

Exactly What Is An EIS?

What is an environmental impact statement (EIS) and when is it necessary?

An EIS is an in-depth study that can be required of any project that expends public money, requires action by a state agency such as issuance of a permit or lending of credit, and has the potential for "significant adverse environmental impact"—causing substantial harm or damage to its surroundings and/or the inhabitants of those surroundings.

According to A Citizen's Guide To Coastal Water Resource Management, the state bases requirement for an EIS on information contained in a preliminary project document called an environmental assessment. That document includes maps and a brief discussion of the need for the proposed activity, reasonable alternatives to it, proposed methods of mitigating (offsetting) or avoiding adverse environmental impacts, and anticipated effects of the activity and its alternatives.

Once the assessment is prepared, the state agency overseeing the project, the Division of Environmental Management (DEM) in this instance, decides if it is complete.

If the agency determines the proposed project has no significant adverse environmental impacts, then it submits the assessment and determination to the N.C. State Clearinghouse for review. The clearinghouse circulates the documents to state and local officials for comment and publishes a summary in its Environmental Bulletin.

Then the public has 15 days to comment before the clearinghouse decides if an impact statement must be completed. Otherwise a "finding of no significant impact" is issued.

If there is a potential for significant adverse environmental impact, then an EIS must be prepared that looks at the cumulative and secondary environmental, social and economic effect of the project. The statement is generated in a process that can take up to several years and includes a public hearing and a public comment period.

The lead state agency makes its decision on information in the EIS. Any state or local agency or citizen may request the decision be reconsidered by the agency's parent department, the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources.

Gypsy Moth Treatments Enter Second Round Of Spraying On Monday

State and federal agriculture experts Monday completed the first round of treatments in their work to eradicate pesky Asian gypsy moths from Brunswick and New Hanover counties.

"All the acreage has been treated one time," said Bill Dickerson, plant protection administrator with the N.C. Department of Agriculture, who is overseeing the project.

"We appreciate the cooperation of the public and everyone involved," he said.

A second round of spraying in the 130,000-acre treatment area was begun Monday.

"If the weather cooperates, we should be finished between Wednesday and Friday of next week," Dickerson said.

Aerial spraying for the moth infestation on April 8.

"It's gone well," Dickerson said. "The weather cooperated and we essentially completed it within 10 days, which was our target."

Most of the infested area, approximately 124,000 acres of the 130,000-acre treatment area, is being sprayed with Bacillus thuringiensis, or Bt, a biological insecticide. Experts have finished applying Gypcheck, another biological insecticide, to the remaining 6,000 acres.

The gypsy moth feeds on the leaves of trees and shrubbery. The infestation in Brunswick and New Hanover counties is the only known infestation of Asian gypsy moths in the country.

The moths arrived in North Carolina when a German munitions vessel docked at Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal last July 4.

Mayor Responds To Call For Impact Study

(Continued From Page 1-A)

Barber says the town hasn't been given any indication thus far more will be required.

The authority, a quasi-governmental agency created by the towns of Sunset Beach and Calabash and expected to include Brunswick County, plans to build a \$35 million sewer system to serve a large section of southwestern Brunswick County.

Sunset Beach residents expressed strong support for the sewer system with the passage on April 5 of a \$5 million general obligation bond referendum.

The SBTA has formally opposed development of a central sewer system unless the communities involved simultaneously address stormwater runoff management needs. At the group's April 2 meeting, members voted for the board to

explore possible legal action to block town participation in any sewer-only project.

According to Barber, both Sunset Beach and Brunswick County are continuing toward the planning and funding of a comprehensive stormwater management phase of the wastewater management program.

Also, his letter states that the town has made a series of efforts to gain the support and cooperation of the SBTA—representation on the advisory committee, state legislation providing that the island-wide 35-foot height cap could only be changed by public referendum, and hearing of SBTA leadership's concerns and suggestions. "They have had a significant impact on the direction of the overall program," said Barber.

The sewer project is in line to receive low-interest loans from two

programs administered by DEM and is under an extremely tight time schedule to retain its eligibility. A delay of even a few months, said Barber, could result in loss of the loans during this funding period and the town "going to the back of the bus" or falling in eligibility in future distributions.

He estimates an EIS would "almost certainly" delay the project at least 18 months and possibly five years or more while growth continues without wastewater or stormwater management.

The town would have to pay for the EIS, he said, at a cost that could range from \$300,000 upward. Barber calculates a one-time increase in property taxes of 86 percent to cover a \$300,000 charge. Based on the current tax rate and tax base, if the cost were \$1 million, it would require a 276 percent tax increase.

Someone with a \$100,000 home who pays \$167 in town taxes would pay \$305 if the study cost \$300,000, or \$628 if it cost \$1 million.

If the sewer system was financed without the low-interest loans, Barber said having to pay market rates for money would require a 10 percent increase in user rates to pay debt service.

Given the current low in market rates, a delay of any length could result in interest rates increasing significantly. "Without the low interest loans, and if interest rates increased by only 1.5 percent," wrote Barber, "debt service would increase by nearly 25 percent, with a comparable increase of 25 percent in user rates required to pay this debt service."

Despite the SBTA's action, Barber said he feels very confident that the project will go forward as planned.

School Board Hears Racial Hiring Bias Charge

(Continued From Page 1-A)

reminded the former school board member that the state sets principals' salaries, not the school board. The board sets the local supplemental salary scale only.

"You can do something about that, then," suggested Randolph.

The state sets salary based on length of experience, level of certification/education, and the size of the school a principal leads.

There may be system administrators who earn more than their assignment warrants. If so, Johnston said, it is because they were transferred in the past and their salary "red-lined" or held at the same level. Otherwise their transfer could have been considered a demotion. "It's an inequity that has happened in the past," he said.

"Many of the problems in the district were not 22 months in the making," Johnston continued, referring to his tenure with the system. "Some were in the making 20 to 30 years and can't be fixed in 22 months."

"My two years in Brunswick County have been like 20 somewhere else," Johnston told Randolph. "I've had some stuff thrown at me."

He and the school board are working to correct past inequities in the system, he said, starting with changes in personnel and other poli-

cies and in hiring procedures.

The system is also seeking funds to more effectively attract black job candidates, as recommended by the system's minority recruitment task force appointed last fall. Statewide, minorities constitute only 16 percent of the pool of certified candidates, Johnston said, and school systems are competing to hire them.

When Russ pointed out the board doesn't know the race of the job applicants recommended to it and isn't supposed to know.

Randolph questioned that, saying the board could and should know someone's race before they are

hired.

"You have to know that to correct the inequities," agreed Gore, "and we need more black role models."

Earlier Gore warned, "You better watch those racial groups. They'll meet behind a tree and throw you out before you know it."

"If you're new here you had better check to see how far you can go before you step on the wrong toes."

Gore prefaced his demands of the board with thanks using its influence to help convince the N.C. Department of Transportation to take over maintenance of Shingletree Acres' main road and Jen-

rette Road near Sunset Beach last year. Parents in the subdivision threatened to keep their children home from school if the poor roads weren't fixed.

Russ said later that she considered Randolph's remarks to her "rude and crude."

Vice Chairman Yvonne Bright presided at Monday's meeting in the absence of Chairman Donna Baxter, who was ill.

The meeting opened with a moment of silent prayer in memory of a West Brunswick High School freshman who committed suicide last week.

Police Search For Woman Last Seen At Seaside Club

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department is seeking help in locating a South Carolina woman who left a Seaside nightclub and failed to return home early Saturday morning.



MELTON
Investigators are not saying whether they suspect foul play, but they are calling the disappearance "suspicious."

Delores Shipp Melton, 38, of North Myrtle Beach was with friends at the High Tide club in Seaside when she went outside with her boyfriend at about 12:30 a.m., according to a crime report filed by Deputy Joey Adams.

The boyfriend returned to get his keys, then went back outside and found that Melton was gone. A bar-

tender who was taking a break outside the club told Adams that he saw Melton get into a vehicle and leave with another man, the report said.

Melton, who has an 11-year-old child, did not return home and did not show up for work at the McDonalds restaurant on Ocean Drive in Myrtle Beach the next day.

She has not been seen since, according to Detective Charlie Miller, who is investigating the case with Detective John Ingram. They detectives are asking anyone with information concerning the whereabouts of Melton to call them at 253-4321 or 1-800-672-6379.

Melton was described as a white female about 4 feet 10 inches tall, with long reddish-blond hair, blue eyes and a medium complexion. She was last seen wearing a blue shirt over a black Harley-Davidson tank top, white shorts and white tennis shoes.

Few April Showers Expected

Near-normal weather is in the forecast for the next few days—warm and a bit dry.

Shalotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday he expects temperatures to average from the mid-50s at night into the mid-70s during the daytime, with less than a half-inch of rainfall.

For the period of April 12-18, Canady recorded a high of 83 degrees on April 14 and a low of 45 degrees on April 17.

A daily average high of 79 degrees and a nightly average low of 57 degrees combined for a daily average temperature of 68 degrees. That's about 5 degrees above average, he said.

Canady measured twenty-eight hundredths of an inch of rainfall.

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