



FEMA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
EMERGENCY TEMPORARY HOUSING PROJECTS
WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA
FEMA-1981-DR-ND**

As a result of damages from severe flooding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under a Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1981-DR-ND) to provide Federal assistance per the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, to designated disaster areas in North Dakota. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable. There are insufficient rental units available to house displaced disaster victims.

The use of hotel rooms, shelters or staying with family/friends is only appropriate for a very limited time period. In response to this need, FEMA is proposing to build emergency disaster group housing for residents in the vicinity of Minot and Burlington, Ward County, North Dakota.

In order to implement its IA Program in a timely and effective manner, FEMA utilized an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced victims. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and FEMA regulations for NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10). The EA's purpose is to analyze and document the proposed alternative's potential environmental impacts, serve as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed temporary housing sites are listed in the EA's Table 1. USACE contractors have been tasked with development of at least one site with a capacity of 150-200 mobile homes. At this time, site occupancy is expected to not exceed 18 months. The proposed group sites will include development of temporary gravel pads for housing foundations, school bus shelters, mailbox units, gravel and asphalt roadways, and all utilities related to the infrastructure of the community including a sewer system, waterline installation, phone, cable, and electric. Access to the sites from surrounding roads along with internal circulation will also be designed in coordination with applicable city and county staff. A general National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit or waiver and Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. FEMA expects that the mobile homes will be hauled from the site to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on a case-by-case basis) when the temporary housing need ends. The site will then be seeded or used by the property owner in a manner consistent with applicable land use approvals.

The public comment period for the Draft EA was from July 22 to July 25, 2011, with notice published in the Minot Daily News, Bismarck Tribune newspapers, Grand Forks Herald, Williston Herald and on FEMA's web site at : <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/index.shtm>. The Public Notice notified residents of the proposed project, the availability of the Draft EA, and the opportunity to comment.

FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the Souris Basin Emergency Temporary Housing Project EA:

The above described action will not result in any significant adverse impacts related to geology and soils; hydrology and floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation and wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; hazardous materials and toxic wastes; and traffic and transportation. The proposed alternative has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x).

The following summarizes what is outlined in the EA and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

1. The construction contractor would be required to identify and implement specific Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., installation of silt fences, hay bales, etc.) to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. In order to convey storm water runoff, the design contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood site residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements, including the acquisition of easements if applicable. A general National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, or a waiver of the permit, must be obtained from the North Dakota Department of Health prior to the start of any work on the site.
2. In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, if unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer and other interested parties.
3. Temporary roads on the site during construction should be constructed of permeable asphalt like millings, gravel, or similar material to reduce airborne particles. Periodic wetting during construction and home removal would reduce fugitive dust. The contractor shall appropriately cover any fill stored on site during unit installation or removal. These measures would help reduce air quality impacts on asthmatics, seniors, and other sensitive residents.
4. If any hazardous materials are found between start of construction and final site closure, all hazardous materials shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
5. If necessary, noise reduction measures would be instituted. These measures include: 1) using a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. construction time frame for Temporary Housing Site 16, with no construction activities on Sundays. Site 16 is located in an urban residential area

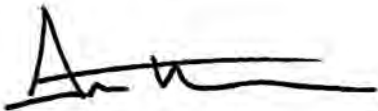
and is land owned by the St. John the Apostle Catholic Church, which is directly adjacent; 2) completing construction closest to potential sensitive receptors first; and/or 3) completing noisier activities during the day if using a 24-hour schedule for those sites in rural areas.

6. Safety and security mitigation measures would include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), implementation of approved safety and management plans, phased construction, UFAS considerations, and appropriate signage and fencing. The fencing and gates shall not impede or hinder future restoration work. The contractor will post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers should be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes. The contractor will also place fencing around the site perimeter to protect residents from vehicular traffic on surrounding roads and will provide 24-hour security services at the site during construction, if needed. To minimize worker and public health and safety risks from project construction and closure, all construction and closure work will be done using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of construction equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. Additionally, all activities will be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Emergency shelters should be included in the group site to accommodate the residents of the mobile homes including individuals with limited mobility and disability. Temporary guard shacks should be constructed at construction sites to protect residents. Once constructed the larger temporary housing communities would included an onsite office trailer.
7. Contractor will coordinate with FEMA's Safety Officer prior to construction.
8. Due to the increased traffic volume associated with the construction vehicles and temporary residents, the contractor would need to work with the City Public Works Department and the Ward and McHenry County Road and Bridge Supervisor to assure that the local level of service on the roadway remains adequate. The contractor should design the roadways to allow multiple ingresses and egresses to sites. The roads and lane widths should be designed to allow ample room for fire and emergency apparatus to pass as defined by local codes. The roadways should at a minimum be graveled and compacted to facilitate maintenance and upkeep, local environment, traffic volume, and usage.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated EA, and in accordance with Presidential Executive Orders 12898 (Environmental Justice), 11988 (Floodplain Management), and 11990 (Wetland Protection), FEMA has determined that the proposed action implemented with the conditions and mitigation measures outlined above and in the EA will not have any significant adverse effects on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVAL:



Steven Hardegen, RVIII Environmental Officer

July 26, 2011

Date

Environmental Assessment

Temporary Housing Sites

FEMA-1981-DR-ND

Minot, Ward County, North Dakota

July 2011



FEMA

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMSL	Above Mean Sea Level
BMP	Best Management Practices
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DEA	Draft Environmental Assessment
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
EA	Environmental Assessment
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FINDS	Facility Index System
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GIS	Geographic Information System
LUST	Leaking Underground Storage Tank
NDDNR	North Dakota Department of Natural Resources
NDNRCS	North Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SQG	Small-Quantity Generator
SHWS	State Hazardous Waste Site
TCP	Traditional Cultural Properties
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
USFS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

Environmental Assessment Temporary Housing Sites FEMA-1981-DR-ND

This Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the results of a study of the proposed action's potential environmental impacts and has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969; the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations [CFR], Part 1500 1508 [49 CFR 1500-15008]); and the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR 10.9).

Background

In February, 2011, flooding began in the Souris River Basin. Spring rains compounded the snowmelt flooding and in mid-June significant rainfall in the upper reaches of the basin resulted in river flows far exceeding any previously experienced in the basin. These flows overtopped emergency levees resulting in devastating flooding in Burlington and Minot, North Dakota, and the rural region between those two communities. From aerial photography and elevation data, FEMA has identified over 4,100 structures in Minot affected by floodwaters from 1 to 17 feet in depth; and of those, more than 2,300 had six-to-ten feet of water and more than 1,000 had from ten to seventeen feet of water in them. From 10,000 to 12,000 people were evacuated from the flooded area in Minot. In the City of Burlington 230 residential units were flooded.

On May 10, 2011, President Obama signed a federal disaster declaration (FEMA-1981-DR-ND) authorizing FEMA to provide federal assistance. Both Ward and McHenry Counties were included in the initial notice for public assistance. On June 11, 2011, Amendment 4 to the declaration added individual assistance for Ward County, and on June 29, 2011, Amendment 5 added individual assistance for McHenry and Renville Counties. Displaced individuals and families are currently living with friends or relatives and at other dispersed temporary housing locations, with a few living in shelters. There are limited temporary housing options in north central North Dakota due to the influx of oil field employees. Therefore, the need exists to expedite the selection and development process of group site locations for temporary mobile homes. Temporary housing will minimize the amount of time displaced individuals spend in shelters and at other dispersed locations.

As part of its role in disaster recovery, FEMA has tasked the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with a temporary housing mission. To that end FEMA and USACE are working with partners at the state and local levels to coordinate the development of housing for recovery in Ward, Renville and McHenry counties within the Souris River Basin in North Dakota.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to assist residents displaced by the Souris River Basin floods by providing temporary housing. The need for temporary housing exists because there is no available temporary housing in the locale. FEMA is authorized to provide disaster assistance funds in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 USC 5121-5206, as amended (Stafford Act, Public Law 93-288). Section 408 of the Stafford Act

authorizes FEMA's Individual Assistance Program to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable.

Project Alternatives

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the environmental review process. Commonly-used temporary housing strategies such as rental units, hotels and motels, are in short supply in much of North Dakota due to the housing requirements for oil field employees. Because of the lack of other housing alternatives, FEMA has assigned the US Army Corps of Engineers a mission for one group temporary housing site holding up to 200 units. Given the number of people affected by the disaster and the number of homes with greater than six feet of water in them, the requirement for temporary housing in the Souris River Basin could increase.

Alternatives are addressed in this Draft EA: the No Action Alternative, where FEMA would not build temporary housing, and the Proposed Action, where FEMA would build temporary housing at one or more of the sites described in this assessment. Multiple sites are being evaluated based on physical characteristics, such as topography, and proximity to utilities and services. Complete assessments of the damage cannot be done until the floodwaters have receded, so the full requirement for temporary housing units is not yet known.

The assessment and development of sites for temporary housing described in this document are nearly identical to the assessment and development of sites for use as base camps for recovery workers or for the development of modular structures for critical public infrastructure, such as school classrooms. Design details differ but the sites assessed herein could be used for either of those two purposes.

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, FEMA would not fund the Proposed Action. Because the flooding has affected and possibly destroyed such a large number of residences in Burlington, Minot and other communities in Ward, Renville and McHenry counties, residents would have to remain in those locations to which they originally evacuated. This includes locations with their families and friends, in travel trailers, and motels in other cities. This will result in further economic and personal hardships for affected residents, disrupt school attendance and the school system, and further strain the affected counties' social and economic infrastructure.

Alternative 2 – Temporary Housing at Sites near the Affected Areas (Proposed Action)

In considering the "range of reasonable alternatives," FEMA investigates the availability of existing temporary housing units within the community, such as motels, hotels, rental units and open sites in existing trailer parks. Those options were not available in Minot. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) noted in their 2011 1st Quarter Housing Marketing Conditions report that "During the first quarter of 2011, according to local sources, vacancy rates in Minot and Bismarck ranged from 2 to 3 percent and in oil-impacted areas such as Dickenson and Williston in western North Dakota were below 2 percent. Because of a housing shortage in oil-impacted areas, many workers stay in hotels and trailers in and around those cities or commute

as far as 100 miles to work.” Existing manufactured home sites were either full or within the inundated area.

The Proposed Action provides temporary housing for families displaced by the flooding in the Souris River Basin in north central North Dakota. Presently Ward, Renville and McHenry counties comprise most of the area affected by flooding. This alternative provides disaster victims with temporary housing on one of the sites considered for development of temporary housing. The Proposed Action Alternative enables the development of at least one site with a capacity of 150-200 mobile homes. The group site will include development of temporary gravel pads for housing foundation, school bus shelters, mailbox units, gravel and asphalt roadways, and all utilities related to the infrastructure of the community including a sewer system, waterline installation, phone, cable, and electric. FEMA expects that the mobile homes will be hauled from the site to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on a case-by-case basis) when the temporary housing need ends. The site will then be seeded or used by the property owner in a manner consistent with applicable land use approvals.

Project Location

Over 25 sites were considered for temporary housing. All the sites are located near Burlington and Minot, North Dakota and are noted in Attachment C (Table 1). Preliminary evaluation determined that not all of the sites would be suitable for temporary housing, and were not evaluated any further. These are highlighted in Table 1.

Site Description

Sites are provided for consideration by the local officials and USACE initially assesses them based on their size and physical characteristics for engineering suitability. Additional factors considered in choosing a site include: site topography; property owner willingness; past land use; if it was already planned for development; access to existing utilities; ingress and egress; proximity to services and amenities; and engineering feasibility. Sites that pass the initial assessment are compared in this environmental assessment to identify any effects on natural or cultural resources as well as social and economic effects.

Table 1 briefly describes each site and some of the characteristics that USACE assessed to determine if it was physically suitable for development of temporary housing. Sites that were removed from consideration were either:

- duplicates to previous sites that had been previously assessed,
- too hilly,
- not close to existing utilities, or
- the owner preferred to continue with existing plans for the site.

In some cases the amount of property made available by the owner would change so the boundaries of some sites have changed as well. After discussions with the City regarding lot size, about 40 acres would be required for 200 units. Many sites smaller than 40 acres continue to be considered

but larger sites that can accommodate more residents on the same utilities will likely be developed first. Because of the unknown requirement for housing as many sites as possible remain open for consideration.

Project Description

The group site will include development of temporary gravel pads for housing foundations, gravel roadways and utilities related to the infrastructure of the community including a sewer system, waterline and hydrant installation, and electric. The sites could include appurtenant support features such as school bus shelters and mailbox units. Development of the site will require a number of steps including surveying; clearing; stripping; soil testing; grading; utility and access road design and installation; and surface storm water and erosion control.

Utilities on the site will include potable water, sanitary sewer, and electricity. The contractor will ensure that the new utility infrastructure is compatible with capacity needed for the remainder of the city. Trench depths of 8.5 ft will be required for water and sewer for this project. The construction schedule will be coordinated with the city and other utility providers, such as gas and communications, and they will be allowed an opportunity to add these utilities when the trenches are open. Storm water will be managed as surface drainage; storm sewers won't be placed.

Access to the site from surrounding roads along with internal circulation will also be designed in coordination with applicable city and county staff. Site preparation will require grading to create appropriate building pads, road grades, and to shed storm water to appropriate locations. Best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. A safety fence will be installed and maintained around the site perimeter during construction.

Roadways will not be completed with asphalt because of the temporary nature of the site. Winter plowing on the roads might be tolerated better by asphalt, but gravel roads are used throughout the state and do not deteriorate significantly with plowing over 2 winters. Lots developed to UFAS standards for accessibility could have additional concrete sidewalks to accommodate the residents' mobility requirements. These details will be developed in the design phase which is slated to begin about the time this assessment is released for public review and comment.

USACE is responsible for site assessment and development. FEMA, in conjunction with the communities, is responsible for site selection, purchase and installation of the manufactured housing units, and management of the site while the residents displaced by the flooding are there. FEMA is also responsible for selecting, developing and managing the staging area.

The manufactured housing units that will be purchased meet northern codes for insulation. They have electric rather than propane heat, thus appropriate power will be brought to each lot. The site development requires utility lines to be 8.5 feet deep but the lines must be protected as they are brought up to the unit. Electric heat tape, an insulated boot or other locally-used successful techniques will be considered to ensure repeated maintenance is not required for burst water or sewer lines. The homes will be stabilized against the wind according to local and national codes with tie downs, and consideration will be given to locally-used successful techniques during design. FEMA will have a site manager for the sites, possibly more than one depending on the

number of sites. Fencing and security guards to protect the residents will be considered and made available.

Staging areas will be used to collect the incoming units for inspection and testing. Power drops will be used to test unit appliances and the selected site will be mowed and, if necessary, graded or graveled to level it. Adequate space for ingress, egress and turning for the trailers will be required. The site will be fenced and secured 24/7 and from 50-100 units will be on the site throughout the operation. Staging area environmental documentation is being completed separately from this environmental assessment and won't be assessed further here.

FEMA expects that the mobile homes will be hauled from the site to suitable locations elsewhere (to be determined on a case-by-case basis) when the temporary housing need ends in from 12 to 18 months. The site will then be seeded or used by the property owner in a manner consistent with applicable land use approvals.

Sites Considered and Dismissed

In order to expedite the site selection process, the Cities of Minot and Burlington provided USACE with a list of potential sites. These were reviewed using available aerial photos and maps, conducting site reconnaissance field surveys, and contacting state and local officials to identify the best potential sites. Additional factors considered in choosing a site include: site topography; property owner willingness; past land use, if it was already planned for development; access to existing utilities; and engineering feasibility. Some sites highlighted in the table above were dropped from consideration for various reasons. Other suitable group sites identified prior to July 21, 2011 may be addressed in a subsequent supplemental NEPA Environmental Assessment.

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

In order to meet the proposed purpose and need of timely delivery of emergency temporary housing, USACE conducted an expedited environmental review process to analyze all natural and human environmental issues associated with the variety of sites identified in Burlington and Minot. The environmental review process included field reconnaissance at the site, background research, and expedited agency consultation. The field reconnaissance was conducted July 5-15, 2011. Background research consisted of a review of census statistics, wetlands maps, FEMA floodplain maps, hazardous materials databases, archaeological and historic structures databases, threatened and endangered species information, soil surveys, and other available information.

Expedited agency consultation through verbal and written communications with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), North Dakota Department of Game and Fish, and the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) produced "No Effect" determination letters from each agency.

Potential Impact Analysis

Geology and Soils

The Proposed Action's effect on geology and soils would be negligible. The soils that were identified in the NRCS website for most of the sites consist of several different types of loam. The

majority of the sites, excluding the wetlands, consist of Barnes Loam, Svea Loam, Max- Williams loam, Embden fine sandy loam, and the Hamerly loam. The loams have annual air temperature between 37 to 45 degrees F and a frost-free period for approximately 110 to 130 days. The annual precipitation is between 14 to 17 inches. Most of the drainage descriptions for the loams are well drained and are very low in Salinity.

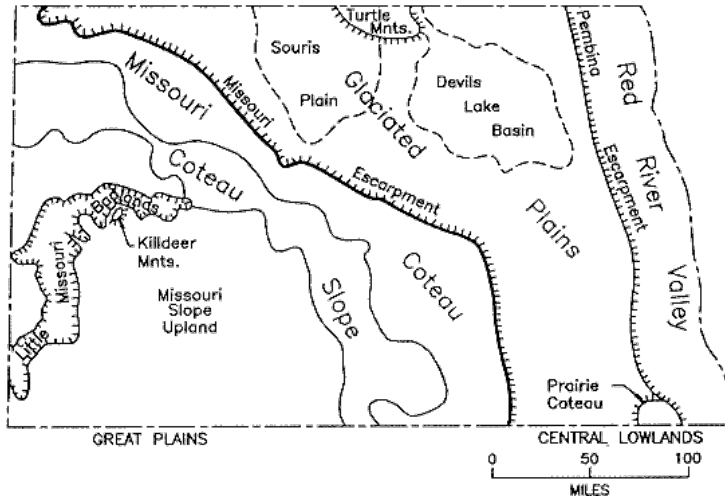


Figure 1: North central North Dakota in the Souris Plain

Minot is located in north central North Dakota in the Souris Plain, drained by the Souris River (often designated as the Mouse River in the United States) (North Dakota Geological Survey).

Under the Farmland Protection Policy Act, coordination with the Natural Resources Conservation Service is not required because of the temporary nature of the project. However, we have provided the NRCS with form AD-1006; Farmland Conversion Impact Rating. While the proposed project is temporary the utilities will be placed to a depth that meets permanent code. It is likely that these sites once developed will not be returned to farmland thus the coordination with NRCS was completed (see Appendix B).

Mitigation Measures

The existing geology, topography, and soils would not preclude the use of these sites for temporary mobile homes. There are negligible impacts to geology and soils, therefore mitigation measures are not required.

Hydrology and Floodplains

A review of the Proposed Action found that the effect that it would have on hydrology and floodplains would be negligible. None of the areas were inundated during the flooding which were well above the 100-year level (see Appendix A – Maps).

Mitigation Measures

The temporary housing sites and staging areas are determined to be outside any floodplain; therefore mitigation measures are not required. See attached FIRMs.

Wetlands

Wetlands consist of lands where saturation with water is the dominant factor determining the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal inhabitants. For regulatory purposes under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the term wetland is defined as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.” A review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetland Inventory Maps (NWI) showed numerous freshwater emergent wetlands in many of the sites. Field reconnaissance of the site revealed a number of small, seasonal, isolated, depression wetlands (prairie potholes) scattered throughout the Proposed Action. On average these small, isolated wetland areas would each measure approximately 0.01 acre in size. Larger wetlands on the site would be incorporated into the surface drainage plan and buffered to provide green space for the site, or between 200-unit sites developed on the larger properties being considered.

Wetlands are valuable biological resources that perform many functions, including groundwater recharge, flood flow attenuation, erosion control, and water quality improvement. Wetlands also provide habitat for many plants and animals, including threatened and endangered species. Executive Order 11990 “Protection of Wetlands” directs all federal agencies to “minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands.”

Only isolated depressions would be affected on the assessed sites. Since these isolated wetlands have no nexus to traditional navigable waters they are not jurisdictional and therefore not subject to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency is being coordinated with for concurrence to the Corps that the wetlands are isolated and non-jurisdictional for the purposes of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The FEMA has determined that the project’s effect on wetlands and waters of the United States would be negligible.

The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing of flood and flood-related therefore, there would be no impacts to any jurisdictional wetlands.

Mitigation Measures

There are negligible impacts to wetlands as most will be avoided through site design and layout; therefore mitigation measures are not required.

Water Quality

There are no streams located on the properties under consideration. Smaller, intermittent to ephemeral stream channels are present in some sites under consideration, but most sites slope toward the road ditches at the edge of the property. Site design and layout takes into consideration the additional impervious surface introduced to the site. Impacts to existing surface drainage will be identified and resolved during site design.

A General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (ground disturbance permit, or a waiver of the permit, would be required to be obtained from the North Dakota

Department of Health before construction begins. This usually includes identification of Best Management Practices (BMPs; e.g., silt fences, hay bales, etc.). The Contractor must implement specific BMPs to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities of the Proposed Action and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction, regardless of whether a NPDES Permit or a waiver from the permit requirement is secured. No work would begin until the NPDES Permit or a waiver is issued by the North Dakota Department of Health. (http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stateinfo.cfm?&view=state&state_id=35&state=ND).

The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing of flood victims; therefore, there would be no impacts to water quality.

Mitigation Measures

The construction contractor would be required to identify and implement specific BMPs (e.g., silt fences, hay bales, etc.) to reduce or eliminate runoff impacts during proposed construction activities and to reduce the potential for soil erosion after construction. In order to convey storm water runoff, the design contractor will be required to design drainage features so that flows will not flood site residents or surrounding properties during storm events. The drainage system will be required to meet local and county requirements, including the acquisition of easements if applicable.

Air Quality

Within the Ward and McHenry temporary housing sites and staging areas, air quality programs are coordinated with the North Dakota Department of Natural Resources (NDDNR). On the Federal level, air quality programs are coordinated with Region VII of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Proposed Action would include activities that would produce a minor, temporary, and localized impact from vehicle emissions and dust particles. Tractor-trailers would transport manufactured homes to the site. Construction equipment would be required for site preparation. Equipment use would temporarily increase emissions; however, no long-term air quality impacts are anticipated. Federal or state air quality attainment levels would not be exceeded.

Construction activity associated with the Proposed Action would produce pollutant emissions. Heavy equipment would produce small amounts of hydrocarbons and exhaust fumes. It would be expected that some air pollutants would increase in the project areas; however, the concentrations of these pollutants would not cause the region to reach nonattainment status. The construction contractor would be required to maintain the vehicles on the sites in good working order to minimize pollutant emissions. Fugitive dust would also result from proposed construction activities. The contractor would be required to address dust suppression activities. Adverse impacts to air quality resulting from the proposed activity would be short term and temporary during construction only.

The No Action Alternative would result in some longer commutes by the displaced people than under the Proposed Action and, therefore, a very small amount of additional vehicle emissions. However, because the No Action Alternative would not involve construction activities and emissions, it would result in fewer emissions overall and less impact to air quality.

Mitigation Measures

Temporary roads on the site during construction should be constructed of permeable asphalt like millings, gravel, or similar material to reduce airborne particles. Periodic wetting during construction and home removal would reduce fugitive dust. The contractor shall appropriately cover any fill stored on site during unit installation or removal. These measures would help reduce air quality impacts on asthmatics, seniors, and other sensitive residents.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The temporary trailer sites and staging areas are predominately agricultural production including wheat fields and pasture with surrounding properties being developed for industry and single-family residential. Site preparation for construction of temporary emergency housing would require clearing and grading, resulting in the loss of the existing cover. FEMA expects that when the temporary housing need has ended, the mobile homes would be hauled from the site to suitable locations elsewhere. The temporary housing sites and staging areas can then be seeded and restored to previous conditions and/or used by the landowner in a manner consistent with applicable land use approvals. Thus, the minimal impact to existing vegetation from the Proposed Action would be temporary.

Wildlife in the area for the Proposed Action is typical of an agricultural landscape. Common wildlife species include white-tailed deer, coyote, northern raccoons, striped skunk, Virginia opossum, eastern gray squirrel, least shrew, and eastern mole. Common birds found in the local area include the American robin, eastern meadow lark, house finch, red-winged blackbird, European starling, mourning dove, and black-capped chickadee. Overall, habitat quality in the immediate project area is low because of agricultural and residential disturbance, which severely limits the extent and diversity of wildlife habitat. The Proposed Action would have minimal impact on the existing faunal conditions.

The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing of flooding and flood-related victims; therefore, there would be no impacts to either vegetation or wildlife.

Mitigation Measures

There are negligible impacts to vegetation and wildlife, therefore mitigation measures are not required.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The project's effect on threatened and endangered species has been determined to be negligible. Many of the sites are currently platted or proposed for single family residential development.

One site has been approved for development of an agricultural business park and intermodal transport site.

The North Dakota endangered species list for Ward and McHenry counties showed the following threatened and endangered species (see Table 2 below). (http://www.fws.gov/northdakotafieldoffice/county_list.htm):

Table 2: Threatened & Endangered Species

Status	Species
E	Crane, whooping except where EXPN (<i>Grus americana</i>)
E	Wolf, gray Lower 48 States (<i>Canis lupus</i>)
T	Plover, piping except Great Lakes watershed (<i>Charadrius melodus</i>)
C	Dakota Skipper (<i>Hesperia dacotae</i>)
	Spragues Pipit (<i>Anthus spragueii</i>)
	Critical Habitat for Piping Plover

The [piping plover](#) is a small shorebird listed as "threatened" in 1985. Habitat loss and poor breeding success are major reasons for the population decline. North Dakota is the most important State in the Great Plains for nesting piping plovers. More than three-fourths of piping plovers in North Dakota nest on prairie alkali lakes, while the remainder use the Missouri River. Piping plovers inhabit barren sand and gravel shores of rivers and lakes.

An infrequent visitor to North Dakota, the [gray wolf](#) occasionally comes across the borders from neighboring Minnesota, Montana, or the province of Manitoba, Canada. Once abundant in the State, the gray wolf was hunted to near extinction by 1940 at the urging of western settlers, who believed wolves caused widespread livestock losses. Biologists say most wolves prefer deer or moose, only a few attack livestock, and programs exist to repay ranchers for their losses. The gray wolf was added to the Endangered Species List in 1978.

The [whooping crane](#) is making a slow, but steady comeback. From a low of 21 birds in the 1940s, the current whooper population is believed to be about 264. Its decline is blamed on loss of habitat and excessive shooting. It was declared "endangered" in 1970. At a height of five feet, the whooping crane is the tallest bird in North America. Equally impressive is its 7-foot wingspan. Most whooping cranes migrate through North Dakota each spring and fall, frequently with sandhill cranes.

The [Dakota skipper](#) is a small butterfly with a 1-inch wingspan. Dakota skippers are found in native prairie containing a high diversity of wildflowers and grasses. Habitat includes two prairie types: 1) low (wet) prairie dominated by bluestem grasses, wood lily, harebell, and smooth camas; and 2) upland (dry) prairie on ridges and hillsides dominated by bluestem grasses, needlegrass, pale purple coneflower and upright coneflowers and blanketflower. Dakota skipper populations have declined historically due to widespread conversion of native prairie. Remnant native prairies occupied by Dakota skippers are subject to a variety of threats.

The [Sprague's Pipit](#) (*Anthus spragueii*) is a small, grasslands bird: Endemic to the northern Great Plains; native short-to-mixed grass prairie; sensitive to fragmentation and conversion of grassland habitat. Sprague's pipits prefer relatively large prairie patches of at least approximately 72 acres, with larger patches of at least 360 acres preferred.

Effects on Endangered Species

The piping plover would not be affected by the project as there is no critical habitat for that species within the sites being considered for temporary housing. The gray wolf is most frequently observed

in the Turtle Mountains area of North Dakota. The project would be within or very near the city limits of Minot. In a USFWS fact sheet it is noted that “From a biological standpoint, we know that wolves can and do survive near urban areas. But whether wolves survive near cities and towns will depend on people. There are areas near large cities that have sufficient wild prey to support wolves. Wolves are predators, however, and conflicts arise when they kill livestock and domestic animals, including pets. These conflicts, along with urban hazards such as vehicle traffic, will likely limit the establishment of wolf populations near urban areas.” The whooping crane migrates through west and central North Dakota in the Spring and Fall and prefers potholes with good visibility. The proximity of the sites to the activities in and around Minot and the great number of wetlands throughout the area farther from the project site reduce the likelihood that the wetlands within the proposed sites would be used by whooping cranes during their migration. The Dakota skipper would not be affected because the sites do not contain their preferred native prairie habitat. While the Sprague’s pipit breeding area includes the Souris Basin, the sites of interest are all actively farmed or hayed and would not provide the preferred large, undisturbed patches of shortgrass prairie or grasslands.

Based on the information presented above comparing the biology of the threatened or endangered species and the characteristics of the proposed project sites, USACE, acting as FEMA’s agent preparing this assessment, determined that the project would not affect threatened or endangered species. On July 15, 2011 the USFWS concurred with that effects determination.

Mitigation Measures

There are negligible impacts to threatened and endangered species, therefore mitigation measures are not required.

Cultural Resources

Historic and archaeological resources are protected by statutes and regulations at all levels of government and must be taken into consideration during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process (36 CFR Part 800:”Protection of Historic Properties”). Prior to the implementation of a Proposed Action, potential impacts to historic and archaeological resources must be reviewed. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to consider the effects of Proposed Actions on historic properties. Historic properties must also be given consideration under NEPA, and Section 106 encourages maximum cooperation with NEPA. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is a federally maintained list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes significant in American history, prehistory, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Archaeological sites are places where past peoples left physical evidence of their occupation. Sites may include ruins and foundations of historic-era buildings and structures. Native American cultural resources may include human skeletal remains, funerary items, sacred items, and objects of cultural patrimony. Historic properties can also include traditional cultural properties (TCPs).

The Proposed Action is located in Ward County in north central North Dakota. The proposed temporary housing sites of the Proposed Action were impacted by glaciations and glacial melt-off. Glacial till is visible over much of the project areas. These housing sites all have low potential to contain archaeological sites. A site file and literature search was conducted in the dataset and archives of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, State Historic Preservation Office,

Bismarck, North Dakota, by FEMA staff on July 9, 2011. None of the housing sites have been previously surveyed for historic properties and no previously reported or recorded archaeological sites are located within any Area of Potential Effect. Since the temporary housing sites were never surveyed for historic properties, coordination with the State of North Dakota Historical Society and FEMA recommend a Class III Intensive Cultural Resource Inventory be conducted. On July 14, 2011, the Corps/FEMA corresponded with the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The NHPA recognizes that properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to a tribe may be determined eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. In order to preserve, conserve, and encourage the continuation of the diverse traditional prehistoric, historic, ethnic, and folk cultural traditions within the Illinois watershed, the FRMFS will be implemented in compliance with [Executive Order No. 13007](#), specifically:

Section 1. *Accommodation of Sacred Sites.* (a) In managing Federal lands, each executive branch agency with statutory or administrative responsibility for the management of Federal lands shall, to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions, (1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and (2) avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Where appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites.

The FEMA is concerned about impacts to those TCPs sites recognized by Native Americans, tribes, ethnic and religious organizations, communities, and other groups as potentially affected by the FRMFS. Presently, the FEMA is unaware of any traditional cultural properties or sacred sites within the Souris River watershed. Since the FEMA remains unaware of any lands held in Federal trust or of any Federal trust responsibilities for Native American Indians within the Cedar River watershed, the Corps requested any information concerning our Federal trust responsibilities. If there are concerns or potential effects known or identified, please complete the enclosed “Traditional Cultural Property and Sacred Site Form” (Appendix C: Correspondence 1).

To facilitate tribal coordination, the Corps asks those on the Consulting Parties Lists to refer to the National Park Service, NRHP Bulletin 38, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*, available for internet viewing at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins.htm>). Locations of traditional cultural properties or sacred sites, consisting of architecture, landscapes, objects, or surface or buried archaeological sites, identified in this coordination effort can be considered to be sensitive information, pursuant to Section 304 of the NHPA. Upon request from any consulting parties not to disclose locations on the Form, the FEMA will secure this information from the general public. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs pursuant to the NHPA states that a: *Traditional Cultural Property* is defined as a property that is associated with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (1) are rooted in that community's history, and (2) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Allowing for tribal review and comment contributes to fulfilling our obligations as set forth in the NHPA (Public Law [PL] 89-665), as amended; the NEPA of 1969 (PL 91-190); Executive Order (EO) 11593 for the “Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment” (Federal Register, May 13, 1971); the Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act of 1974 (PL 93-291); the

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation “Regulations for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties” (36 CFR, Part 800); and the applicable National Park Service and Corps regulations and guidance.

Pursuant to Section 800.3 of the Council’s regulations and to meet the responsibilities under the NEPA of 1969, the FEMA developed a preliminary Interested and Consulting Parties List comprised of individuals from government organizations or agencies, Tribes or tribal members, and other interested parties (Appendix C: Correspondence 1). The FEMA will comply with any requests to be removed from, or added to, the Consulting Parties List. The development and maintenance of the Interested and Consulting Parties List allows agencies, tribes, individuals, organizations, and other interested parties an opportunity to provide views on any effects of this undertaking on historic properties resulting from the Proposed Action and to participate in the review of the Draft EA. Response will allow the FEMA to provide those on the Interested and Consulting Parties List access to all environmental reports.

On July 12 2011, the FEMA conducted the Class II survey on Temporary Housing Sites 8, 9, 9A, 16, 18, and 26. The FEMA Class II report, dated July 14, 2011, was provided for review and the permanent files of the SHPO. By letter dated July 14, 2011 (Appendix C: Correspondence 2) the SHPO concurred with the FEMA determination of No Historic Properties Affected. Furthermore, the SHPO concurred with the determination of No Historic Properties Affected for Site 8. The additional Class II survey for Site #1 was provided to the SHPO. By letter of July 18, 2011 the SHPO concurred with FEMA’s determination of No Historic Properties Affected. A Class III survey was recommended by the SHPO for Site 18, submitted by FEMA to the SHPO, and by letter of July 18, 2011 the SHPO concurred with FEMA’s determination of No Historic Properties Affects. The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing for flooding victims; therefore, there would be no impact to any known properties listed; on or eligible properties for listing on the NRHP.

FEMA Mitigation Measures.

There are no historic or archaeological issues associated with the Proposed Action, therefore mitigation measures are not required. In accordance with the NHPA, if unanticipated historic or cultural materials are discovered during construction, all construction activities shall immediately cease within 100 feet of the materials until their cultural affiliation and ultimate disposition are determined in consultation with the Missouri SHPO, FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer and other interested parties.

Socioeconomic/Recreation

Socioeconomic effects focus on the social fabric of the family and the community and well-being of the individuals and families that are done or used for pleasure or relaxation rather than work. Social Economics

North Dakota is in the Midwestern region of the United States of America, along the Canadian border. North Dakota is the 19th-largest state by area and also the third least populous, with 672,591 residents as of 2010. North Dakota was formed out of Dakota Territory and admitted to the Union on November 2, 1889, simultaneously with South Dakota. The state capitol is Bismarck and the largest city is Fargo with a population of 105,549. Bismarck is the second largest city

(61,272) in North Dakota and Grand Forks is the third largest (52,838). All of the temporary housing sites and staging area projects are located in Ward County. There are 53 counties in the state of North Dakota.

Ward County was created by the 1885 Dakota Territory legislature and named for Mark Ward, chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Counties during the session. The county government was first organized on November 23, 1885 with Burlington as the county seat. This was changed to Minot in 1888.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Ward County has a total area of 2,012.88 square miles. The 2010 census lists the total populations as 61,675, having 30.6 persons per square mile. In 2000 there were 58,795 people living in the county within 23,041 households (averaging 2.46 people in each household) but by 2009 the population had decreased to 57,012 with an estimated -3.0% change.

The average income per person in 1999 for Ward County was \$16,926. By 2007 the income was \$37,104. The average income in each household was \$45,544 in 2008. The percentage of Ward County residents living in poverty in 2008 was 9.8%. The total personal income for the county in 2007 was \$2,076 (in millions of dollars). The average per job earnings was \$39,675 in 2007.

In 2009 there were about 26,506 housing units within the county, a change of 1,407 from 2000 (or about 5.6%). The percentage of housing units that were occupied by the owner in 2000 was 62.6%. The median value of each house was about \$79,500 in the county in 2000. 426 building permits were issued in 2009 totaling \$39,944 (thousands of dollars) in estimated value.

The number of Ward County births in the year 2006 was 968 while the number of deaths occurring during the same year was 529. Infant deaths that year numbered 8. In 2007, Ward County, ND jobs totaled 42,373 across all industries. This was a change of 2,229 jobs from 2000. The number of Ward County jobs in government in 2007 was 10,099. Workers traveled an average of 14.5 minutes to work each day.

There were 4,692 businesses in Ward County in 2002. These include 26.8% of businesses listed as owned by women, and 0.0% of businesses listed as owned by American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The amount of land in Ward County devoted to farming was 1,066,242 acres in 2007.

In 2000 4.7% of residents spoke a language other than English at home. The percent of the county's population who were born in a foreign country was 2.1%.

The percentage of adults in Ward County over the age of twenty-five who graduated high school as of 2000 was 87.4%. About 22.1% of county residents held at least a four-year college degree.

The number of people in Ward County with a disability is 8,371.

There were 29,511 civilians working in Ward County jobs in 2009. The number unemployed was 1,147 (or 3.9% of the workforce).

The total sales of businesses involved in serving food and accommodation was \$72,768 (thousands of dollars).

The estimated breakdown of population by age in 2009 included 4,756 residents less than five years old, (8.3% of residents), 13,639 less than eighteen years old (23.9% of residents), and 7,936 of the population of Ward County was over the age of sixty-five (13.9% of residents).

The percentage of the population who were female in 2009 was 50.5%. The population classified as white was 52,703 (92.4%), black: 1,326 (2.3%), Asian: 421 (0.7%), two or more races: 1,002 (1.8%), Hispanic or Latino 1,853 (3.3%).

Minot is located at t 48°13'59"N 101°17'32"W/48.23306°N 101.29222°W, about 100 miles (170 km) north of Bismarck and is the fourth largest city in the state and the County Seat of Ward County. The Souris River, or Mouse River, runs through the city west to east. Important cities and villages for which Minot is the trading center include Burlington, Velva, Garrison, Stanley, Bottineau, Rugby, and New Town. The area bounded by the city limits is almost entirely land; the Souris River, its oxbow lakes, and a few creeks take up just 0.14% of the city's total landmass. The elevation of the river at the city center is 1,540 feet (469 m) above sea level. The valley sits some 160 feet (50 m) below the surrounding plains; the elevation at the Minot International Airport on "North Hill" is 1,716 feet (523 m).

Minot was named by Departures Magazine to be the best place to raise a family in 2010. It is also known for the large and extensive Minot Air Force Base located approximately 15 miles north of the city. With a population of 40,888 (2010 census), Minot is the fourth largest city in the state. A housing study completed by the Minot Area Development Corporation in 2011, estimated that 45,508 people live within the city limits. Minot continues to be a trading center (or central city/hub) for a large portion of northern North Dakota, southwestern Manitoba, and southeastern Saskatchewan. Founded in 1886 during the construction of the Great Northern Railway, Minot is also known as "Magic City", commemorating its remarkable growth in size over a short time. Based on the 2000 Census, there were 15,520 households with 2.27 residing in 16,475 housing units.

The 2000 census states that the population density was 2,513.2 persons per square mile. The racial makeup of the city was White (34,074), Black or African American (490), American Indian and Alaskan Native (1,008), Asian (226), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (226), Other race (181), Two or More races (563), and Hispanic or Latino (539). Of the 15,520 households ownership was 62.4% and homeownership rate was 62.4% with a median value of owner-occupied housing units were \$80,400. In 1999, medium household income was \$32,218 with per capita money income at \$18,011. In 1999, persons below the poverty level were 12.8% and housing is in demand with critical housing needs in 2000 was 28.3%.

Summary

Ward County in North Dakota is located in areas of low population, relative to other areas in the Midwest. Through the years, population has remained relatively stable, but within the last decade, increase in median income and population have occurred. These increases are primarily in urban areas and reflect the increasing population and standard of living with growing economic opportunities. On June 22nd, 2011, the worst flooding in the recorded history of Minot began and

by June 24th, 2011, the river exceeded the 130 year flood record and by that afternoon levels were more than 5 feet above major flood. About 4,000 homes are damaged in Minot and Ward County with 2,376 considered to have suffered extensive damage after being inundated; therefore FEMA proposes the construction of temporary housing for many of the displaced people.

The construction of temporary housing and staging would result in negligible social or economic impacts. The Proposed Action would have a positive impact on public health and safety, community cohesion, and employment in the area. People displaced by the flooding event will be able to stay in the community and keep their jobs while their homes are being made habitable.

The site being considered for development of temporary emergency housing is near existing residential and commercial areas. The temporary residents, therefore, would be close to stores, post offices, schools, and other services necessary for urban living. During site development and the staging and placement of the mobile homes for the Proposed Action, short-term negative impacts would likely occur in the following areas: an increase in noise levels and disruption of normal community traffic patterns. These effects would be attenuated through the appropriate placement of construction and coordination with city and local officials to reduce effects on the nearby community. Temporary housing sites will contain green space and Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS) units will be available, as required.

The effects of the Proposed Action would be short-lived and terminate once the temporary housing sites and/or staging area projects were complete. The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing for flooding and flood-related victims. Residents that could not return to their homes would have to find other accommodations such as with friends or family members or in hotels or apartments available in nearby areas. Persons unable to remain in flooded areas would face longer travel times and social disruption as a result of relocation.

Mitigation Measures

There are negligible socioeconomic impacts; therefore mitigation measures are not required.

Recreation

No recreation areas are within or adjacent to the sites being considered for development of the temporary housing sites. There would be negligible effects on recreation, if any at all, if the sites under consideration were used.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, Environmental Justice, requires each federal agency to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income households in the United States. The Proposed Action would not have disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations. The level of commitment is proportional to the level of need of the affected community, regardless of socioeconomic status.

The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing of flood victims. That would have a greater adverse effect on low-income flood victims as they are often less resilient.

Mitigation Measures

There are no impacts disproportionate to minority or low-income populations due to the Proposed Action, therefore mitigation measures are not required.

Noise

Noise is defined as “sound undesirable because it is intense and/or loud enough to damage hearing, interferes with speech communication and sleep, or is annoying.” Sound varies simultaneously in level (or loudness) and frequency content (pitch), as well as in time of occurrence and duration. The fundamental measure of sound level is expressed in unit of decibels (dB)) using a logarithmic scale.

It is the policy of Federal agencies to assess long-term, cumulative exposure to environmental noise including aircraft traffic in terms of day-night average sound level (DNL). The Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise has developed land use compatibility guidelines for noise. DNL values of 65 dBA and less are normally compatible with residential land uses.

Potential noise impacts associated with construction of the Proposed Action will be reduced to the maximum extent possible and are not expected to exceed DNL values of 65 dBA. Typical and standard construction machinery will be used for the Proposed Action construction activities. Furthermore, the majority of the Temporary Housing Sites are semi-rural and not located in urban or commercial zones. Once the temporary housing is established, additional noise would be generated from the vehicles and activities of people inhabiting the completed units. While noise at the selected site would increase, noise levels would not be expected to result in any significant long-term adverse impacts to residents who redevelop their homes in the adjacent areas, because the temporary site would eventually be vacated. The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing; therefore, there would be no noise impacts.

Mitigation Measures

If necessary, noise reduction measures would be instituted. These measures include: 1) using a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. construction time frame for Temporary Housing Site 16, with no construction activities on Sundays. Site 16 is located in an urban residential area and is land owned by the St. John the Apostle Catholic Church, which is directly adjacent; 2) completing construction closest to potential sensitive receptors first; and/or 3) completing noisier activities during the day if using a 24-hour schedule for those sites in rural areas.

Safety and Security

Safety and security issues analyzed as part of the Proposed Action include the health and safety of the individuals working on site development activities, transporting the housing units to the site, and the well-being of the people living in or adjacent to the temporary housing site. For implementation of the Proposed Action, the contractor’s construction engineer will identify and

rectify potential safety hazards at the selected staging site and housing sites. Safety during construction is a high priority for both the personnel constructing the sites, and residents associated with the Proposed Action. Construction is anticipated to be performed in phases to better manage safety considerations. First aid and other medical services would be readily available throughout the duration of site development. To assure safety, the contractor will develop and obtain approvals of a construction management plan, a quality plan, an accident prevention plan, and an environmental protection plan. Chain-linked fences will be provided for site security and safety at the discretion of the community in coordination with FEMA. There will be a site manager available on site.

The sites for the Proposed Action will be designed to meet the guidelines established by the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) standards including the required number of UFAS compliant units. The site's common or public areas will be accessible for people with disabilities in accordance with UFAS guidelines through providing firm, stable, and slip-resistant materials. Mobile home units will be installed to comply with the appropriate manufacturer's requirements; the most up-to-date safety procedures provided in FEMA technical papers on installation of mobile homes; as well as federal, state, and local codes and ordinances including safety precautions in installing anchors that will maximize safety and reduce risks during severe weather and tornado events. FEMA also initiated a study in response to public concerns expressed about formaldehyde in mobile home units used as temporary housing following disasters such as tornadoes and hurricanes. The objective of the study was to validate the most effective measures for lowering formaldehyde concentrations in these units. Based on the findings of the study, FEMA is moving forward with the following:

- Establishing procedures for ventilating units currently in inventory;
- Strengthening training for employees and contractors concerning the presence of formaldehyde and methods of reducing levels in travel trailers and park models;
- Updating and standardizing communications to occupants regarding the presence of and methods for reducing formaldehyde in temporary housing units;
- Studying alternative power supplies available or provided during power blackouts;
- Formalizing procedures for responding to formaldehyde complaints from travel trailer occupants; and
- Working with manufacturers to reduce formaldehyde-emitting materials in FEMA purchased units.

The safety and security of the residents of the mobile home communities will be a high priority. The City of Minot has determined that storm shelters would not be required at the sites being assessed, however precast structures have been provided for temporary housing sites in other communities and could be added during site design. Fire and police protection will be provided by the City of Minot. The school district shall provide busing for the area students if required.

The location of temporary school facilities is not known at this time, but it is anticipated that schools will be located in a manner that is conducive to the safety and convenience of the residents.

For safety concerns, no housing would be located within the flight path of the Minot International Airport. Adverse impacts resulting from the safety and security issues associated with this Proposed Action would be minor. The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing of flooding and flood-related victims; therefore, there would be no safety or security impacts.

Mitigation Measures

Safety and security mitigation measures would include the use of best management practices (BMPs), implementation of approved safety and management plans, phased construction, UFAS considerations, and appropriate signage and fencing. The fencing and gates shall not impede or hinder future restoration work. The contractor will post appropriate signage and fencing to minimize potential adverse public safety concerns. Appropriate signage and barriers should be in place prior to construction activities in order to alert pedestrians and motorists of project activities and traffic pattern changes. The contractor will also place fencing around the site perimeter to protect residents from vehicular traffic on surrounding roads and will provide 24-hour security services at the site during construction, if needed. To minimize worker and public health and safety risks from project construction and closure, all construction and closure work will be done using qualified personnel trained in the proper use of construction equipment, including all appropriate safety precautions. Additionally, all activities will be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with the standards specified in Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Emergency shelters should be included in the group site to accommodate the residents of the mobile homes including individuals with limited mobility and disability. Temporary guard shacks should be constructed at construction sites to protect residents. Once constructed the larger temporary housing communities would include an onsite office trailer.

Hazardous Materials and Toxic Wastes

A review of potential hazardous and toxic materials associated with the site and surrounding areas was conducted. The United States Environmental Protection Agency lists the Minot Landfill (Burdick Expressway and U.S. Highways 2 and 52 Bypass) as a superfund site. The Minot Landfill site, located about one mile southwest of downtown Minot, North Dakota, covers approximately 26 acres. Land use in the site vicinity is light industrial and residential. Areas southwest of the site are used for agriculture. The Minot Landfill site was remediated and deleted from the National Priorities List in March 1997 (United States Environmental Protection Agency 2011).

The summary of the findings of the investigation indicate that the temporary housing sites are currently developed as agricultural fields and appear to have been historically developed for agricultural hay production. At the time of site reconnaissance, the subject properties were planted to tall fescue. No areas of stressed vegetation, dumping, structures, or scared surfaces were observed. Several depressed areas of various sizes were observed across the subject properties and many contained standing water and/or moist soil, the majority being prairie potholes. No sheens, odors, or stressed vegetation were observed in the vicinity of these areas. The research of federal, state, and local government databases revealed no record of hazardous materials sites or spills at the subject properties or within a 1,000-foot radius of the Project property borders. Mr. Dan Jonasson, Assistant Public Works Director for Minot stated that there were no hazardous waste sites within the properties being assessed for use as temporary housing sites. Therefore there would be no impacts from hazardous materials.

Mitigation Measures

Hazardous materials were not observed at the sites or through the research. However, if any are found between start of construction and final site closure, all hazardous materials shall be remediated, abated, or disposed of as appropriate, and otherwise handled in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Alternatively, the sites could be abandoned in view of finding other sites that better meet the identified project purpose and need.

Traffic and Transportation

The U.S. Highway 83 Bypass Bridge over the Souris River in Minot was closed indefinitely for repairs on July 11, 2011. The closure is related to erosion problems discovered by the North Dakota Department of Transportation on the abutment on the south side of the bridge. This affects ingress and egress from Temporary Housing sites 16 and 26. From these sites, inhabitants that travel Highway 83 Bypass will proceed north only. This inconvenience impacts all of the residence that use the U.S. Highway 83 Bypass.

Traffic within the general project area would increase due to the ingress and egress of construction equipment. This would be a short-term temporary impact during construction. Traffic volumes would also increase due to the residents of the site. Again, this traffic impact would be short term and limited to the duration of the need for temporary housing at the site. Site layout and design considerations include the development of multiple ingress and egress points to allow for emergency vehicle access and evacuation. The No Action Alternative would entail no construction or preparation of sites for temporary emergency housing of tornado victims; therefore, there would be no impacts to traffic and transportation.

Mitigation Measures

Due to the increased traffic volume associated with the construction vehicles and temporary residents, the contractor would need to work with the City Public Works Department and the Ward and McHenry County Road and Bridge Supervisor to assure that the local level of service on the roadway remains adequate. The contractor should design the roadways to allow multiple ingresses and egresses to sites. The roads and lane widths should be designed to allow ample room for fire and emergency apparatus to pass as defined by local codes. The roadways should at a minimum be graveled and compacted to facilitate maintenance and upkeep, local environment, traffic volume, and usage.

Public Involvement

Due to the emergency nature of this action, the Public Notice would be issued concurrent with the design of the first temporary housing site for 200 units and the development of a staging area in Velva. A Public Notice and Public Notice of Availability would be published in the Minot Daily News and other local newspapers. The Public Notice and the DEA would also be posted on the Public Notice Board at the City of Minot City Hall: 515 2nd Ave SW, Minot, ND Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5006, Minot, ND 58702. If no substantive comments were received, the DEA would become Final and the initial Public Notice would also serve as the final Public Notice. If no public comments were received, this document serves as the final EA.

Conclusion

The Proposed Action will involve the construction of a temporary group site to accommodate at least 1 site containing up to 200 mobile homes and more as the need is determined. Development of the site will require a number of steps including surveying, clearing, stripping, soil testing, grading, utility and access road design, and installation, and stormwater and erosion control. Site occupancy is not expected to exceed 18 months. The project will ultimately provide temporary housing for residents displaced by the Souris Basin floods of 2011. The installation of utilities to permanent depths required in the cold climate could lead to supporting future permanent residential development of some of the sites. The water and sewer service may allow for future development of adjoining areas. Expansion to these areas would, by its nature, need to be consistent with the growth management objectives of the City of Minot and Ward County. During the course of this EA, FEMA coordinated with the following agencies: USFWS; North Dakota Department of Natural Resources; North Dakota SHPO; North Dakota Department of Conservation; North Dakota Natural Resource Conservation Service; the City of Minot Administrator and Public Works Department, and others (see Agencies Consulted in this EA).

On the basis of the findings of this EA and coordination with the appropriate agencies, it is our initial determination that implementation of the Proposed Action and mitigation measures described in this EA would not have any significant adverse impacts to the human or natural environment. All requirements of NEPA will be satisfied after the review period for the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact.

References

- Executive Order 12898. 1994. Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 59 FR 7629.
- Executive Order 11988. 1977. Floodplain Management, 42 FR 26951.
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Bureau of Labor Statistics

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Additional Information Websites

<http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/popInfo.php?locIndex=4680>

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/index.shtm>

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/regs/eo11990.html>

Agencies Consulted

Environmental Protection Agency Region 8

Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

National Soil Conservation Service

North Dakota Department of Conservation

North Dakota Department of Natural Resources

State Historic Preservation Officer, Bismarck, ND 58505-0830

City of Minot, Assistant Director of Public Works Dan Jonasson

Ackerman-Estvold Engineering and Management Consulting, Inc., Burlington, ND

Fort Berthold Reservation, New Town, ND

Three Affiliated Tribes Parshall, ND

Ward County Historical Society, Minot, ND

The Dakota Territory Air Museum, Minot, ND

Minot Railroad Museum, Minot, ND

Old Soo Depot Transportation Museum, Minot, ND

Railroad Museum of Minot, Minot, ND 58701-0074

Environmental / Historic Preservation Section ~ Branch Director, Bismarck, ND

McHenry County Historical Society, Towner, ND

Mouse River Loop Genealogy Society, Minot, ND

Souris Development Basin Certified Development Company, Minot, ND

Minot Area Development Corporation, Minot, ND

Ward County Emergency Manager, Minot, ND

City of Minot, Assistant Director of Public Works Dan Jonasson

Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service