DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WANAMAKER BUILDING, 100 PENN SQUARE EAST
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19107-3390

MAY 08 2001

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Regulatory Branch
Application Section II

SUBJECT: CENAP-OP-R-200002324-39 (NW23)
NJDEP #: 0802-00-0009.1,.2,.3
Project Name: NJ DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
Applicant: New Jersey Department of Transportation
Waterway: Big Timber Creek
Location: At the State Routes 41 and 42 Interchange, in Deptford Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey

Ms. Jo Ann Szczech
New Jersey Department of Transportation
1035 Parkway Avenue, CN 600
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0600

Dear Ms. Szczech:

This is in regard to your proposal to install two outfall structures associated with the improvements to a roadway interchange.

Under current Federal regulations, a Department of the Army permit is required for work or structures in navigable waters of the United States and/or the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States including adjacent and isolated wetlands. Based upon our review of the information you have provided, it has been determined that the proposed work is approved by the existing Department of the Army nationwide permit (NWP) described below, provided the work is conducted in compliance with the general and special conditions specified in this letter.

Nationwide Permit 23. Approved Categorical Exclusions: Activities undertaken, assisted, authorized, regulated, funded, or financed, in whole or in part, by another Federal agency or department where that agency or department has determined, pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulation for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR part 1500 et seq.), that the activity, work, or discharge is categorically excluded from environmental documentation because it is included within a category of actions which neither individually nor cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment, and the Office of the Chief of Engineers (ATTN: CECW-OR) has been furnished notice of the agency's or department's application for the categorical exclusion and concurs with that determination. Prior to approval for purposes of this NWP of any agency's categorical exclusions, the Chief of Engineers will solicit public comment. In addressing these comments, the Chief of Engineers may require certain conditions for authorization of an agency's categorical exclusions under this NWP. (Sections 10 and 404)

This authorization does not affect your responsibility to obtain any other Federal, State or local approval(s) required by law for the proposed work before beginning work.

The enclosed table (Enclosure 1) identifies those NWPs which require a preconstruction notification (PCN) to the Corps of Engineers, those which have been regionally conditioned by the Division Engineer, and those which have been denied 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) and/or Coastal Zone Management (CZM) consistency by the State. It is noted that CZM consistency from the State is only required for those activities in or affecting the State's coastal zone. Additionally, some of the NWPs do not involve a discharge of

MAY 14 2001

dredged or fill material, and as such, do not require a 401 WQC. For those NWPs not requiring a 401 WQC, the appropriate rows and columns have been identified with the term "NA". If the State has denied the required WQC and/or not concurred with the Corps' CZM consistency determination, the NWP authorization is considered denied without prejudice until an individual project specific WQC and/or CZM approval is obtained. This approval must be obtained in order for the activity to be authorized under the NWP and a copy provided to this office before work begins. Any project specific conditions required by the State for the WQC and/or CZM approval will automatically become part of the NWP authorization.

You should carefully note that this NWP authorization is based upon your agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of this NWP (Enclosure 2), including any and all attached project specific special conditions listed below. Initiation of any authorized work shall constitute your agreement to comply with all of the NWP's conditions. You should also note that the authorized work may be subject to periodic inspections by a representative of this office.

PROJECT SPECIFIC SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

1. All work performed in association with the above noted project shall be conducted in accordance with the project plans identified as "Environmental Plan...", prepared by McFarland-Johnson, Incorporated, undated, sheet EP-1/EP-19. The project plans provide for the installation of two outfall structures, with associated rip-rap along the State Route 41/42 Interchange. The stated purpose of the project is to provide for improved travel at the project site.

2. Construction activities shall not result in the disturbance or alteration of greater than 0.02 acre of waters of the United States.

3. Any deviation in construction methodology or project design from that shown on the above noted drawings must be approved by this office, in writing, prior to performance of the work. All modifications to the above noted project plans shall be approved, in writing, by this office. No work shall be performed prior to written approval of this office.

4. This office shall be notified at least 10 days prior to the commencement of authorized work by completing and signing the enclosed Notification/Certification of Work Commencement Form (Enclosure 3). This office shall also be notified within 10 days of the completion of the authorized work by completing and signing the enclosed Notification/Certification of Work Completion/Compliance Form (Enclosure 4). All notifications required by this condition shall be in writing and shall be transmitted to this office by registered mail. Oral notifications are not acceptable. Similar notification is required each time maintenance work is to be done under the terms of this Corps of Engineers permit.

5. Efforts shall be made to keep construction debris from entering the waterway or wetland. Debris in the waterway or wetland shall be removed immediately.

6. The disposal of trees, brush and other debris in any stream corridor, wetland or surface water is prohibited.

7. The fill material shall be free of oil and grease, debris, wood, general refuse, plaster, and other pollutants, and shall contain no broken asphalt.

8. The permittee shall perform the work authorized herein in strict accordance with the New Jersey State Standards for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

You are advised that this verification of NWP authorization is valid for two (2) years from the date of this letter, unless the NWP authorization is modified, suspended, or revoked. In the event that the NWP authorization is reissued and/or modified during that time period, this two-year expiration date will remain valid, provided the activity complies with any subsequent reissuance and/or modification of the NWP authorization.

The existing NWPs will expire on February 11, 2002. Activities which have commenced (i.e., are under construction) or are under contract to commence in reliance upon a NWP, will remain authorized provided the activity is completed within 12 months of the date of the NWP's expiration, modification, or revocation, unless discretionary authority has been exercised on a case-by-case basis to modify, suspend, or revoke the authorization. As such, any work to be completed beyond this date in reliance upon this existing NWP must be completed by February 11, 2003. Activities completed under the authorization of a NWP which was in effect at the time the activity was completed, continue to be authorized by that NWP. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon you to remain informed of any changes to the NWP authorization(s).

Also enclosed is a pre-addressed postal card (Enclosure 5) soliciting your comments on the processing of your application. Any comments, positive or otherwise, on the procedures, timeliness, fairness, etc., may be made on this card. If you should have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Lawrence M. Slavitter of this office at (215) 656-6734 or write to the above address.

Sincerely,

for Samuel L. Reynolds

Frank J. Cianfrani
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Enclosures

Nationwide Permit General Conditions

The following general conditions must be followed in order for any authorization by an NWP to be valid:

1. **Navigation**. No activity may cause more than a minimal adverse effect on navigation.
2. **Proper Maintenance**. Any structure or fill authorized shall be properly maintained, including maintenance to ensure public safety.
3. **Soil Erosion and Sediment Controls**. Appropriate soil erosion and sediment controls must be used and maintained in effective operating condition during construction, and all exposed soil and other fills, as well as any work below the ordinary high water mark or high tide line, must be permanently stabilized at the earliest practicable date.
4. **Aquatic Life Movements**. No activity may substantially disrupt the movement of those species of aquatic life indigenous to the waterbody, including those species which normally migrate through the area, unless the activity's primary purpose is to impound water. Culverts placed in streams must be installed to maintain low flow conditions.
5. **Equipment**. Heavy equipment working in wetlands must be placed on mats, or other measures must be taken to minimize soil disturbance.
6. **Regional and Case-By-Case Conditions**. The activity must comply with any regional conditions which may have been added by the division engineer (see 33 CFR 330.4(e)) and with any case specific conditions added by the Corps or by the State or tribe in its Section 401 water quality certification and Coastal Zone Management Act consistency determination.
7. **Wild and Scenic Rivers**. No activity may occur in a component of the National Wild and Scenic River System; or in a river officially designated by Congress as a "study river" for possible inclusion in the system, while the river is in an official study status; unless the appropriate Federal agency, with direct management responsibility for such river, has determined in writing that the proposed activity will not adversely affect the Wild and Scenic River designation, or study status. Information on Wild and Scenic Rivers may be obtained from the appropriate Federal land management agency in the area (e.g., National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).
8. **Tribal Rights**. No activity or its operation may impair reserved tribal rights, including, but not limited to, reserved water rights and treaty fishing and hunting rights.
9. **Water Quality**. (a) In certain States and tribal lands an individual 401 water quality certification must be obtained or waived (See 33 CFR 330.4(c)).

   (b) For NWPs 12, 14, 17, 18, 32, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44, where the State or tribal 401 certification (either generically or individually) does not require or approve a water quality management plan, the permittee must include design criteria and techniques that will ensure that the authorized work does not result in more than minimal degradation of water quality. An important component of a water quality management plan includes stormwater management that minimizes degradation of the downstream aquatic system, including water quality. Refer to General Condition 21 for stormwater management requirements. Another important component of a water quality management plan is the establishment and maintenance of vegetated buffers next to open waters, including streams. Refer to General Condition 19 for vegetated buffer requirements for the NWPs.
10. **Coastal Zone Management**. In certain states, an individual state coastal zone management consistency concurrence must be obtained or waived (see Section 330.4(d)).
11. **Endangered Species**. (a) No activity is authorized under any NWP which is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a threatened or endangered species or a species proposed for such designation, as identified under the Federal Endangered Species Act, or which will destroy or adversely modify the critical habitat of such species. Non-federal permittees shall notify the District Engineer if any listed species or designated critical habitat might be affected or is in the vicinity of the project, or is located in the designated critical habitat and shall not begin work on the activity until notified by the District Engineer that the requirements of the Endangered Species Act have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. For activities that may affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species or designated critical habitat, the notification must include the name(s) of the endangered or threatened species that may be affected by the proposed work or that utilize the designated critical habitat that may be affected by the proposed work. As a result of formal or informal consultation with the FWS or NMFS, the District Engineer may add species-specific regional endangered species conditions to the NWPs.

    (b) Authorization of an activity by a nationwide permit does not authorize the "take" of a threatened or endangered species as defined under the Federal Endangered Species Act. In the absence of separate authorization (e.g., an ESA Section 10 Permit, a Biological Opinion with "incidental take" provisions, etc.) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service, both lethal and non-lethal "takes" of protected species are in violation of the Endangered Species Act. Information on the location of threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat can be obtained directly from the offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service or their world wide web pages at http://www.fws.gov/r9endspp/endspp.html and http://www.nfms.gov/prot_res/esahome.html, respectively.
12. **Historic Properties**. No activity which may affect historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places is authorized, until the DE has complied with the provisions of 33 CFR Part 325, Appendix C. The prospective permittee must notify the District Engineer if the authorized activity may affect any historic properties listed, determined to be eligible, or which the prospective permittee has reason to believe may be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and shall not begin the activity until notified by the District Engineer that the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act have been satisfied and that the activity is authorized. Information on the location and existence of historic resources can be obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Register of Historic Places (see 33 CFR 330.4(g)). For activities that may affect historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, the notification

must state which historic property may be affected by the proposed work or include a vicinity map indicating the location of the historic property.

13. Notification.

(a) Timing: Where required by the terms of the NWP, the prospective permittee must notify the District Engineer with a preconstruction notification (PCN) as early as possible. The District Engineer must determine if the PCN is complete within 30 days of the date of receipt and can request the additional information necessary to make the PCN complete only once. However, if the prospective permittee does not provide all of the requested information, then the District Engineer will notify the prospective permittee that the PCN is still incomplete and the PCN review process will not commence until all of the requested information has been received by the District Engineer. The prospective permittee shall not begin the activity:

(1) Until notified in writing by the District Engineer that the activity may proceed under the NWP with any special conditions imposed by the District or Division Engineer; or

(2) If notified in writing by the District or Division Engineer that an individual permit is required; or

(3) Unless 45 days have passed from the District Engineer's receipt of the complete notification and the prospective permittee has not received written notice from the District or Division Engineer. Subsequently, the permittee's right to proceed under the NWP may be modified, suspended, or revoked only in accordance with the procedure set forth in 33 CFR 330.5(d)(2).

(b) Contents of Notification: The notification must be in writing and include the following information:

(1) Name, address, and telephone numbers of the prospective permittee;

(2) Location of the proposed project;

(3) Brief description of the proposed project; the project's purpose; direct and indirect adverse environmental effects the project would cause; any other NWP(s), regional general permit(s), or individual permit(s) used or intended to be used to authorize any part of the proposed project or any related activity; and

(4) For NWPs 7, 12, 14, 18, 21, 34, 38, 39, 40, 42, and 43, the PCN must also include a delineation of affected special aquatic sites, including wetlands, vegetated shallows (e.g., submerged aquatic vegetation, seagrass beds), and riffle and pool complexes (see paragraph 13(f));

(5) For NWP 7, Outfall Structures and Maintenance, the PCN must include information regarding the original design capacities and configurations of those areas of the facility where maintenance dredging or excavation is proposed.

(6) For NWP 14, Linear Transportation Crossings, the PCN must include a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset permanent losses of waters of the United States and a statement describing how temporary losses of waters of the United States will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

(7) For NWP 21, Surface Coal Mining Activities, the PCN must include an Office of Surface Mining (OSM) or state-approved mitigation plan.

(8) For NWP 27, Stream and Wetland Restoration, the PCN must include documentation of the prior condition of the site that will be reverted by the permittee.

(9) For NWP 29, Single-Family Housing, the PCN must also include:

(i) Any past use of this NWP by the individual permittee and/or the permittee's spouse;

(ii) A statement that the single-family housing activity is for a personal residence of the permittee;

(iii) A description of the entire parcel, including its size, and a delineation of wetlands. For the purpose of this NWP, parcels of land measuring 1/4 acre or less will not require a formal on-site delineation. However, the applicant shall provide an indication of where the wetlands are and the amount of wetlands that exists on the property. For parcels greater than 1/4 acre in size, a formal wetland delineation must be prepared in accordance with the current method required by the Corps. (See paragraph 13(f));

(iv) A written description of all land (including, if available, legal descriptions) owned by the prospective permittee and/or the prospective permittee's spouse, within a one mile radius of the parcel, in any form of ownership (including any land owned as a partner, corporation, joint tenant, co-tenant, or as a tenant-by-the-entirety) and any land on which a purchase and sale agreement or other contract for sale or purchase has been executed;

(10) For NWP 31, Maintenance of Existing Flood Control Projects, the prospective permittee must either notify the District Engineer with a PCN prior to each maintenance activity or submit a five year (or less) maintenance plan. In addition, the PCN must include all of the following:

(i) Sufficient baseline information so as to identify the approved channel depths and configurations and existing facilities. Minor deviations are authorized, provided the approved flood control protection or drainage is not increased;

(ii) A delineation of any affected special aquatic sites, including wetlands; and,

(iii) Location of the dredged material disposal site.

(11) For NWP 33, Temporary Construction, Access, and Dewatering, the PCN must also include a restoration plan of reasonable measures to avoid and minimize adverse effects to aquatic resources.

(12) For NWPs 39, 43, and 44, the PCN must also include a written statement to the District Engineer explaining how avoidance and minimization of losses of waters of the United States were achieved on the project site.

(13) For NWP 39, Residential, Commercial, and Institutional Developments, the PCN must include a compensatory mitigation proposal that offsets unavoidable losses of waters of the United States or justification explaining why compensatory mitigation should not be required.

(14) For NWP 40, Agricultural Activities, the PCN must include a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset losses of waters of the United States.

(15) For NWP 43, Stormwater Management Facilities, the PCN must include, for the construction of new stormwater management facilities, a maintenance plan (in accordance with State and local requirements, if applicable) and a compensatory mitigation proposal to offset losses of waters of the United States.

(16) For NWP 44, Mining Activities, the PCN must include a description of all waters of the United States adversely affected by the project, a description of measures taken to minimize adverse effects to waters of the United States, a description of measures taken to comply with the criteria of the NWP, and a reclamation plan (for aggregate mining activities in isolated waters and non-tidal wetlands adjacent to headwaters and any hard rock/mineral mining activities).

(17) For activities that may adversely affect Federally-listed endangered or threatened species, the PCN must include the name(s) of those endangered or threatened species that may be affected by the proposed work or utilize the designated critical habitat that may be affected by the proposed work.

(18) For activities that may affect historic properties listed in, or eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, the PCN must state which historic property may be affected by the proposed work or include a vicinity map indicating the location of the historic property.

(19) For NWPs 12, 14, 29, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44, where the proposed work involves discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States resulting in permanent, above-grade fills within 100-year floodplains (as identified on FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps or FEMA-approved local floodplain maps), the notification must include documentation demonstrating that the proposed work complies with the appropriate FEMA or FEMA-approved local floodplain construction requirements.

(c) Form of Notification: The standard individual permit application form (Form ENG 4345) may be used as the notification but must clearly indicate that it is a PCN and must include all of the information required in (b) (1)-(19) of General Condition 13. A letter containing the requisite information may also be used.

(d) District Engineer's Decision: In reviewing the PCN for the proposed activity, the District Engineer will determine whether the activity authorized by the NWP will result in more than minimal individual or cumulative adverse environmental effects or may be contrary to the public interest. The prospective permittee may, optionally, submit a proposed mitigation plan with the PCN to expedite the process and the District Engineer will consider any proposed compensatory mitigation the applicant has included in the proposal in determining whether the net adverse environmental effects to the aquatic environment of the proposed work are minimal. If the District Engineer determines that the activity complies with the terms and conditions of the NWP and that the adverse effects on the aquatic environment are minimal, the District Engineer will notify the permittee and include any conditions the District Engineer deems necessary.

Any compensatory mitigation proposal must be approved by the District Engineer prior to commencing work. If the prospective permittee is required to submit a compensatory mitigation proposal with the PCN, the proposal may be either conceptual or detailed. If the prospective permittee elects to submit a compensatory mitigation plan with the PCN, the District Engineer will expeditiously review the proposed compensatory mitigation plan. The District Engineer must review the plan within 45 days of receiving a complete PCN and determine whether the conceptual or specific proposed mitigation would ensure no more than minimal adverse effects on the aquatic environment. If the net adverse effects of the project on the aquatic environment (after consideration of the compensatory mitigation proposal) are determined by the District Engineer to be minimal, the District Engineer will provide a timely written response to the applicant stating that the project can proceed under the terms and conditions of the nationwide permit.

If the District Engineer determines that the adverse effects of the proposed work are more than minimal, then he will notify the applicant either: (1) that the project does not qualify for authorization under the NWP and instruct the applicant on the procedures to seek authorization under an individual permit; (2) that the project is authorized under the NWP subject to the applicant's submission of a mitigation proposal that would reduce the adverse effects on the aquatic environment to the minimal level; or (3) that the project is authorized under the NWP with specific modifications or conditions. Where the District Engineer determines that mitigation is required in order to ensure no more than minimal adverse effects on the aquatic environment, the activity will be authorized within the 45-day PCN period, including the necessary conceptual or specific mitigation or a requirement that the applicant submit a mitigation proposal that would reduce the adverse effects on the aquatic environment to the minimal level. When conceptual mitigation is included, or a mitigation plan is required under item (2) above, no work in waters of the United States will occur until the District Engineer has approved a specific mitigation plan.

(e) Agency Coordination: The District Engineer will consider any comments from Federal and State agencies concerning the proposed activity's compliance with the terms and conditions of the NWPs and the need for mitigation to reduce the project's adverse effects on the aquatic environment to a minimal level.

For activities requiring notification to the District Engineer that result in the loss of greater than 1/2 acre of waters of the United States, the District Engineer will, upon receipt of a notification, provide immediately (e.g., via facsimile transmission, overnight mail, or other expeditious manner), a copy to the appropriate offices of the Fish and Wildlife Service, State natural resource or water quality agency, EPA, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and, if appropriate, the National Marine Fisheries Service. With the exception of NWP 37, these agencies will then have 10 calendar days from the date the material is transmitted to telephone or fax the District Engineer notice that they intend to provide substantive, site-specific comments. If so contacted by an agency, the District Engineer will wait an additional 15 calendar days before making a decision on the notification. The District Engineer will fully consider agency comments received within the specified time frame, but will provide no response to the resource agency, except as provided below. The District Engineer will indicate in the administrative record associated with each notification that the resource agencies' concerns were considered. As required by Section 305(b)(4)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the District Engineer will provide a response to National Marine Fisheries Service within 30 days of receipt of any

Essential Fish Habitat conservation recommendations. Applicants are encouraged to provide the Corps multiple copies of notifications to expedite agency notification.

(f) Wetlands Delineations: Wetland delineations must be prepared in accordance with the current method required by the Corps. For NWP 29 see paragraph (b)(9)(iii) for parcels less than 1/4 acre in size. The permittee may ask the Corps to delineate the special aquatic site. There may be some delay if the Corps does the delineation. Furthermore, the 45-day period will not start until the wetland delineation has been completed and submitted to the Corps, where appropriate.

14. Compliance Certification. Every permittee who has received a Nationwide permit verification from the Corps will submit a signed certification regarding the completed work and any required mitigation. The certification will be forwarded by the Corps with the authorization letter. The certification will include: a.) A statement that the authorized work was done in accordance with the Corps authorization, including any general or specific conditions; b.) A statement that any required mitigation was completed in accordance with the permit conditions; and c.) The signature of the permittee certifying the completion of the work and mitigation.

15. Use of Multiple Nationwide Permits. The use of more than one NWP for a single and complete project is prohibited, except when the acreage loss of waters of the United States authorized by the NWPs does not exceed the acreage limit of the NWP with the highest specified acreage limit. For example, if a road crossing over tidal waters is constructed under NWP 14, with associated bank stabilization authorized by NWP 13, the maximum acreage loss of waters of the United States for the total project cannot exceed 1/3 acre.

16. Water Supply Intakes. No activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the United States or discharges of dredged or fill material, may occur in the proximity of a public water supply intake except where the activity is for repair of the public water supply intake structures or adjacent bank stabilization.

17. Shellfish Beds. No activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the United States or discharges of dredged or fill material, may occur in areas of concentrated shellfish populations, unless the activity is directly related to a shellfish harvesting activity authorized by NWP 4.

18. Suitable Material. No activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the United States or discharges of dredged or fill material, may consist of unsuitable material (e.g., trash, debris, car bodies, asphalt, etc.) and material used for construction or discharged must be free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts (see Section 307 of the Clean Water Act).

19. Mitigation. The project must be designed and constructed to avoid and minimize adverse effects to waters of the United States to the maximum extent practicable at the project site (i.e., on site). Mitigation will be required when necessary to ensure that the adverse effects to the aquatic environment are minimal. The District Engineer will consider the factors discussed below when determining the acceptability of appropriate and practicable mitigation necessary to offset adverse effects on the aquatic environment that are more than minimal.

(a) To be practicable, the mitigation must be available and capable of being done considering costs, existing technology, and logistics in light of the overall project purposes. Examples of mitigation that may be appropriate and practicable include, but are not limited to: reducing the size of the project; establishing and maintaining wetland or upland vegetated buffers to protect open waters such as streams; and replacing losses of aquatic resource functions and values by creating, restoring, enhancing, or preserving similar functions and values, preferably in the same watershed;

(b) The District Engineer will require restoration, creation, enhancement, or preservation of other aquatic resources in order to offset the authorized impacts to the extent necessary to ensure that the adverse effects on the aquatic environment are minimal. An important element of any compensatory mitigation plan for projects in or near streams or other open waters is the establishment and maintenance, to the maximum extent practicable, of vegetated buffers next to open waters on the project site. The vegetated buffer should consist of native species. The District Engineer will determine the appropriate width of the vegetated buffer and in which cases it will be required. Normally, the vegetated buffer will be 25 to 50 feet wide on each side of the stream, but the District Engineer may require wider vegetated buffers to address documented water quality concerns. If there are open waters on the project site and the District Engineer requires compensatory mitigation for wetland impacts to ensure that the net adverse effects on the aquatic environment are minimal, any vegetated buffer will comprise no more than 1/3 of the remaining compensatory mitigation acreage after the permanently filled wetlands have been replaced on a one-to-one acreage basis. In addition, compensatory mitigation must address adverse effects on wetland functions and values and cannot be used to offset the acreage of wetland losses that would occur in order to meet the acreage limits of some of the NWPs (e.g., for NWP 39, 1/4 acre of wetlands cannot be created to change a 1/2 acre loss of wetlands to a 1/4 acre loss; however, 1/2 acre of created wetlands can be used to reduce the impacts of a 1/3 acre loss of wetlands). If the prospective permittee is required to submit a compensatory mitigation proposal with the PCN, the proposal may be either conceptual or detailed.

(c) To the extent appropriate, permittees should consider mitigation banking and other appropriate forms of compensatory mitigation. If the District Engineer determines that compensatory mitigation is necessary to offset losses of waters of the United States and ensure that the net adverse effects of the authorized work on the aquatic environment are minimal, consolidated mitigation approaches, such as mitigation banks, will be the preferred method of providing compensatory mitigation, unless the District Engineer determines that activity-specific compensatory mitigation is more appropriate, based on which is best for the aquatic environment. These types of mitigation are preferred because they involve larger blocks of protected aquatic environment, are more likely to meet the mitigation goals, and are more easily checked for compliance. If a mitigation bank or other consolidated mitigation approach is not available in the watershed, the District Engineer will consider other appropriate forms of compensatory mitigation to offset the losses of waters of the United States to ensure that the net adverse effects of the authorized work on the aquatic environment are minimal.

20. Spawning Areas. Activities, including structures and work in navigable waters of the United States or discharges of dredged or fill material, in spawning areas during spawning seasons must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Activities that result in the physical destruction (e.g., excavate, fill, or smother downstream by substantial turbidity) of an important spawning area are not authorized.

21. Management of Water Flows. To the maximum extent practicable, the activity must be designed to maintain preconstruction downstream flow conditions (e.g., location, capacity, and flow rates). Furthermore, the activity must not permanently restrict or impede the passage of normal or expected high flows (unless the primary purpose of the fill is to impound waters) and the structure or discharge of dredged or fill material must withstand expected high flows. The activity must, to the maximum extent practicable, provide for retaining excess flows from the site, provide for maintaining surface flow rates from the site similar to preconstruction conditions, and must not increase water flows from the project site, relocate water, or redirect water flow beyond preconstruction conditions. In addition, the activity must, to the maximum extent practicable, reduce adverse effects such as flooding or erosion downstream and upstream of the project site, unless the activity is part of a larger system designed to manage water flows.

22. Adverse Effects From Impoundments. If the activity, including structures and work in navigable waters of the United States or discharge of dredged or fill material, creates an impoundment of water, adverse effects on the aquatic system caused by the accelerated passage of water and/or the restriction of its flow shall be minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

23. Waterfowl Breeding Areas. Activities, including structures and work in navigable waters of the United States or discharges of dredged or fill material, into breeding areas for migratory waterfowl must be avoided to the maximum extent practicable.

24. Removal of Temporary Fills. Any temporary fills must be removed in their entirety and the affected areas returned to their preexisting elevation.

25. Designated Critical Resource Waters. Critical resource waters include, NOAA-designated marine sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, critical habitat for Federally listed threatened and endangered species, coral reefs, State natural heritage sites, and outstanding national resource waters or other waters officially designated by a State as having particular environmental or ecological significance and identified by the District Engineer after notice and opportunity for public comment. The District Engineer may also designate additional critical resource waters after notice and opportunity for comment.

(a) Except as noted below, discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States are not authorized by NWPs 7, 12, 14, 16, 17, 21, 29, 31, 35, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44 for any activity within, or directly affecting, critical resource waters, including wetlands adjacent to such waters. Discharges of dredged or fill materials into waters of the United States may be authorized by the above NWPs in National Wild and Scenic Rivers if the activity complies with General Condition 7. Further, such discharges may be authorized in designated critical habitat for Federally listed threatened or endangered species if the activity complies with General Condition 11 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service has concurred in a determination of compliance with this condition.

(b) For NWPs 3, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 33, 34, 36, 37, and 38, notification is required in accordance with General Condition 13, for any activity proposed in the designated critical resource waters including wetlands adjacent to those waters. The District Engineer may authorize activities under these NWPs only after he determines that the impacts to the critical resource waters will be no more than minimal.

26. **Fills Within 100-Year Floodplains.** For purposes of this general condition, 100-year floodplains will be identified through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps or FEMA-approved local floodplain maps.

(a) Discharges Below Headwaters. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States resulting in permanent, above-grade fills within the 100-year floodplain at or below the point on a stream where the average annual flow is five cubic feet per second (i.e., below headwaters) are not authorized by NWPs 29, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44. For NWPs 12 and 14, the prospective permittee must notify the District Engineer in accordance with General Condition 13 and the notification must include documentation that any permanent, above-grade fills in waters of the United States within the 100-year floodplain below headwaters comply with FEMA or FEMA-approved local floodplain construction requirements.

(b) Discharges in Headwaters (i.e., above the point on a stream where the average annual flow is five cubic feet per second).

(1) Flood Fringe. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States resulting in permanent, above-grade fills within the flood fringe of the 100-year floodplain of headwaters are not authorized by NWPs 12, 14, 29, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44, unless the prospective permittee notifies the District Engineer in accordance with General Condition 13. The notification must include documentation that such discharges comply with FEMA or FEMA-approved local floodplain construction requirements.

(2) Floodway. Discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States resulting in permanent, above-grade fills within the floodway of the 100-year floodplain of headwaters are not authorized by NWPs 29, 39, 40, 42, 43, and 44. For NWPs 12 and 14, the permittee must notify the District Engineer in accordance with General Condition 13 and the notification must include documentation that any permanent, above grade fills proposed in the floodway comply with FEMA or FEMA-approved local floodplain construction requirements.