

Bell Island Pier and Parking Area Rehab Project

Project Location: Bell Island Pier, Swanquarter National Wildlife Refuge, Hyde County, NC

Lead Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Project Description

The Bell Island Pier and Parking Area rehab project involves improvements to public access infrastructure at Bell Island Pier within the Swanquarter National Wildlife Refuge. The project includes three main components:

1. Partial Pier Replacement

The decking and railing of the existing pier will be replaced with like materials. All pilings, ledgers, and stringers are to remain in place. Corroded hardware connecting these components will be replaced. There will be no replacement of or change to pier components that contact the water or the subsurface.

2. Pier Ramp Reorientation

The existing wooden ramp that provides access to the pier will be removed and rebuilt in a new orientation that leads to higher ground. The new ramp will be constructed using wood as the current structure. This change is intended to reduce the ramp's exposure to flooding and storm damage, and to improve long-term access for visitors and staff.

3. Parking Area Relocation and Site Restoration

The current gravel parking area, which is frequently impacted by flooding, will be reduced in size limiting parking to a more elevated area. Gravel will be removed from the lower portion of the parking area and reused to improve the higher portion of the parking area. The original parking area that is to be removed will be regraded to match the surrounding landscape and planted with native vegetation to restore the area and support natural drainage and marsh function.

These improvements are being made in response to recurring storm damage and standing water that currently affect both the ramp and parking area. The existing conditions create safety concerns for visitors, who often have to walk or park in flooded areas. By relocating these features to higher ground, the project will provide safer, more reliable access to the pier while also restoring a portion of the site to a more natural condition. Vegetation restoration will include planting native species to stabilize the soil and enhance habitat quality. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will coordinate with relevant agencies to ensure that any necessary permits are obtained before construction begins.

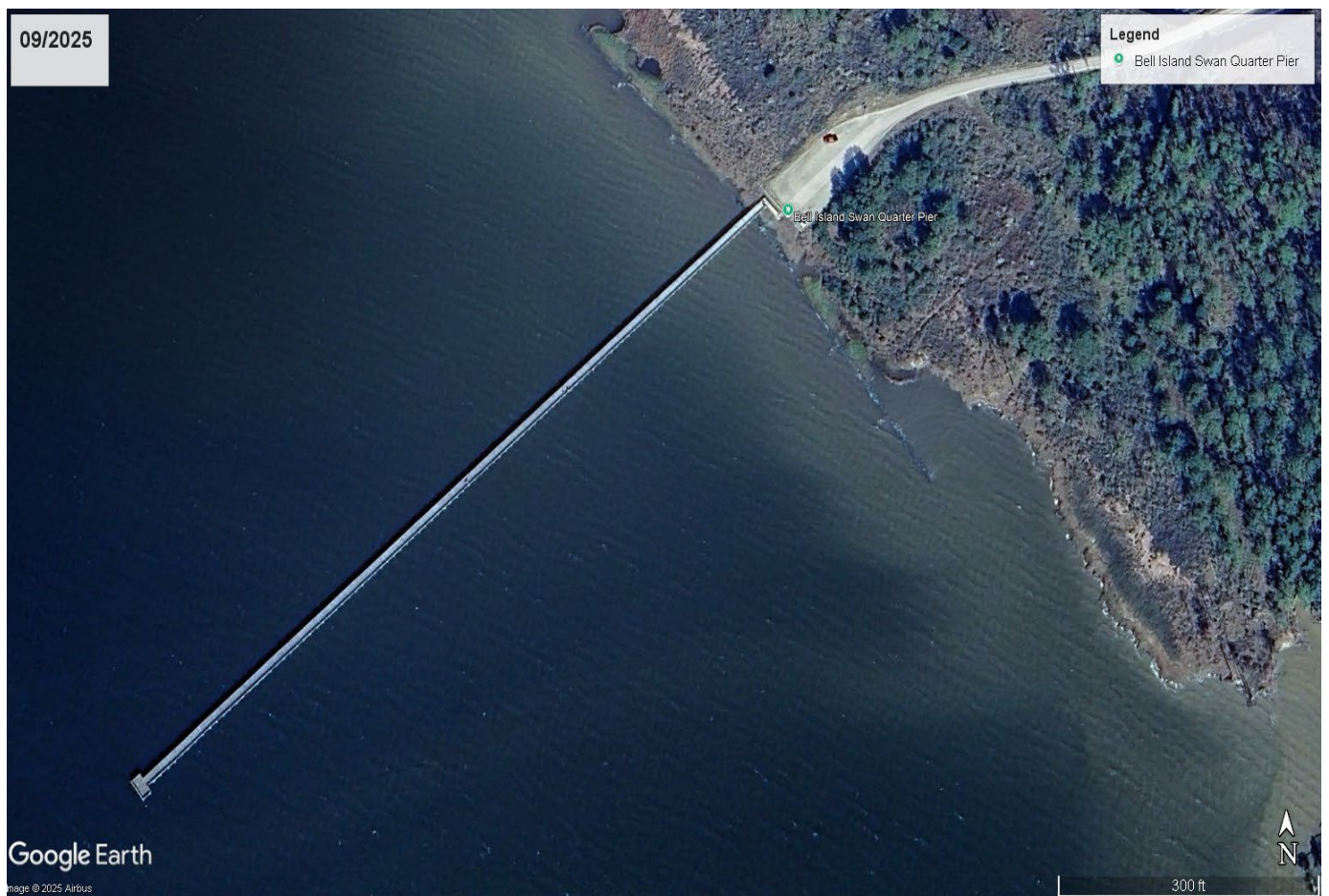


Figure 1: Aerial of Bell Island Pier



Figure 2: Visual of where new ramp will be built to access the pier. The parking area will be removed from “marsh restoration” and relocated to higher elevation. Marsh restoration area will be regraded and restored by planting native vegetation.



Figure 3: Looking NNW at current ramp to pier and current parking area.



Figure 4: Looking NW at current ramp to access the pier.



Figure 5: Looking west at current ramp to pier and current parking area.