

Ecology

Project Basics

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OVERVIEW

The following describes basic Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) project information pertaining to the Ecologist including schedule, online resources, funding, lead Federal Agency, and program types.

PROJECT TEAM AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Upon project assignment, the Ecologist should determine the GDOT project team contact information including the Project Manager (PM), Environmental Analyst, and lead Designer. These team members can be found on the *OES All Projects Spreadsheet* available on the [GDOT Office of Environmental Services \(OES\) SharePoint](#).¹ If applicable, all previously transmitted ecology reports must be requested from the GDOT Ecologist or Ecology Team Leader, and survey and design files (PDF and DGN) must be requested from the lead Designer.

P6 SCHEDULE

Also upon project assignment, the Ecologist must review the project Primavera P6 schedule and confirm that Ecology activities can be completed as scheduled. The P6 schedule should be provided by the PM or Environmental Analyst. It is also available on the GDOT OES SharePoint.

For consultant projects, the GDOT Ecologist should confirm that the P6 schedule is feasible and discuss a recovery schedule, if needed. The prime consultant must coordinate with sub consultants, as needed, to confirm ecology and species survey schedules are consistent with the P6 schedule. The following tables list the ecology P6 activities, expected duration (in business days), and associated deliverable/action required).

¹ See instructions for accessing SharePoint on the [Office of Environmental Services Guidebooks website](#).

Table 1 – Ecology Survey

P6 Activity	Activity Description	Duration	Deliverable/Action Required
Ecology Survey (240 days Total)			
11413	Conduct Ecology Survey (with steps) <u>Applicable tasks (6 Steps)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Background Research & Early Coordination • Conduct Ecology Survey for Protected Water & Habitats • USACE, EPD, and/or CRD Field Visits (if needed) • Prepare ERSR • GDOT Review of ERSR • Submit Ecology Resource Boundaries 	120 days	ERSR approved and Ecology Boundaries submitted to the PM
11414	Conduct Ecology Survey for Seasonal Species	60 days	Species survey completed
11424	Conduct Ecology Survey for 2nd Seasonal Species	60 days	Species survey completed
11447	Receive Local/Consultant Ecology Survey	0 days*	ERSR version 1 is received by OES

*Milestone Activity; ERSR – Ecology Resource Survey Report; USACE – US Army Corps of Engineers; EPD – Environmental Protection Division; CRD – Coastal Resources Division

Table 2 – Agency Consultation

P6 Activity	Activity Description	Duration	Deliverable/Action Required
Agency Consultation for Ecology (120 days Total)			
13463	Conduct Agency Consultation for Ecology (with steps) <u>Applicable tasks (4 Steps)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare ERS AOE, BE, or BA • GDOT Review of AOER, BE, or BA • Submit ERS AOE, BE, or BA to FHWA • USFWS/NOAA Fisheries Review and Concurrence 	120 days	Agency consultation completed or concurrence received (if needed)
13467	Receive Local/Consultant Agency Consultation for Ecology	0 days*	ERS AOE version 1 received by OES

*Milestone Activity; ERS AOE – Ecology Resource Survey and Assessment of Effects Report; BE – Biological Evaluation; BA – Biological Assessment; FHWA – Federal Highway Administration; USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Table 3 – Permits

P6 Activity	Activity Description	Duration	Deliverable/Action Required
Permits (65 or 100 days Total)			
88233	Complete 404 Permit (with steps) <u>Applicable tasks (7 Steps)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 404 Permit Application Preparation • 404 Permit Application GDOT Review • 404 Permit Submission • 404 Permit Review by Resource Agency • USACE Public Notice (PCN or JPN) • USACE Prepares and Issues 404 Permit • Purchase of 404 Mitigation Credits 	NWP/RGP = 65 days IP = 100 days	404 Permit authorization received and mitigation credits purchased
88234	404 Individual Permit - JPN Activities (only if IP required)	40 days	Public comment period ended and all public comments addressed
88253	Prepare Buffer Variance (with steps) <u>Applicable tasks (4 Steps)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare BV Application • GDOT Review of BV Application • Submit BV Application to EPD • BV Public Notice 	85 days	BV received and mitigation credits purchased

PCN – Pre-Construction Notification; JPN – Joint Public Notice; BV – Buffer Variance; EPD – Environmental Protection Division; NWP – Nationwide Permit; RGP – Regional General Permit; IP – Individual Permit

Table 4 – Update Ecology Studies for Construction Authorization

P6 Activity	Activity Description	Duration	Deliverable/Action Required
Update Environmental Studies for Construction Authorization (20 days Total)			
18814	Update Ecology Studies <i>Applicable tasks (4 Steps)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Ecology Addendum, BE, or BA • GDOT Review of Addendum, BE, or BA • Submit Addendum, BE, or BA to FHWA • USFWS/NOAA Fisheries Review and Concurrence 	20 days	Agency concurrence received, if needed

BE – Biological Evaluation; BA – Biological Assessment; FHWA – Federal Highway Administration; USFWS – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; NOAA - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

ONLINE RESOURCES

GeoPI

GeoPI is an online repository for project information and files including, but not limited to, the following: GDOT PM name, project description, programmed funds, milestone dates (i.e., management let and right-of-way [ROW]), bridge inventory sheets and other project documents. GeoPI is available on the [MyGDOT](#) website.

SharePoint

GDOT OES maintains a SharePoint website for storing guidance documents, agency transmittals, avoidance and minimization measures meeting (A3M) tracking, P6 environmental schedules, and other relevant content. The GDOT OES SharePoint can be accessed through the OES website on MyGDOT. The OES Environmental Delivery Support Team maintains weekly and monthly environmental P6 schedules online. The monthly schedules can be found by navigating to the “Guidance and Document Library” of the GDOT OES SharePoint and then using the search bar to search for “Environmental Schedules” or by using [this link](#). The weekly schedules can be found [here](#) or by navigating to the “All Projects Spreadsheet” folder in the “Guidance and Document Library”. Primavera and schedule management training is available. Email OES_Primavera_P6@dot.ga.gov to request the training schedule or for any questions regarding P6.

The GDOT Ecology Section also maintains a [SharePoint](#) site which can be accessed from the GDOT OES SharePoint main page. The Ecology Section SharePoint “Shared Documents” folder contains useful information, including but not limited to, agency agreements, guidance documents, ecology report templates, survey methodologies, and policies and procedures.

Important announcements are posted to the Ecology Section SharePoint; thus, it is recommended that email alerts for announcements and SharePoint updates be enabled. To set up email alerts, navigate to the “Announcements” page of the Ecology Section SharePoint. Click on the “List” tab in the top left portion of the screen and then click on the “Alert Me” button. Select “Set Alert” on this list and adjust alert settings as desired for frequency of alerts.

Secure FTP (SFTP)

The OES SFTP is the primary file transfer protocol used by GDOT OES. Use of the SFTP by external users requires WinSCP software. Instructions for installing WinSCP and accessing the SFTP can be found in the “Shared Documents” folder of the Ecology Section SharePoint.

Access to MyGDOT, OES SharePoint, and SFTP requires a valid GDOT username and password. Refer to the New Consultant Registration & SharePoint Access Instructions on the Ecology Section SharePoint for more information. For new consultant employees, the consultant supervisor must submit an email request to the GDOT Ecology Special Projects Coordinator requesting SFTP access for the new employee.

PROJECT FUNDING AND LEAD FEDERAL AGENCY

Programmed funds listed in GeoPI identify funding source (i.e., federal or state); however, the PM should be contacted to verify funding source. For projects receiving federal funding, federal oversight is typically required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Projects in the GDOT Intermodal Program (Aviation, Bike/Pedestrian, Rail, Transit, or Waterways) may have a different lead Federal Agency (i.e. Federal Transit Authority or Federal Rail Authority). Note that GDOT OES does not have oversight on intermodal projects and any environmental documents or permits required for such projects are not issued to the GDOT State Environmental Administrator.

The FHWA serves as the lead Federal Agency on most federally funded GDOT projects. The [Joint Coordination Procedures](#) (JCP) and associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be consulted for agency coordination requirement for ecology resources on federally funded projects. The [GDOT District and Agency Contacts Map](#) on the Ecology Section SharePoint should be consulted for appropriate agency points of contact.

For state-funded projects, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) serves as the lead Federal Agency if a Section 404 Clean Water Act permit is required. The USACE only has jurisdiction over and liability for their Scope of Analysis (SOA). GDOT USACE Coordination Instructions should be consulted for determining the SOA when USACE is the lead Federal Agency. The JCP and associated SOPs for agency coordination also apply when USACE is the lead Federal Agency.

For state-funded projects that do not have a lead Federal Agency (i.e., no permit is required), GDOT will act as the lead Federal Agency. Environmental resource documentation and avoidance and minimization of impacts is still required. The documentation process will vary based on project characteristics, such as funding amount and likelihood of “take” of species. The GDOT Ecologist or Ecology Team Leader should be consulted regarding documentation requirements for state-funded projects with no federal action.

PROGRAM TYPE

There are two primary program types for GDOT projects that receive Environmental Certification through OES: 1) Design-Bid-Build, and 2) Design-Build. Projects that follow other program types must be coordinated with the GDOT Ecologist or Ecology Team Leader to determine the appropriate process for ecology.

Design-Bid-Build

Design-Bid-Build represents the traditional process of GDOT project delivery and involves final project design by GDOT or a consultant under contract with GDOT, project letting for construction by GDOT, and project construction by a contractor awarded the GDOT contract. Design-Bid-Build projects are typically programmed and managed through the GDOT Office of Program Delivery.

Design-Build

Design-Build projects involve conceptual project design (i.e., 30% plans) by GDOT or a consultant under contract with GDOT, project letting for final design and construction by GDOT, and final design and construction completed by a contractor awarded the Design-Build contract. Design-Build projects are typically programmed and managed through the GDOT Office of Alternative Delivery.

Guidebook Revision History

Revision Description	Relevant Sections	Revision Date
Initial Publication	All	5/22/2019
Updated Acronyms, Hyperlinks	All	12/09/2020
Minor editorial revisions & hyperlinks	All	
Table 3 name change	P6 Schedule	11/7/2023
Office name update	Program Type	