# ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT WILSON BAY (STURGEON CITY) PHASE II

### WETLAND RESTORATION ONSLOW COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA (EEP Project Number 367)

Monitoring Year 5 of 5 (2008)



Submitted to: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Ecosystem Enhancement Program Raleigh, North Carolina



December 2008

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Submitted to: North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Ecosystem Enhancement Program Raleigh, North Carolina

> Prepared by: Axiom Environmental, Inc. 2126 Rowland Pond Drive Willow Spring, North Carolina 27592

Design Firm: BLUE Land, Water, Infrastructure, PA 1271 Old US Highway 1 South Southern Pines, North Carolina 28387





December 2008

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Wilson Bay (Surgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II Site (Site) is located within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit 03030001 (North Carolina Division of Water Quality [NCDWQ] subbasin 03-05-02) of the White Oak River Basin. The Site includes 2.5 acres of brackish marsh restoration, located at Sturgeon City in Jacksonville, North Carolina in Onslow County. The Site is located adjacent to Thompson School Creek and Sturgeon City Park at an inactive municipal wastewater treatment plant. This report summarizes data for year 5 (2008) monitoring.

The primary goals of the project include the following.

- 1. Reduce nutrient and stormwater inputs to adjacent estaurine waters.
- 2. Stabilize the shoreline through restoration of native vegetation.
- 3. Improve the aesthetics to that of a natural estuarine marsh.
- 4. Enhance wildlife habitat.
- 5. Educate visitors about the importance of coastal wetlands.

Five vegetation plots were surveyed for herbaceous coverage in late June 2008 for the 2008 (year 5) monitoring season. Vegetative growth has been excellent in the brackish marsh, with many native volunteer salt marsh species; in addition an organic mat typical of a coastal salt marsh is continuing to develop.

No problem areas have been identified during the year 5 (2008) monitoring year. Site hydrology supports a coastal marsh as evidenced by sufficient flooding to support the growth of brackish marsh vegetation, the establishment of native volunteer salt marsh species, and the continued development of a native coastal marsh vegetative community structure. In summary, the Site is stable, the desired plant communities are developing, the plants are healthy, and the marsh has an aesthetic appeal.

#### **Table of Contents**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND	. 1
1.1 Location and Setting	. 1
1.2 Mitigation Structure and Objectives	. 1
1.3 Project History and Background	. 3
1.4 Monitoring Plan View	.4
2.0 PROJECT CONDITION AND MONITORING RESULTS	.6
2.1 Vegetation Assessment	.6
2.1.1 Soil Data	.6
2.1.2 Vegetative Problem Areas	.6
2.1.3 Stem Counts	.6
2.1.4 Vegetation Plot Photos	.9
2.2 Wetland Assessment	.9
2.2.1 Wetland Problem Area Plan View	10
2.2.2 Wetland Criteria Attainment 1	10
4.0. REFERENCES1	11

### Appendices

APPENDIX A.	VEGETATION PLOT PHOTOGRAPHS
APPENDIX B.	YEAR 5 (2008) GROUNDWATER GAUGE GRAPHS
APPENDIX C.	YEAR 4 (2007) GROUNDWATER GAUGE GRAPHS
APPENDIX D.	YEAR 3 (2006) GROUNDWATER GAUGE GRAPHS

#### **List of Figures**

Figure 1.	Site Location	2
Figure 2.	Monitoring Plans	5
Figure 3.	Monitoring Results	7

## List of Tables

Table 1.	Project Mitigation Structures and Objectives	1
Table 2.	Project Activity and Reporting History	3
Table 3.	Project Contact Table	3
Table 4.	Project Background Table	4
Table 5.	Preliminary Soil Data	6
Table 6.	Marsh Stem Counts	8
Table 7.	Vegetation Trends	8
Table 8.	Summary of Groundwater Gauge Results for Years 1 through 5	10
Table 9.	Wetland Criteria Attainment for Year 5 (2008)	10

#### **1.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 Location and Setting**

The Wilson Bay (Surgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II Site (Site) is located within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Hydrologic Unit 03030001 (North Carolina Division of Water Quality [NCDWQ] subbasin 03-05-02) of the White Oak River Basin. The Site includes 2.5 acres of brackish marsh restoration, located at Sturgeon City in Jacksonville, North Carolina in Onslow County (Figure 1). The Site is located adjacent to Thompson School Creek and Sturgeon City Park at an inactive municipal wastewater treatment plant.

Directions to the Site:

From Raleigh:

- Travel east on Interstate 40 to Exit 373 (NC24/903 east)
- ➢ Follow NC 24 to Jacksonville
- > In Jacksonville, veer right onto Old Bridge Street to cross over the New River
- Turn right on Court Street
- > At the end of Court Street take a left into the inactive wastewater treatment plant
- > The Site is adjacent to Wilson Bay at the far end of the property

The Site is located in the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain Physiographic Province, within the Carolina Flatwoods ecoregion.

#### **1.2 Mitigation Structure and Objectives**

Prior to implementation of wetland restoration activities, the Site was used as a municipal wasterwater treatment plant.

Restoration at the Site entailed 1) removal of trash laden fill material, 2) grading the Site to the desired elevations to restore wetland hydrology, and 3) planting the Site. The primary goals of this project were to reduce nutrient and stormwater inputs to adjacent estaurine waters, stabilize the shoreline through restoration of native vegetation, improve the aesthetics to that of a natural estuarine marsh, enhance wildlife habitat, and educate visitors about the importance of coastal wetlands. Project structures and objectives are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Project Mitigation Structures and ObjectivesWilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II(EEP Project Number 367)							
Project Segment or Reach ID	Mitigation Type	Approach	Linear Footage or Acreage	Stationing	Comment		
Brackish Marsh	Restoration		2.50 acres		Planted with Spartina cynosuroides in the lower elevations and Spartina patens in the higher elevations.		



#### 1.3 Project History and Background

Completed project activities, reporting history, and completion dates are summarized in Table 2.

## Table 2. Project Activity and Reporting History

## Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II

(EEP Project Number 367)

	Scheduled	Data Collection	Actual Completion
Activity or Report	Completion	Completion	or Delivery
Restoration Plan	2002		Mar. 24, 2003
Final Design – 90%	Unknown		Unknown
Construction	June 2003		October 2003
Temporary Sediment & Erosion Mix Applied	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Permanent Seed Mix Applied	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Brackish Marsh Planting	August 2003		June 2004
Containerized and B&B Plantings	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
As-built Report (Year 0 Monitoring – map only)	2005		Unknown
Year 1 Monitoring (2004)	Fall 2004		Oct. 12, 2004
Year 2 Monitoring (2005)	Fall 2005		Sept. 22, 2005
Year 3 Monitoring (2006)	Fall 2006		Feb. 2007
Year 4 Monitoring (2007)	Fall 2007		Feb. 2008
Year 5 Monitoring (2008)	Fall 2008	Nov. 2008	Dec. 2008

Contact information regarding project designer, construction, planting contractor, and monitoring personnel are summarized in Table 3 and relevant project background information is summarized in Table 4.

Table 3. Project Contact Table				
Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II (FEB Project Number 267)				
Designer	BLUE: Land, Water, Infrastructure, PA			
	Southern Pines, NC 28387			
Property Owner	Thomas Blue (910) 692-6461 City of Jacksonville			
	PO Box 128			
	Jacksonville, North Carolina 28541 Glenn Hargett (910) 938-5200			
Construction Contractor	Trader Construction Company			
2500 Highway 70 East				
	Carl Huddle (252) 633-2424			

Table 3. Project Contact Table (continued)				
Planting Contractor	BLUE: Land, Water, Infrastructure, PA			
	1271 Old Highway 1			
	Southern Pines, NC 28387			
	Larry Hobbs (919)306-2410			
	Thomas Blue (910) 692-6461			
Seeding Contractor	Unknown			
Temporary Seed Mix Sources	Unknown			
Nursery Stock Suppliers (marsh plants)	Campbells Greenhouse			
	Raleigh, North Carolina			
	Street Address and Point of Contact: Unknown			
Monitoring Performers	Axiom Environmental, Inc.			
	2126 Rowland Pond Dr.			
	Willow Spring, NC 27592			
	Grant Lewis 919-215-1693			

Table 4. Project Background Table						
Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II						
(EEP Project Number 367)						
Project County	Onslow County, North Carolina					
Drainage Area	~ 115 acres					
Drainage impervious cover estimate (%)	~ 35 percent					
Stream Order	First					
Physiographic Region	Coastal Plain					
Ecoregion	Carolina Flatwoods					
Rosgen Classification of As-built	Not Applicable					
Cowardin Classification	Estaurine Intertidal Emergent Persistant Irregularly					
	Flooded (E21P)					
Dominant Soil Types	Wando fine sand					
Reference Site ID	No Reference					
USGS HUC for Project and Reference	Project - 03030001					
NCDWQ Subbasin for Project and Reference	Project - 03-05-02					
NCDWQ Classification for Project and Reference	Project – SC HQW NSW					
Any portion of any project segment 303d listed?	No (Stream Index #19-14)					
Any portion of any project segment upstream of a 303d	No					
listed segment?	INO					
Reasons for 303d listing or stressor	Not Applicable					
% of project easement fenced	None					

#### **1.4 Monitoring Plan View**

Monitoring activities for the Site, including relevant structures and utilities, project features, specific project structures, and monitoring features are detailed in Figure 2.

Site features have been monitored with five 1-meter square marsh grass vegetation plots, four continuous recording surfacewater gauges, and photographic documentation.



### 2.0 PROJECT CONDITION AND MONITORING RESULTS

#### 2.1 Vegetation Assessment

During late June 2008, five 1-meter square plots were sampled for herbaceous cover. Two plots were located in the *Spartina cynosuroides* area of the marsh, and three were located in the *Spartina patens* area. Plant height, numbers, and percent cover were measured and recorded in each plot. Plots were located as close as possible to the corresponding plot designation from the previous monitoring reports. In addition, the methodology from previous monitoring reports was followed and stems were not counted in the *Spartina patens* plots. The general condition of the marsh was assessed, and potential problem areas were also examined.

#### 2.1.1 Soil Data

General soil conditions found onsite, including level of erosion and percentage of organic matter, are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Preliminary Soil Data							
Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II (EEP Project Number 367)							
Series	Max Depth (inches)	% Clay on Surface	K	Т	OM %		
Wando	85	1	0.1	5	<1		
Pactolus	72	2-12	0.1	5	0.5-2		

#### 2.1.2 Vegetative Problem Areas

No vegetation problem areas were identified within the Site during year 5 (2008) annual monitoring.

#### 2.1.3 Stem Counts

Marsh vegetation was assessed by sampling five 1-meter by 1-meter plots using the *CVS-EEP Protocol* for Recording Vegetation, Version 4.0 (Lee et al. 2006) (<u>http://cvs.bio.unc.edu/methods.htm</u>); two plots are located in the Spartina cynosuroides area of the marsh and three in the Spartina patens area. Percent cover from year 4 (2007) are summarized in Table 6 and vegetation trends for the five monitoring years are summarized in Table 7. The taxonomic standard for vegetation used for this document was *Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and Surrounding Areas* (Weakley 2007). No reference area was studied; therefore, no comparisons could be made to reference conditions.



#### Table 6. Marsh Stem Counts

#### Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II (EEP Project Number 367)

(EEI ITOject Number 507)							
Desired Species	Plot	Stem Count	Height (meters)	Percent Coverage of Desired Species	Notes Other Plants within Plots		
	C3	NA	2.0	80	Scirpus sp. – 10% cover		
Spartina cynosuroides	C8	NA	2.3	100			
	C11	NA	2.0	80			
Spartina patens	P14	NA	0.9	55	S. cynosuroides - 5% cover, Solidago sp., various grass species – 5% cover, matted grasses – 35% cover		
	P15	NA	1.2	80	S. cynosuroides - 15% cover, Paspalum urvillei, Ipomea sp., Hydrocotyle sp 5% cover		

Table 7. Vegetation Trends							
Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II (EEP Project Number .00091)							
Lower Marsh (Spa	ertina cynosuroi	des) Data Range					
Monitoring Year	Firm	Stem Count	Height (meters)	Percent Cover			
2004 (year 1)		No m	neasurements taken				
2005 (year 2)	BLWI	47-78	1.4-3.3	45-60			
2006 (year 3)	AXE	48-71	2.2-2.4	30-60			
2007 (year 4)	AXE	Not applicable	2.4-2.8	70-100			
2008 (year5)	AXE Not applicable 2.0-2.3 80-100						
Upper Marsh (Spa	rtina patens) Da	ata Range					
<b>Monitoring Year</b>	Firm	Stem Count	Height (meters)	Percent Cover			
2004 (year 1)		No m	neasurements taken				
2005 (year 2)	BLWI	Not applicable	0.45-1.3	40-50			
2006 (year 3)	AXE	Not applicable	0.9-2.3	50-70			
2007 (year 4)	AXE	Not applicable	0.7-1.0	40-80			
2008 (year 5)	AXE	Not applicable	0.9-1.2	55-80			

Site vegetation success will be determined based on year-to-year comparisons of the stem counts, plant heights, and will require 75 percent coverage of marsh species at the end of the five-year monitoring period.

The average percent coverage within the lower marsh (*Spartina cynosuroides*) was between 80 and 100 percent coverage with *Spartina cynosuroides* and within the upper marsh (*Spartina patens*) was between 55 and 80 percent coverage with *Spartina patens* for year 5 (2008) monitoring. The average percent coverage across the Site is increasing and should be considered successful.

#### 2.1.4 Vegetation Plot Photos

Photographs taken in the vegetation monitoring area are included in Appendix A; locations of each are depicted on Figure 2. The photographs show that the marsh grasses are growing well and the Site is functioning as a brackish marsh wetland system.

#### 2.2 Wetland Assessment

Four surfacewater monitoring gauges have been maintained and monitored throughout the year 5 (2008) growing season. The gauges are located within the *Spartina cynosuroides* area between the 1 and 1.5-foot contours and record daily readings of the groundwater levels. Daily rainfall data recorded from a rain gauge maintained and monitored at the nearby New River Station in Jacksonville, North Carolina was used for seasonal comparison (Weather Underground 2008). The graphs of groundwater hydrology and precipitation are included in Appendix B.

No specific success criteria were established for this project; however, hydrologic success is based on sufficient Site flooding to support the marsh vegetation. General success criteria for wetland groundwater hydrology require inundation or saturation within 12 inches of the ground surface for a consecutive period of 12.5 percent of the growing season. The growing season in Onslow County begins April 8 and ends November 5 (212 days).

Surfacewater gauges provided unreliable data during year 2 (2005) monitoring and no gauge data is available for years 1 and 2 (2004 and 2005) monitoring. The gauge graphs for years 3 through 5 (2006-2008) are included in Appendices B-D. The following table summarizes success criteria achievement for surfacewater gauges over the monitoring period.

Groundwater hydrology within 12 inches of the soil surface occurred for greater than 12.5 percent of the growing season for the year 5 (2008) growing season. Site hydrology supports a coastal marsh as evidenced by sufficient flooding to support the growth of brackish marsh vegetation, the establishment of native volunteer salt marsh species, and the continued development of a native coastal marsh vegetative community structure. In summary, the Site is stable, the desired plant communities are developing, the plants are healthy, and the marsh has an aesthetic appeal.

Table 8. Summary of Groundwater Gauge Results for Years 1 through 5											
Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II (EEP Project Number 367)											
	Success Criteria Achieved/Max Consecutive Days During Growing Season Saturated or Inundated										
ıge	within 12 inches of the Ground Surface (Percentage)										
Gai	Year 1 (2004)	Year 2 (2005)	Year 3 (2006)	Year 4 (2007)	Year 5 (2008)						
1	No Data*	No Data*	Yes/212 days (100 %)	Yes/212 days (100 %)	Yes/212 days (100 %)						
2	No Data*	No Data*	Yes/36 days (17.0 %)	Yes/37 days (17.5 %)	Yes/71 days (33.5 %)						
3	No Data*	No Data*	Yes/69 days (32.5 %)	Yes/176 days (83.0 %)	Yes/212 days (100 %)						
4	No Data*	No Data*	Yes/212 days (100 %)	Yes/212 days (100 %)	Yes/212 days (100 %)						
Ige	Percentage of										
Gaı	Year 1 (2004)	Year 2 (2005)	Year 3 (2006)	Year 4 (2007)	Year 5 (2008)						
1	No Data*	No Data*	71	92	92						
2	No Data*	No Data*	11	23	30						
3	No Data*	No Data*	33	40	67						
4	No Data*	No Data*	58	95	93						

 No Data\*
 No Data\*
 S8
 95
 93

 \* - The surfacewater gauges provided unreliable data during year 2 (2005) monitoring and no data is available for years 1 or 2 (2004 or 2005).
 93

## 2.2.1 Wetland Problem Area Plan View

No wetland problem areas have been identified during the year 5 (2008) monitoring year.

## 2.2.2 Wetland Criteria Attainment

All monitored gauges within restoration areas were inundated/saturated within 12 inches of the surface for greater than 12.5 percent of the growing season with sufficient flooding to support brackish marsh vegetation (Table 9). Hydrographs containing precipitation data for each gauge can be found in Appendix B. Percent coverage of planted species is increasing since year 2 (2005) monitoring. Photographs within the Site can be found in Appendix A.

## Table 9. Wetland Criteria Attainment for Year 5 (2008)

## Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Wetland Restoration Phase II

(EEP Project 367)

Gauge ID	Hydrology Threshold Met?	Hydrophytic Vegetation Criteria Met?	Site Mean	Vegetation Plot ID	Vegetation Survival Threshold Met?	Site Mean				
1	Yes	Yes	100 %	C3	Yes	100 %				
2	Yes	Yes		C8	Yes					
3	Yes	Yes		C11	Yes					
4	Yes	Yes		P14	Yes					
				P15	Yes					

#### 4.0. REFERENCES

- Lee, Michael T., R.K. Peet, S.D. Roberts, and T.R. Wentworth. 2006. CVS-EEP Protocol for Recording Vegetation, Version 4.0. (online). Available: http://cvs.bio.unc.edu/methods.htm.
- United States. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 1992. Soil Survey of Onslow County, North Carolina. United States Department of Agriculture.
- Weakley, Alan S. 2007. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, and Surrounding Areas (online). Available: http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/WeakleysFlora.pdf [February 1, 2008]. University of North Carolina Herbarium, North Carolina Botanical Garden, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
- Weatherground. 2008. New River MCAS Station in Jacksonville, North Carolina. (online). Available: http://www.wunderground.com/cgi-bin/findweather/getForecast?query=jacksonville%2C+nc [October 26, 2008]. Weather Underground.

# APPENDIX A VEGETATION MONITORING PLOT PHOTOGRAPHS







Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Phase II (final) EEP Project Number 367 Onslow County, North Carolina

Axiom Environmental, Inc.

Monitoring Year 5 of 5 (2008) December 2008 Appendices Vegetation Monitoring Photographs (cont'd) Taken June 26, 2008



Wilson Bay (Sturgeon City) Phase II (final) EEP Project Number 367 Onslow County, North Carolina

Axiom Environmental, Inc.

Monitoring Year 5 of 5 (2008) December 2008 Appendices Vegetation Monitoring Photographs (cont'd) Taken June 26, 2008



Picture 17



Picture 18

Axiom Environmental, Inc.

# APPENDIX B YEAR 5 (2008) GROUNDWATER GAUGE GRAPHS

Sturgeon City Phase 2 - Gauge 1 Year 5 (2008 Data)



Sturgeon City Phase 2 - Gauge 2 Year 5 (2008 Data)



Sturgeon City Phase 2 - Gauge 3 Year 5 (2008 Data)







## APPENDIX C YEAR 4 (2007) GROUNDWATER GAUGE GRAPHS

















## APPENDIX D YEAR 3 (2006) GROUNDWATER GAUGE GRAPHS

















Water Level (inches)