phase I ESA included a site visit, interviews with persons knowledgeable about the Site, a review of historic information, and review of local, State and Federal environmental regulatory information for the Site and surrounding area. Based upon the information obtained and evaluated as part of the Phase I ESA, the following potential environmental concern was identified in association with the Site:

- Petroleum pipelines have crossed the western portion of the Site in a dedicated easement since at least 1965. No spills or releases associated with the pipelines and no other evidence of environmental issues associated with the petroleum pipelines was identified or observed during the Phase I ESA. Based on the absence of reported releases or environmental issues associated with the petroleum pipelines, the pipelines were not considered to be a Recognized Environmental Condition (REC) with respect to the Site.

The Phase I ESA did not identify any RECs in association with the Site warranting further action or investigation. In addition, a review of reasonably ascertainable public documents did not identify evidence of known or reported environmental impacts related to petroleum or hazardous materials in the vicinity of the Site that were considered likely to impact the Site.

3.13.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and initial passive management of the Site by VA would produce no solid and hazardous materials effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site would result in less-than-significant solid and hazardous materials effects.

The Preferred Action Alternative could result in short-term, less-than-significant adverse impacts due to the increased presence and use of solid and hazardous materials during
construction of the expanded cemetery. During construction, a small increase in construction vehicle traffic would increase the possibility of a release of vehicle operating fluids (e.g., oil, diesel, gasoline, antifreeze, etc.) and maintenance materials. As such, a less-than-significant, direct, short-term adverse impact is possible. Implementation of standard construction BMPs would serve to ensure this impact is further minimized.

No significant adverse long-term impacts during operation of the expanded cemetery are anticipated; long-term operational solid and hazardous materials would be managed in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws. The Preferred Action Alternative would not result in a substantial increase in the generation of solid or hazardous substances or wastes, increase the exposure of persons to hazardous or toxic substances, increase the presence of hazardous or toxic materials in the environment, or place substantial restrictions on property use due to hazardous waste, materials, or site remediation. As noted in Section 3.6.3, based on standard modern burial practices, it is unlikely that embalming fluid would be released into the soil or groundwater.

3.13.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no solid and hazardous materials use or effects from actions by VA would occur. If the Site were to be developed by others for another use, similar short-term construction solid and hazardous materials as realized under the Proposed Action could occur. In addition, depending upon the use, longer term solid and hazardous materials impacts could occur.

3.14 Transportation and Parking

The Site is currently undeveloped with no formal access drives other than unpaved areas associated with the utility easements. General access to the Site is provided from South McCoy Road (western boundary). South McCoy Road is a generally north-south oriented, two-lane, paved residential collector with an estimated Level of Service¹ (LOS) rating of B or better. Additional general access to the Site is provided by a small section of Old Wilkesboro Road (southwestern corner of the Site). Old Wilkesboro Road is generally east-west oriented, two-lane, paved, minor arterial with a current estimated LOS rating of B or better.

Access to the existing SNCA is from Statesville Boulevard; the entrance to the cemetery is located approximately 0.50 mile northeast of the Site. Future access to the expanded SNCA would likely to be continued from Statesville Boulevard via an internal cemetery access road/bridge over Grants Creek. Secondary access would likely be provided from South McCoy Road. Statesville Boulevard is generally east-west oriented, four-lane, paved, major arterial with a current estimated LOS rating of C or better. According to the NCDOT, Statesville Boulevard experiences between 14,000 and 15,000 average daily traffic (ADT). No ADT data is available for South McCoy Road or Old Wilkesboro Road. Local roadway characteristics are shown in Table 8.

Traffic in the Site area is regulated by NCDOT and the Salisbury Street Management Division. Under current conditions, all of the adjacent roadways appear to operate at acceptable LOS ratings.

¹ Level of Service – LOS represents a set of qualitative descriptions of a transportation system’s performance. The Federal Highway Administration Highway Capacity Manual defines levels of service for intersections and highway segments, with ratings that range from A (best) to F (worst). Generally, a LOS of D or higher is considered acceptable by transportation planning agencies.
### 3.14.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and the initial passive management of the Site by VA would produce no transportation and parking effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site would likely have less-than-significant impacts to transportation.

Construction traffic, consisting of trucks, workers’ personal vehicles, and construction equipment, during the development of the cemetery at the Site would likely result in minimal, short-term traffic increases in the Site area, but would likely not cause significant delays. Thus, only less-than-significant, short-term adverse traffic impacts would be anticipated.

In the future, when the Site would be developed with the expanded cemetery, vehicle trips associated with burials would likely be similar to current conditions at the SNCA. The SNCA is currently handling an average of 4 burials per weekday. With an average of 30 cars per burial, the SNCA is currently experiencing an estimated 240 daily one-way vehicle trips associated with burials (120 daily vehicle round trips) per day. Burial traffic would continue to use the main entrance to the SNCA from Statesville Boulevard when the expanded cemetery is developed. Based on the anticipated similar amount of burial traffic and traffic patterns that currently exist at the SNCA, the traffic impacts associated with burials at the expanded cemetery would be less-than-significant.

The SNCA currently experiences approximately 175 round trip visitor and staff trips per day. As additional areas of the expanded SNCA are developed and utilized, the number of visitors is likely to increase; however, the increased number of vehicle trips associated with visitors is likely to be minimal.

Based on the proposed maximum usage estimates, operational traffic would not produce a significant adverse impact to local traffic conditions as defined at 38 CFR 26(2)(ii); this regulation defines a significant traffic impact as “an increase in average daily traffic volume of at least 20 percent on access roads to the Site or the major roadway network.” The Proposed Action would result in a minor increase of visitors when the Site is ultimately utilized as an expanded portion of the SNCA. Traffic increases would be far less than 20 percent on area roads.

No parking impacts are anticipated. The proposed SNCA expansion would be designed and constructed to accommodate all cemetery parking on-site.
3.14.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no traffic or parking impacts by VA would occur. However, should the Site ultimately be developed by others, traffic and parking impacts would occur. The type and magnitude of transportation effects would be dependent upon that proposed future use.

3.15 Utilities

Basic utilities in Salisbury (i.e., water, sewer, electric, and natural gas) are provided by various utility providers. As part of the preparation of this EA, local utility providers were researched to determine the availability of required utilities in the vicinity of the Site.

The following identifies the utility providers to the Site:

The **City of Salisbury** supplies potable water to the Site area, including the SNCA. The potable water service in the vicinity of the Site is likely adequate for the Proposed Action. VA would coordinate with the City of Salisbury to expand the SNCA potable water service to the Site.

The **City of Salisbury** is responsible for stormwater management in the Site area and operates under a NPDES Phase 2 Permit. The City Engineer (Stormwater Services Division) reviews all development plans for adequacy of stormwater management design and approval of NPDES permits. In addition, regulation of E&SC in Salisbury’s jurisdiction is the responsibility of Rowan County, which requires the submission and approval of an E&SC Plan to Rowan County and the RCSWCD in accordance with Chapter 18 (Soil Erosion and Sedimentation) of the RCCO.

The **City of Salisbury** supplies sanitary sewer service to the Site area, including the SNCA. The sanitary sewer service in the vicinity of the Site is likely adequate for the Proposed Action. VA would coordinate with the City of Salisbury to expand the SNCA sanitary sewer service to the Site, as needed.

**Duke Energy** supplies the electric service to the Site area, including the SNCA. The electrical service in the vicinity of the Site is likely adequate for the Proposed Action. VA would coordinate with Duke Energy prior to expanding the SNCA electrical service to the Site.

**Piedmont Natural Gas** supplies the natural gas service to the Site area, including the SNCA. The natural gas service in the vicinity of the Site is likely adequate for the Proposed Action. VA would coordinate with Piedmont Natural Gas prior to expanding the SNCA natural gas service to the Site, as needed.

**CenturyLink** provides telecommunication services to the Site vicinity. The Proposed Action is likely to require minimal telecommunication services; therefore, the telecommunications services in the Site vicinity are likely to be adequate for the Proposed Action. CenturyLink should be contacted in advance of construction activities in order to determine if additional service is required.

3.15.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and initial passive management of the Site by VA would produce no direct utilities effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site would have minor impacts to utilities.

Expansion of the SNCA would result in an increase in the consumption of utilities, including electricity, potable water, and sanitary sewer discharges. All major utility services are available immediately next to or in close proximity to the Site. The proposed cemetery
expansion would be anticipated to have minimal utility needs. Water would be anticipated to have the largest demand, due to the need for maintaining landscaped areas of the cemetery. The expanded cemetery would likely be connected to the existing SNCA irrigation system, supplied by the City of Salisbury; however, this would be determined during the design process.

Adequate utilities are likely to exist to supply the facility as currently proposed. However, VA would coordinate with the utility providers to determine connection/extension requirements to service the proposed cemetery expansion. No significant adverse impacts to local utilities are anticipated.

### 3.15.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction by VA would occur. However, should the Site ultimately be developed by others, impacts as identified under the Proposed Action would occur. The type and magnitude of utility effects would be dependent upon that proposed future use.

### 3.16 Environmental Justice

In 1994, EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, was issued to focus attention of Federal agencies on human health and environmental conditions in minority and low-income communities and to ensure that disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on these communities are identified and addressed.

According to the USEPA-developed EJSCREEN (an environmental justice mapping and screening internet application), the Site vicinity includes a higher concentration of low-income (62 percent) and minority (63 percent) populations than the State of North Carolina (38 percent and 36 percent, respectively) as a whole.

### 3.16.1 Effects of the Preferred Action Alternative

Acquisition and passive management of the Site by VA would produce no environmental justice effects. Future expansion of the SNCA on the Site is not anticipated to have adverse environmental justice effects. Although the Site is located in an area with disproportionately high low-income and minority populations, the Preferred Action Alternative would have very little impact on the residents in the area.

During construction, effects on nearby residential land uses, such as through noise and dust, would be limited and controlled, thereby minimizing adverse effects to populations in the ROI.

In addition, the Proposed Action construction activities are anticipated to result in short-term, beneficial socioeconomic impacts to local employment and personal income in the ROI as described in Section 3.11.6. Given the ROI is a low-income community, such beneficial effects would be anticipated to extend to local low-income citizens, a positive environmental justice effect.

No local groups are known to principally rely on fish or wildlife for subsistence in the vicinity of the Site. Consequently, no adverse impacts to such disadvantaged segments of the population are anticipated.
3.16.2 Effects of the No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no development by VA would occur at the Site and there would be no environmental justice effect by VA. If the Site were to be developed by others, it is not likely to result in adverse environmental justice effects.

3.17 Cumulative Impacts

As defined by CEQ Regulations in 40 CFR Part 1508.7, cumulative impacts are those which “result from the incremental impact of the Proposed Action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, without regard to the agency (Federal or non-Federal) or individual who undertakes such other actions.” Cumulative impact analysis captures the effects that result from the Proposed Action in combination with the effects of other actions taken during the duration of the Proposed Action in the same geographic area. Because of extensive influences of multiple forces, cumulative effects are the most difficult to analyze.

NEPA requires the analysis of cumulative environmental effects of a Proposed Action, or set of actions, on resources that may often be manifested only at the cumulative level, such as traffic congestion, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, socioeconomic conditions, utility system capacities, and others.

The approximately 35-acre Site is located in a mixed use area located approximately 1.75 miles northwest of the center of Salisbury. The ROI for the Site consists of a mixture of residential, commercial and light industrial, and institutional properties as well as some undeveloped land. Residential properties are located to the north and west of the Site, the SNCA and the WG Hefner VA Medical Center are located to the east and the northeast of the Site, and unimproved land and commercial/light industrial properties are located to the south of the Site. Although some currently undeveloped land exists in the ROI, no other development plans were identified for the Site area.

The Preferred Action Alternative would result in the impacts identified in Sections 3.2 through 3.16. These include potential impacts to aesthetics, air quality, soils, hydrology and water quality, wildlife and habitat, noise, land use, wetlands and floodplains, solid and hazardous materials, transportation, utilities, and environmental justice. With the exception of potential wetlands/Waters of the US and floodplains impacts, all of these impacts are less-than-significant and would be further reduced through careful implementation of the general BMPs, management measures, and compliance with regulatory requirements as identified in Section 5. Given the nature of the Proposed Action, and the limited potential additional development within the Site area, no significant cumulative adverse effects to any of these resource areas are anticipated. No adverse effects to cultural resources; coastal zones; socioeconomics; community services; or parking would occur as a result of the Proposed Action. As such, no cumulative adverse effects to any of these resource areas are anticipated.

As detailed in Sections 3.6 and 3.10, the Preferred Action Alternative could result in direct or indirect adverse impacts to wetlands/Waters of the U.S. and floodplains. Grants Creek, Waters of the U.S., flows along the eastern site boundary and a tributary to Grants Creek flows through the northern portion of the Site. Approximately 15 acres of the eastern and northern portions of the Site are located within the 100-year floodplain associated with Grants Creek. In addition, an approximately 2 to 3-acre forested wetland area is located within the 100-year floodplain in the eastern portion of the Site. VA anticipates that through environmentally sensitive site design and following good engineering practices, potential impacts to Waters of the US and floodplains would be avoided, to the extent possible. VA anticipates that the cemetery expansion design would maintain a buffer of undisturbed land around the identified Waters of the US and floodplains, with the exception of the construction of a new bridge over Grants Creek to connect the existing SNCA with the expanded cemetery.
area. VA would obtain all necessary permits from the USACE (Section 404 of the CWA), NCDENR (Section 401 of the CWA), and City of Salisbury (floodplains), as applicable. By following the permit requirements and implementing general BMPs, Waters of the US/wetland and floodplain impacts would be less-than-significant. Waters of the US (Grants Creek and its tributaries), small wetlands, and floodplains are also located on off-site properties within the Site area, which could be impacted by other development projects. However, no other area development projects were identified and those other projects (if any) would also be subject to the Federal, State, and City of Salisbury regulations and permit requirements. As such, cumulative Waters of the US/wetland and floodplain impacts would be less-than-significant.

No significant adverse cumulative impacts to the environment, induced by the Proposed Action, are anticipated within the region. Coordination between Federal, State, and community representatives would serve to manage and control cumulative effects within the region, including potential Waters of the US/wetland and floodplain effects. Implementation of local land use and resource management plans would serve to control the extent of environmental impacts, and continued planning would ensure future socioeconomic conditions maintain the quality of life the area’s residents currently enjoy. Implementation of effective resource management plans and programs should minimize or eliminate any potential cumulative degradation of the natural ecosystem, cultural or human environment within the ROI.

Under the No Action Alternative, cumulative impacts would be similar to those identified for the Proposed Action, as the Site would likely be developed for another use by others. The extent of cumulative effects under the No Action Alternative would depend upon that future use.

3.18 Potential for Generating Substantial Public Controversy

As discussed in Section 4.0, VA has solicited input from various Federal, State, and local government agencies regarding the Proposed Action. Several of these agencies have provided input; none of the input has identified opposition or controversy related to the Proposed Action or the Preferred Action Alternative. VA will publish and distribute the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period. Based on the significant positive effects of the Proposed Action and the findings of this Draft EA (no significant adverse environmental impact), it is not anticipated that there will be substantial public controversy regarding the Proposed Action or the Preferred Action Alternative.
4.1 Public and Agency Involvement

VA invites public participation in decision-making on new proposals through the NEPA process. Public participation with respect to decision-making on the Proposed Action is guided by 38 CFR Part 26, VA’s policy for implementing the NEPA. Additional guidance is provided in VA’s NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010). Consideration of the views and information of all interested persons promotes open communication and enables better decision-making. Agencies, organizations, and members of the public with a potential interest in the Proposed Action, such as minority, low-income, and disadvantaged persons, are urged to participate. A record of agency coordination and public involvement associated with this EA is provided in Appendix A and Appendix E.

4.1.1 Public Review

VA, as the Federal proponent of this Proposed Action, will publish and distribute the Draft EA for a 30-day public comment period as announced by a Notice of Availability (NOA) published in the Salisbury Post, a local newspaper of general circulation. Review copies will also be made available for public review at a local public library. Based on comments received from the public review of the Draft EA, VA will respond to provided comments within the Final EA and will issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), presuming that there are no substantive public comments that would warrant further analysis.

4.1.2 Agency Coordination

Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning (IICEP) is a federally mandated process for informing and coordinating with other governmental agencies regarding Federal Proposed Actions. CEQ Regulations require intergovernmental notifications prior to making any detailed statement of environmental impacts. Through the IICEP process, the VA notifies relevant Federal, State, and local agencies and allows them sufficient time to make known their environmental concerns specific to a Proposed Action. Comments and concerns submitted by these agencies during the IICEP process are subsequently incorporated into the analysis of potential environmental impacts conducted as part of the EA. This coordination fulfills requirements under EO 12372 (superseded by EO 12416, and subsequently supplemented by EO 13132), which requires Federal agencies to cooperate with and consider State and local views in implementing a Federal proposal. It also constitutes the IICEP process for this EA.

VA consulted with the following agencies during the preparation of this EA: US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History (State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO), North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP), Salisbury Community Planning Services Department (SCPSD), Salisbury Engineering Department (SED),
Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department (SPRD), Salisbury Public Services Department (SPSD), and Salisbury – Rowan Utilities Department (SRUD).

VA received responses from the following agencies: USEPA, USACE, USFWS, NCNHP, NCDEQ, and North Carolina SHPO. Received agency information and comments have been fully incorporated and addressed in this EA. Copies of relevant correspondence can be found in Appendix A.

### 4.1.3 Native American Consultation

For Federal proposed actions, Federal agencies are required to consult with Federally-recognized Native American Tribes in accordance with the NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and Executive Order (EO) 13175. VA identified one Native American Tribe (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) as having possible ancestral ties to the Proposed Action's ROI and invited this Tribe to consult on this Proposed Action. The letter sent to the Tribe is included in Appendix B. As of the date of this EA, no response has been received from the consulted tribe (VA 2018).
SECTION 5: MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This section provides the management and mitigation measures, if any, that are proposed to minimize and maintain adverse effects of the Preferred Action Alternative at acceptable, less-than-significant levels. A supplemental NEPA analysis will be conducted for the construction and operation of the expanded cemetery in approximately 10 to 15 years, during the Site design. The management, avoidance, and mitigation (if necessary) measures in this section would be included into the future process and analysis.

Per established protocols, procedures, and requirements, VA and its contractors would implement BMPs and would satisfy all applicable regulatory requirements in association with the design, construction, and operation of the expanded cemetery at the Site. These “management measures” are described in this EA, and are included as components of the Preferred Action Alternative. “Management measures” are defined as routine BMPs and/or regulatory compliance measures that are regularly implemented as part of proposed activities, as appropriate, across North Carolina. In general, implementation of such management measures would maintain impacts at acceptable levels for all resource areas analyzed. These are different from “mitigation measures,” which are defined as project-specific requirements, not routinely implemented as part of development projects, necessary to reduce identified potentially significant adverse environmental impacts to less-than-significant levels.

5.1 Management Measures

The routine BMP and minimization measures summarized in Table 9 would be included in the Preferred Action Alternative to minimize and maintain adverse effects at less-than-significant levels.

Table 9. Best Management Practices and Minimization Measures Incorporated into the Proposed Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Resource Area</th>
<th>Best Management Practice/Minimization Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Use topography and vegetative buffers to enhance viewscapes, particularly near adjacent residential properties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comply, to the extent practicable, with the Salisbury Land Development Ordinance (SLDO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use appropriate dust suppression methods (such as the use of water, dust palliative, covers, suspension of earth moving in high wind conditions) during onsite construction activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stabilize disturbed areas through re-vegetation or mulching if the area would be inactive for several weeks or longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implement measures to reduce diesel particulate matter (DPM) emissions from construction equipment, such as reducing idling time and using newer equipment with emissions controls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comply with the applicable NCDEQ air quality regulations. Secure any required minor air emissions permits from NCDEQ, as appropriate and prior to construction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 9. Best Management Practices and Minimization Measures Incorporated into the Proposed Action (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Resource Area</th>
<th>Best Management Practice/Minimization Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Resources</strong></td>
<td>Should human remains or other potentially historic or culturally significant items be discovered during project construction, the construction contractor would immediately cease work until VA, the Rowan County Coroner (if human remains are discovered), a qualified archaeologist, the SHPO, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians are contacted to properly identify and appropriately treat discovered items in accordance with applicable State and Federal law(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geology, Topography, and Soils</strong></td>
<td>Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by implementing erosion prevention measures and complying with the Salisbury National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting process. Prior to construction, VA would develop, submit to the City of Salisbury, and have approved, an NPDES Construction General Permit, which would include an Erosion and Sedimentation Control (E&amp;SC) Plan. The E&amp;SC Plan would be submitted and approved by Rowan County. The NPDES permit would require stormwater runoff and erosion management using BMPs, such as earth berms, vegetative buffers and filter strips, and spill prevention and management techniques. The construction contractor would implement the sedimentation and erosion control measures specified in the NPDES permit to protect surface water quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hydrology and Water Quality</strong></td>
<td>Document impacts to prime and unique farmland in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) by completing and submitting Form AD-1006 to the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wildlife and Habitat</strong></td>
<td>Control soil erosion and sedimentation impacts during construction by complying with the Salisbury NPDES permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure the design of the cemetery includes sufficient on-site stormwater management so as not to adversely affect the water quantity/quality in receiving waters and/or offsite areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design cemetery to avoid development or construction activities within the 4.3-acre Conservation Easement area, to the extent possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain naturally vegetated buffers along Grants Creek and its tributary as recommended by the USFWS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction should be timed to avoid impacts to birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Tree removal at the Site would be conducted outside the migratory bird nesting season so that nests are not disturbed. If it is not practical to clear the Site outside of this time frame, a qualified biologist should survey the Site prior to tree and brush clearing to ensure that no active nests are disturbed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tree felling and clearing should be conducted between August 15 and May 15 to reduce potential impacts to Northern Long-Eared Bats, as recommended by USFWS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native species should be used to the extent practicable when re-vegetating land disturbed by construction to avoid the potential introduction of non-native or invasive species.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Best Management Practices and Minimization Measures Incorporated into the Proposed Action (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Resource Area</th>
<th>Best Management Practice/Minimization Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noise</strong></td>
<td>Coordinate proposed construction activities in advance with adjacent sensitive receptors. Let the local residents know what operations would be occurring at what times, including when they would start and when they would finish each day. Post signage at the entry points of the Site providing current construction information, including schedule and activity. Limit, to the extent possible, construction and associated heavy truck traffic to occur between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday. Locate stationary operating equipment as far away from sensitive receptors as possible. Select material transportation routes as far away from sensitive receptors as possible. Shut down noise-generating heavy equipment when it is not needed. Maintain equipment per manufacturer’s recommendations to minimize noise generation. Encourage construction personnel to operate equipment in the quietest manner practicable (e.g., speed restrictions, retarder brake restrictions, engine speed restrictions, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td>Comply with, to the extent practicable, the SLDO. Design cemetery to avoid development or construction activities within the 4.3-acre Conservation Easement, if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wetlands, Floodplains, and Coastal Zone Management</strong></td>
<td>Complete a delineation of the wetlands/Waters of the US at the Site in accordance with the USACE Wetlands Delineation Manual. Obtain a jurisdictional determination from the USACE regarding the identified wetlands/Waters of the US. Develop a site design that avoids interaction with onsite and adjacent wetlands and surface waters, to the extent possible. Comply with the requirements of EO 11988 (Floodplain Management). Also refer to Section 5.2 for design avoidance and mitigation measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomics</strong></td>
<td>None required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Services</strong></td>
<td>None required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solid and Hazardous Materials</strong></td>
<td>Comply with existing VA Standard Operating Procedures and applicable Federal and State laws governing the use, generation, storage, and transportation of solid and hazardous materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation and Parking</strong></td>
<td>Coordinate with the NCDOT and the City of Salisbury to ensure that construction and operational traffic are considered in the planning of future transportation improvements in this vicinity. Ensure demolition and construction activities do not adversely affect traffic flow on local roadways; construction would be timed to avoid peak travel hours. Ensure debris and/or soil is not deposited on local roadways during the demolition and construction activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utilities</strong></td>
<td>Coordinate with local utility providers to determine connection/extension requirements to service the cemetery expansion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Best Management Practices and Minimization Measures Incorporated into the Proposed Action (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Resource Area</th>
<th>Best Management Practice/Minimization Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Justice</td>
<td>None required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Design Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

Grants Creek, which forms the Site’s eastern boundary, and a tributary to Grants Creek that crosses the northern portion of the Site, are Waters of the U.S. The eastern portion of the Site also includes an approximately 2 to 3-acre wetland that is also likely a Water of the U.S. The eastern portion of the Site along Grants Creek and most of the northern portion of the Site along the tributary are also included within the 100-year floodplain of Grants Creek. These floodplain areas total approximately 15 acres. An approximately 4.3-acre area of the Site along Grants Creek is also within a Conservation Easement, which restricts its development and the removal or alteration of vegetation. The 2 to 3-acre wetland and Conservation Easement area are both located within the 100-year floodplain. VA anticipates that through environmentally sensitive site design and following good engineering practices, potential impacts to Waters of the US (including wetlands), floodplains, and the Conservation Easement, would be avoided, to the extent possible. VA anticipates that the cemetery expansion design would maintain a buffer of undisturbed land around the identified Waters of the US and floodplains, with the exception of constructing a new bridge in the eastern portion of the Site across Grants Creek to connect the existing SNCA with the expanded cemetery area. The bridge would have minor impact on the floodplain and Waters of the U.S. VA would obtain all necessary permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA)), North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (Section 401 of the CWA), and City of Salisbury (floodplains), as applicable, for the bridge and any other development within the floodplain. By minimizing development within the floodplain areas and by following the permit requirements and implementing general BMPs for activities within the floodplains, Waters of the US/wetlands and floodplain impacts would be less-than-significant. These measures would be more fully developed as part of future efforts, concurrent with the cemetery design.
SECTION 6: CONCLUSIONS

This EA evaluates the Proposed Action of the VA to acquire approximately 35 acres of land adjacent to the existing SNCA, located at 501 Statesville Boulevard, in Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina for the future expansion of the cemetery. This EA discusses two alternatives: (1) Preferred Action Alternative – Acquire approximately 35 acres of land located contiguous, across Grants Creek, to the west of the SNCA for the future expansion of the SNCA; and (2) the No Action Alternative. This EA evaluates possible effects to aesthetics; air quality; cultural resources; geology and soils; hydrology and water quality; wildlife and habitat; noise; land use; floodplains, wetlands, and coastal zone management; socioeconomics; community services; solid and hazardous materials; transportation and parking; utilities; and environmental justice. The EA concludes there would be no significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, to the local environment or quality of life associated with implementing the Preferred Action Alternative, provided the avoidance, management, and mitigation (if necessary) measures, and best management practices identified in this EA are implemented. VA does not plan to design or develop the proposed cemetery expansion for approximately 10 to 15 years. A supplemental NEPA analysis will be conducted at the time of the cemetery expansion design. The avoidance, management and mitigation (if necessary) measures identified in this EA would be incorporated into that future process and analysis. Therefore, this EA concludes that a FONSI is appropriate, and that an EIS is not required.
SECTION 7: LIST OF PREPARERS

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STAFF

Ms. Jill Schattel
Environmental Engineer
Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration

Mr. Glenn Madderom
Chief, Cemetery Development & Improvement Service
Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration

Mr. W. Edward Hooker, III
Historic Architect/Cultural Resources Manager
Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration

Ms. Brigette Banks
Project Manager
Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Real Property

TTL ASSOCIATES, INC. (CONSULTANTS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robin J. Clark</td>
<td>Project Manager, Technical Lead Technical QA/QC Review, Program Management/Project Coordination</td>
<td>B.S., Aquatic Environments/Environmental Science, 1985</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 8: REFERENCES CITED


ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey, S. McCoy Road and Old Wilkesboro Road, Salisbury, North Carolina, R.B. Pharr & Associates, PA, June 2017.

Association of Natural Burials, 2011 and 2012.


EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. 6 November, 2000.


Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 26161C0262E, dated 3 April 2012.


Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation District, 2017.


Salisbury Community Planning Services Department, 2017.
Salisbury Engineering Department, 2017.
Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department, 2017.
Salisbury Public Services Department, 2017.
Salisbury – Rowan Utilities Department, 2017.
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), 2017.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), 2017. -
USFWS National Wetlands Inventory Online Mapper, 2017. -

Other internet searches and data (accessed April-December 2017):

City of Salisbury: http://www.salisburync.gov/Pages/index.aspx
FEMA Flood Hazard Insurance Map: http://msc.fema.gov/portal
Rowan County: http://www.rowancountync.gov
National Wetlands Inventory: https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/mapper.html
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality: https://deq.nc.gov
North Carolina Department of Transportation: https://www.ncdot.gov
North Carolina Office of Archives and History: http://www.history.ncdcr.gov
North Carolina Natural Heritage Program: http://www.ncnhp.org
US Army Corps of Engineers: http://www.usace.army.mil
USDA NRCS and Soil and Water Conservation District: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/nc/home


US Environmental Protection Agency:  https://www.epa.gov

US Fish and Wildlife Service:  https://www.fws.gov


Various mapping tools to locate properties, internet,  www.maps.google.com,  
www.google.earth.com, etc.
### SECTION 9: LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACHP</td>
<td>Advisory Council on Historic Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIRFA</td>
<td>American Indian Religious Freedom Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amsl</td>
<td>above mean sea level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARPA</td>
<td>Archaeological Resources Protection Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST</td>
<td>Aboveground Storage Tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMP</td>
<td>Best Management Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Clean Air Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERCLA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEQ</td>
<td>Council on Environmental Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFR</td>
<td>Code of Federal Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Coastal Management Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Carbon Monoxide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWA</td>
<td>Clean Water Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZMA</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E&amp;B</td>
<td>Erosion and Sedimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Environmental Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIS</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Executive Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Endangered Species Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMA</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRM</td>
<td>Flood Insurance Rate Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FONSI</td>
<td>Finding of No Significant Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPPA</td>
<td>Farmland Protection Policy Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAP</td>
<td>Hazardous Air Pollutant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IICEP</td>
<td>Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination for Environmental Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOS</td>
<td>Level of Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAAQS</td>
<td>National Ambient Air Quality Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAGPRA</td>
<td>Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCDEQ</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCDOT</td>
<td>North Carolina Department of Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCNHP</td>
<td>North Carolina Natural Heritage Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCWRC</td>
<td>North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Environmental Policy Act of 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHPA</td>
<td>National Historic Preservation Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOA</td>
<td>Notice of Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOAA</td>
<td>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOx</td>
<td>Nitrogen Oxides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPDES</td>
<td>National Pollution Discharge Elimination System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS</td>
<td>National Park Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRCS</td>
<td>Natural Resources Conservation Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRHP</td>
<td>National Register of Historic Places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWI</td>
<td>National Wetland Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O₃</td>
<td>Ozone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pb</td>
<td>Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Particulate matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ppm</td>
<td>parts per million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCRA</td>
<td>Resource Conservation and Recovery Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROD</td>
<td>Record of Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RONA</td>
<td>Record of Non-applicability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCPSD</td>
<td>Salisbury Community Planning Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SED</td>
<td>Salisbury Engineering Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFHA</td>
<td>Special Flood Hazard Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHPO</td>
<td>North Carolina Office of Archives and History (State Historic Preservation Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>State Implementation Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO₂</td>
<td>Sulfur dioxide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRD</td>
<td>Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSD</td>
<td>Salisbury Public Services Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRUD</td>
<td>Salisbury – Rowan Utilities Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWCD</td>
<td>Soil and Water Conservation District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPPP</td>
<td>Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPY</td>
<td>Tons per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USACE</td>
<td>United States Army Corps of Engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td>United States Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USEPA</td>
<td>United States Environmental Protection Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFWS</td>
<td>United States Fish and Wildlife Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGS</td>
<td>United States Geological Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Department of Veterans Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SECTION 10: AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED**

**Agencies Consulted**

**US Fish and Wildlife Service**  
*Asheville Ecological Services Field Office*  
160 Zillicoa Street  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801-1082  
Phone: (828) 258-3939

**US Environmental Protection Agency**  
*Region 4*  
*Office of Public Affairs*  
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center  
61 Forsyth Street SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960  
Phone: (404) 562-9900

**US Army Corps of Engineers – Wilmington**  
*Charlotte Regulatory Field Office*  
c/o Asheville Regulatory Field Office  
151 Patton Avenue, Room 208  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801-5006  
Phone: (828) 271-7980

**North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality**  
*Mooresville Regional Office*  
*Division of Air Quality*  
610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301  
Mooresville, North Carolina 28115  
Phone: (704) 663-1699

**North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality**  
*Mooresville Regional Office*  
*Division of Mitigation Services*  
610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301  
Mooresville, North Carolina 28115  
Phone: (704) 663-1699

**North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality**  
*Mooresville Regional Office*  
*Division of Waste Management*  
610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301  
Mooresville, North Carolina 28115  
Phone: (704) 663-1699

**North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality**  
*Mooresville Regional Office*  
*Division of Water Resources*  
610 East Center Avenue, Suite 301  
Mooresville, North Carolina 28115  
Phone: (704) 663-1699

**North Carolina Department of Transportation**  
*Administration and Business Development*  
1501 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1501  
Phone: (919) 707-2663

**North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office**  
*North Carolina Office of Archives and History*  
*State Historic Preservation Officer*  
4617 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617  
Phone: (919) 807-6570

**North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission**  
1701 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1701  
Phone: (919) 707-0010
North Carolina Natural Heritage Program
Nature Research Center – 121 West Jones Street
1651 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1651
Phone: (919) 707-8107

Natural Resources Conservation Service
and Soil and Water Conservation District
Salisbury Service Center
2727 Old Concord Road
Salisbury, North Carolina 28146-8388
Phone: (704) 637-1602

Salisbury Community Planning Services
Department
217 South Main Street
Salisbury, North Carolina 28144
Phone: (704) 638-5240

Salisbury Engineering Department
P.O. Box 479
Salisbury, North Carolina 28145
Phone: (704) 638-5200

Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department
634 Park Avenue
Salisbury, North Carolina 28144
Phone: (704) 638-5291

Salisbury Public Services Department
519 North Fulton Street
Salisbury, North Carolina 28144
Phone: (704) 638-5268

Salisbury – Rowan Utilities Department
1415 South Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue
Salisbury, North Carolina 28145
Phone: (704) 638-5300
Federally Recognized Tribes Consulted

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Mr. Russell Townsend, NAGPRA Contact
Qualla Boundary Reservation
88 Council House Loop
P.O. Box 455
Cherokee, North Carolina 28719
SECTION 11: LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITS REQUIRED

11.1 Regulatory Framework

This EA has been prepared under the provisions of, and in accordance with the NEPA, the CEQ Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, and 38 CFR Part 26. In addition, the EA has been prepared as prescribed in VA’s NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects (VA 2010b). Federal, State, and local laws and regulations specifically applicable to this Proposed Action are specified, where appropriate, within this EA, and include:

- Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (7 USC 136; 16 USC 1531 et seq.).
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, as amended (NAGPRA) (25 USC 3001 et seq.).
- Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1990 (42 USC 7401 et seq., as amended).
- Federal Clean Water Act (Federal Water Pollution Control Act) of 1948, as amended (1972, 1977) (33 USC 1251 et seq.); Sections 401 and 404.
- Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice (11 February 1994).
- Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, also known as the Veteran’s Benefit Act of 2010, Public Law 111-275, Sec.503. Reports on Selection of New National Cemeteries (38 USC 2400).
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.
- North Carolina Department of Environment Quality Air Quality Regulations.
- Salisbury Land Development Ordinance.
11.2 Environmental Permits Required

In addition to the regulatory framework of the NEPA, the CEQ Regulations Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA, 38 CFR Part 26, and VA’s NEPA Interim Guidance for Projects, the following Federal, State, and/or local environmental permits are required as part of this Proposed Action, and include:

- City of Salisbury, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System.
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
- Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- City of Salisbury, Floodplain Development.
SECTION 12: GLOSSARY

**100-Year Flood** – A flood event of such magnitude that it occurs, on average, every 100 years; this equates to a one percent chance of its occurring in a given year.

**Aesthetics** – Pertaining to the quality of human perception of natural beauty.

**Ambient** – The environment as it exists around people, plants, and structures.

**Ambient Air Quality Standards** – Those standards established according to the CAA to protect health and welfare (AR 200-1).

**Aquifer** – An underground geological formation containing usable amounts of groundwater which can supply wells and springs.

**Asbestos** – Incombustible, chemical-resistant, fibrous mineral forms of impure magnesium silicate used for fireproofing, electrical insulation, building materials, brake linings, and chemical filters. Asbestos is a carcinogenic substance.

**Attainment Area** – Region that meets the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for a criteria pollutant under the CAA.

**Bedrock** – The solid rock that underlies all soil, sand, clay, gravel and loose material on the earth's surface.

**Best Management Practices (BMPs)** – Methods, measures, or practices to prevent or reduce the contributions of pollutants to U.S. waters. Best management practices may be imposed in addition to, or in the absence of, effluent limitations, standards, or prohibitions (AR 200-1).

**Commercial land use** – Land use that includes private and public businesses (retail, wholesale, etc.), institutions (schools, churches, etc.), health services (hospitals, clinics, etc.), and military buildings and installations.

**Compaction** – The packing of soil together into a firmer, denser mass, generally caused by the pressure of great weight.

**Contaminants** – Any physical, chemical, biological, or radiological substances that have an adverse effect on air, water, or soil.

**Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)** – An Executive Office of the President composed of three members appointed by the President, subject to approval by the Senate. Each member shall be exceptionally qualified to analyze and interpret environmental trends, and to appraise programs and activities of the Federal Government. Members are to be conscious of and responsive to the scientific, economic, social, aesthetic, and cultural needs of the Nation; and to formulate and recommend national policies to promote the improvement of the quality of the environment.

**Criteria Pollutants** – The CAA of 1970 required the USEPA to set air quality standards for common and widespread pollutants in order to protect human health and welfare. There are six "criteria pollutants": ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and particulate matter.

**Cultural Resources** – The physical evidence of our Nation's heritage. Included are: archaeological sites; historic buildings, structures, and districts; and localities with social significance to the human community.

**Cumulative Impact** – The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonable foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7).
Decibel (dB) - A unit of measurement of sound pressure level.

Direct Impact - A direct impact is caused by a Proposed Action and occurs at the same time and place.

Emission - A release of a pollutant.

Endangered Species - Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Environmental Assessment (EA) - An EA is a publication that provides sufficient evidence and analyses to show whether a proposed system will adversely affect the environment or be environmentally controversial.

Erosion - The wearing away of the land surface by detachment and movement of soil and rock fragments through the action of moving water and other geological agents.

Farmland - Cropland, pastures, meadows, and planted woodland.

Fauna - Animal life, especially the animal characteristics of a region, period, or special environment.

Flora - Vegetation; plant life characteristic of a region, period, or special environment.

Floodplain - The relatively flat area or lowlands adjoining a river, stream, ocean, lake, or other body of water that is susceptible to being inundated by floodwaters.

FONSI - Finding of No Significant Impact, a NEPA document.

Fugitive Dust - Particles light enough to be suspended in air, but not captured by a filtering system. For this document, this refers to particles put in the air by moving vehicles and air movement over disturbed soils at construction sites.

Geology - Science which deals with the physical history of the earth, the rocks of which it is composed, and physical changes in the earth.

Groundwater - Water found below the ground surface. Groundwater may be geologic in origin and as pristine as it was when it was entrapped by the surrounding rock or it may be subject to daily or seasonal effects depending on the local hydrologic cycle. Groundwater may be pumped from wells and used for drinking water, irrigation, and other purposes. It is recharged by precipitation or irrigation water soaking into the ground. Thus, any contaminant in precipitation or irrigation water may be carried into groundwater.

Hazardous Substance - Hazardous materials are defined within several laws and regulations to have certain meanings. For this document, a hazardous material is any one of the following:

Any substance designated pursuant to section 311 (b)(2)(A) of the Clean Water Act.

Any element, compound, mixture, solution, or substance designated pursuant to Section 102 of Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Any hazardous substance as defined under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

Any toxic pollutant listed under TSCA.

Any hazardous air pollutant listed under Section 112 of CAA.

Any imminently hazardous chemical substance or mixture with respect to which the EPA Administrator has taken action pursuant to Subsection 7 of TSCA.

The term does not include: 1) Petroleum, including crude oil or any thereof, which is not otherwise specifically listed or designated as a hazardous substance in a above. 2) Natural gas, natural gas liquids, liquefied natural gas, or synthetic gas usable for fuel (or mixtures of natural gas and such synthetic gas). A list of hazardous substances is found in 40 CFR Part 302.4.

Hazardous Waste - A solid waste which, when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, poses a substantial hazard to human health or the environment. Hazardous wastes are identified in 40 CFR Part 261.3 or applicable foreign law, rule, or regulation.
Hazardous Waste Storage - As defined in 40 CFR Part 260.10, "... the holding of hazardous waste for a temporary period, at the end of which the hazardous waste is treated, disposed of, or stored elsewhere".

Hydric Soil - A soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic (oxygen-lacking) conditions that favor the growth and regeneration of hydrophytic vegetation. A wetland indicator.

Indirect Impact - An indirect impact is caused by a Proposed Action that occurs later in time or farther removed in distance, but is still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect impacts may include induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air, water, and other natural and social systems. For example, referring to the possible direct impacts described above, the clearing of trees for new development may have an indirect impact on area wildlife by decreasing available habitat.

Industrial Land Use - Land uses of a relatively higher intensity that are generally not compatible with residential development. Examples include light and heavy manufacturing, mining, and chemical refining.

Isolated Wetland - Areas that meet the wetland hydrology, vegetation, and hydric soil characteristics, but do not have a direct connection to the Waters of the US.

Jurisdictional Wetland - Areas that meet the wetland hydrology, vegetation, and hydric soil characteristics, and have a direct connection to the Waters of the US. These wetlands are regulated by the USACE.

Listed Species - Any plant or animal designated as a State or Federal threatened, endangered, special concern, or candidate species.

Mitigation - Measures taken to reduce adverse impacts on the environment.

Mobile Sources - Vehicles, aircraft, watercraft, construction equipment, and other equipment that use internal combustion engines for energy sources.

Monitoring - A process of inspecting and recording the progress of mitigation measures implemented.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) - Nationwide standards set up by the USEPA for widespread air pollutants, as required by Section 109 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). Currently, six pollutants are regulated by primary and secondary NAAQS: carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), ozone (O3), particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide (SO2).

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - U.S. statute that requires all Federal agencies to consider the potential effects of Proposed Actions on the human and natural environment.

Non-attainment Area - An area that has been designated by the EPA or the appropriate State air quality agency as exceeding one or more National or State ambient air quality standards.

Parcel - A plot of land, usually a division of a larger area.

Particulates or Particulate Matter - Fine liquid or solid particles such as dust, smoke, mist, fumes, or smog found in air.

Physiographic Region - A portion of the Earth's surface with a basically common topography and common morphology.

Pollutant - A substance introduced into the environment that adversely affects the usefulness of a resource.

Potable Water - Water which is suitable for drinking.

Prime Farmland - A special category of highly productive cropland that is recognized and described by the US Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service and receives special protection under the Surface Mining Law.

Remediation - A long-term action that reduces or eliminates a threat to the environment.

Riparian Areas - Areas adjacent to rivers and streams that have a high density, diversity, and productivity of plant and animal species relative to nearby uplands.
River Basin - The land area drained by a river and its tributaries.

Sensitive Receptors - Include, but are not limited to, asthmatics, children, and the elderly, as well as specific facilities, such as long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, convalescent centers, retirement homes, residences, schools, playgrounds, and childcare centers.

Significant Impact - According to 40 CFR Part 1508.27, "significance" as used in NEPA requires consideration of both context and intensity.

Context. The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the Proposed Action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.

Intensity. This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action.

Small quantity generator - A generator who generates greater than 220 pounds but less than 2,200 pounds of hazardous waste in a calendar month and who does not accumulate more than 13,200 pounds of hazardous waste at any one time (if either threshold is exceeded, the generator becomes a large quantity generator). A small quantity generator may accumulate hazardous waste up to 180 days from the accumulation start date.

Soil - The mixture of altered mineral and organic material at the earth's surface that supports plant life.

Solid Waste - Any discarded material that is not excluded by section 261.4(a) or that is not excluded by variance granted under sections 260.30 and 260.31.

Threatened species - Any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Topography - The relief features or surface configuration of an area.

Toxic Substance - A harmful substance which includes elements, compounds, mixtures, and materials of complex composition.

Waters of the United States - Include the following: (1) All waters which are currently being used, were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters which are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide. (2) All interstate waters including interstate wetlands. (3) All other waters such as intrastate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds; the use, degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate or foreign commerce.

Watershed - The region draining into a particular stream, river, or entire river system.

Wetlands - Areas that are regularly saturated by surface or groundwater and, thus, are characterized by a prevalence of vegetation that is adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Examples include swamps, bogs, fens, marshes, and estuaries.

Wildlife Habitat - Set of living communities in which a wildlife population lives.
APPENDIX A

Agency Correspondence
APPENDIX B

Native American Consultation
APPENDIX C

Photograph Log
APPENDIX D

Other Relevant Environmental Data
APPENDIX E

Public Notices and Comments