

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION  
PUBLIC NOTICE  
WATERSHED PROTECTION BRANCH

May 13, 2026  
Notice Issue Date

Houston and Twiggs  
City / County

June 11, 2026  
Notice Close Date

SAS-2025-00934  
Control Number

Sec. 401 Water Quality Certification

SR 96 from East of CR 540/Old Hawkinsville Road to West of SR 87 - US Army Corps of Engineers Sec. 404  
Permit Application

This notice is issued to inform the public that a request has been received for water quality certification (WQC) in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The public is invited to comment during this 30-day period on the proposed activity. Information pertaining to the project is attached to this notice. Since the request is specific to 401 WQC, only comments pertaining to water quality are considered under the certification review process. Comments may be submitted via e-mail to: [EPD.WQC@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:EPD.WQC@dnr.ga.gov). Comments may also be provided in writing to: Program Manager, Wetlands Unit, 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. SE, Suite 1052 East, Atlanta, GA 30334. Include the words "Water Quality Certification Comment" and the Control Number above in the e-mail subject line or on the top of the first page of written comments to ensure that your comments will be forwarded to the appropriate staff. For additional information, contact Jacob Kelley at [Jacob.kelley@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:Jacob.kelley@dnr.ga.gov).

Type of Permit Application: 401 Water Quality Certification

Applicable Law: Federal Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1341

Applicable Rules: 40 CFR part 121

Description and Location of Proposed Activity:

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) TIA is seeking a Section 401 Water Quality Certification for activities associated with a road widening project of State Road (SR) 96 in Houston and Twiggs Counties, Georgia. The approximately 6.97-mile project is in Lower Ocmulgee watershed (HUC 03070104) with its midpoint at (32.5416900, -83.5056820). As proposed in the April 3, 2026, Request for 401 WQC, the project includes widening the SR 96 beginning east of County Road (CR) 540/Old Hawkinsville Road/ Thompson Mill Road, then proceed easterly along SR 96 to just west of SR 87/US 23/ US 129 in Houston and Twiggs Counties.

The project, as currently proposed, requires a USACE Section 404 permit and entails permanently impacting 48.718 acres of wetland, 1,022 linear feet (0.334 acre) of perennial stream, 1,043 linear feet (0.108 acre) of intermittent streams, 0.097 acre of open waters, and 0.433 acre of ditches. In addition, the project would temporarily impact 87 linear feet (0.011 acre) of perennial stream and 160 linear feet (0.014 acre) of intermittent stream to widen SR 96. To offset the loss in aquatic function associated with the above impacts, the applicant has proposed the purchase of 42.69 2018 Credits (341.52 Legacy Credits) for proposed wetland impacts, and 1,920.36 2018 Credits (18,777.95 Legacy Credits) for proposed streams impacts would be purchased from a USACE approved mitigation bank servicing the Lower Ocmulgee watershed (HUC 03070104). The purchase of credits has not yet been completed.

Name and Address of Permit Applicant:

Ms. Amber Phillips  
Georgia Department of Transportation  
Office of Environmental Services  
600 W. Peachtree Street, NW, 16th Floor  
Atlanta, Georgia 30308



**Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner**  
One Georgia Center  
600 West Peachtree Street, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
(404) 631-1000 Main Office

April 3, 2026

Brian Kent, Program Manager  
Environmental Protection Division  
2 MLK, Jr. Dr. S.W., Suite 1462  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
ATTN: Michael Berry

Re: Request for 401 Water Quality Certification Application for GDOT Project PI#  
322460-  
Houston and Twiggs Counties  
SR 96 from East of CR 540/Old Hawkinsville Road to West of SR 87  
SAS-2025-00934

Dear Mr. Kent,

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) requests Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) issuance of Water Quality Certification pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) for the above referenced project. GDOT submitted an Individual Section 404 Permit application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for the project on March 23, 2026. GDOT notified GEPD with a request for a pre-filing meeting via email dated December 31, 2025. Per the CWA Section 401 Certification Rule, this certification request contains all nine requirements outlined in section 121.5 (b) for an individual permit.

(1) Project PI# 322460- proposes to widen State Route (SR) 96 from two 12-foot lanes to four 12-foot lanes with a 44-foot depressed median in the rural typical section. The project is proposed to begin widening just east of County Road (CR) 540/Old Hawkinsville Road/ Thompson Mill Road, then proceed easterly along SR 96 to just west of SR 87/US 23/ US 129, where it connects with PI 322470-. This project is located on Georgia Bike Route 40, which requires a bike lane to be added in the urban typical sections and a bike shoulder in the rural typical sections. The existing right-of-way (ROW) is approximately 100 feet wide, and the required ROW would be approximately 200-250 feet wide.

The proposed project is approximately 8.067 miles long and would disturb approximately 250 acres. The purpose of this project is to accommodate increased vehicle traffic along SR 96 and correct operational deficiencies in the corridor.

(2) Attached is a table that documents each aquatic resource impact and its GPS coordinates.

(3) Attached is a figure that illustrates the site boundary and all associated aquatic resources.

(4) The current site conditions consist of maintained roadside rights-of-way (ROW), mixed pine hardwood and bottomland hardwood forests, existing developed properties, utility easements, and managed pine plantations. Attached is a photolog documenting current site conditions.

(5) Proposed activity is anticipated to begin in September 2026 and will be completed in September 2030.

(6) A list of all other federal, interstate, tribal, state, territorial, or local agency authorizations required for the proposed project, including all approvals and denials already received, is outlined in the following table:

Issuing Agency	Type Approval	PI#	Date/ Application	Date/ Approval
USFWS	Section 7 ESA	2025-0081647	3/9/2026	3/19/26
NOAA Fisheries	Section 7 ESA	INQ-2025-00438	3/9/2026	Pending
FHWA	NEPA Final EA/FONSI	322460-, 322470-, and 0007251	8/12/2010	4/27/2011
FHWA	NEPA Environmental Reevaluation #1	322460-, 322470-, and 0007251	1/28/2013	2/19/2013
FHWA	NEPA Environmental Reevaluation #2	322460-, 322470-, and 0007251	8/7/2013	8/20/2013
FHWA	NEPA Environmental Reevaluation #3	322460-, 322470-, and 0007251	3/7/2022	3/8/2022
FHWA	NEPA Environmental Reevaluation #4	322460-, 322470-, and 0007251	6/28/2022	6/29/2022

Issuing Agency	Type Approval	PI#	Date/ Application	Date/ Approval
FHWA	NEPA Environmental Reevaluation #5	322460-, 322470-, and 0007251	Pending	Pending
USACE	Aquatic Resource Delineation Verification Request	SAS-2025- 00934	10/13/2025	11/25/2025
USACE	Practicable Alternatives Report (PAR)	SAS-2025- 00934	11/10/2009	11/18/2009
USACE	Updated PAR Memorandum	SAS-2025- 00934	2/4/2026	2/5/2026
GA HPD-SHPO	Section 106 NHPA Concurrence of Findings	STP-155-1(22) – PI#322460-	Archaeology- 7/24/2008 History - 11/23/2009	Archaeolog y- 8/7/2008 History - 12/15/2009
GA EPD	401 WQC	Unknown	Pending	Pending
GA EPD	Buffer Variance	Unknown	Pending	Pending
GA EPD	NPDES	Unknown	Pending	Pending

Key: FHWA – Federal Highway Administration, NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act, USFWS – United States Fish and Wildlife Service, ESA – Endangered Species Act, NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, EFH – Essential Fish Habitat, GA HPD – Georgia Historic Preservation Division, SHPO – State Historic Preservation Office, NHPA – National Historic Preservation Act

(7) Attached is the email correspondence initiated December 31st, 2025 between GDOT to GEPD documenting that a pre-filing meeting request was submitted to the certifying authority at least 30 days prior to submitting the certification request.

The project proponent hereby certifies that all information contained herein is true, accurate, and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief. The project proponent hereby requests that the certifying authority review and take action on this CWA 401 certification request within the applicable reasonable period of time.

Brian Kent  
GDOT PI No. 322460-  
April 3, 2026

Please copy the GDOT Ecologist, Environmental Analyst, and the USACE Project Manager on any future correspondence. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact GDOT Support Services Ecologist Dan Ashworth at 404-433-2421 (bashworth@dot.ga.gov) or GDOT Support Services Ecology Team Leader Katie Zornig at 404-803-4279 (kzornig@dot.ga.gov).

Sincerely,

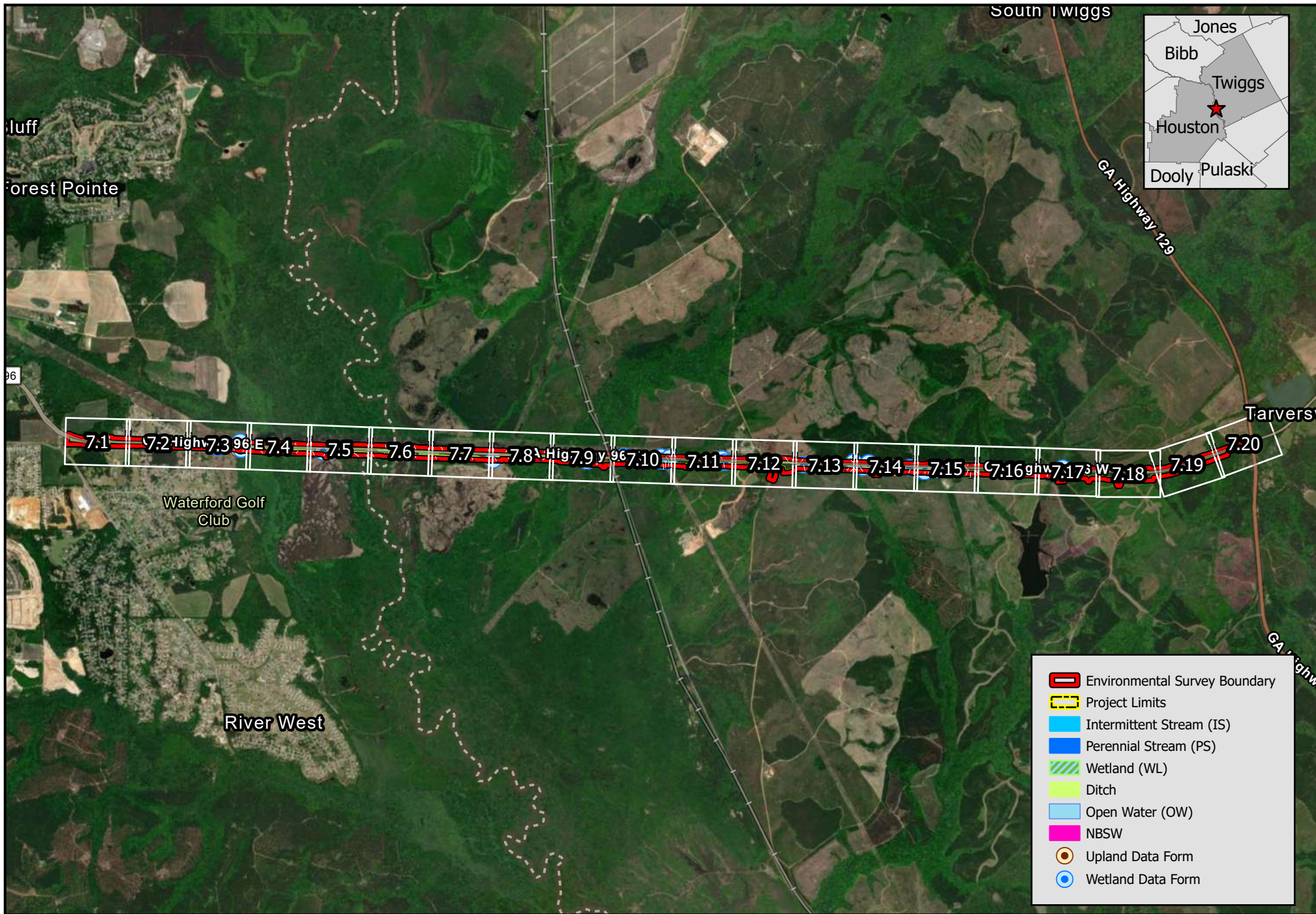
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Amber Phillips" followed by a stylized flourish.

Amber Phillips  
State Environmental Administrator

AP/KZ/jm  
Enclosure

cc:

Shanda Marsh, GDOT PM  
Lauren Bolstad, GDOT Environmental Analyst  
GDOT Environmental Inbox (ENV\_Inbox@dot.ga.gov)  
Daryl Williams, GDOT ECB  
Lisa Westberry, GDOT Mitigation  
EPD-GDOT Inbox (epd.gdot@dnr.ga.gov)  
Eric Somerville, EPA  
GDOT IOEQ Inbox (IOEQsubmittals@dot.ga.gov)  
Nicole Liette, USACE Reviewer  
Meredith Tredeau, Consultant at WSP  
Cydney Abel, Consultant at Pond  
Robert Brown, Consultant at Pond



Service Layer Credits: Hybrid Reference Layer: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

**Figure 7**  
**State and Federal Waters Map (Aerial) - Index**

SR 96 From E of CR 540/Old Hawkinsville Road to W of SR 87  
 Houston and Twiggs Counties, Georgia  
 November 2025  
 PI#: 322460-  
 Author: CA

