



**FEMA**

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
1 Seine Court, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70114

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**for the**  
**SEVENTH WARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FLOOD EMBANKMENT**  
**PROJECT**  
**ABBEVILLE, LOUISIANA**  
***FEMA-1603-DR-LA***

**BACKGROUND**

The Seventh Ward Elementary School, located at 12012 Audubon Road, Abbeville, LA, was substantially damaged by flooding as a direct result of Hurricane Rita on September 24, 2005. As a result, Vermilion Parish (Applicant) has requested federal funding through FEMA's 404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to construct a ring concrete flood wall and earthen berm around the Seventh Ward Elementary School structure, the top of which will be approximately 12 feet above mean sea level (msl), which is one foot above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE) of 11 feet above msl, as indicated on the preliminary Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (PDFIRMs).

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10, FEMA regulations to implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared. The purpose of the EA was to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with construction of a ring concrete flood wall and earthen berm around the Seventh Ward Elementary School structure and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The need for the proposed action is to protect the Seventh Ward Elementary School structure to one foot above the BFE; thereby, reducing the risk of future damage from flooding. The alternatives considered include 1) No Action, 2) Relocation of Seventh Ward Elementary School students to Eaton Park Elementary School (Rejected), 3) Relocation of the Seventh Ward Elementary School structure (Rejected), 4) Elevation of the existing Seventh Ward Elementary School structure (Rejected), and 5) Construction of a ring concrete flood wall/earthen berm around the existing Seventh Ward Elementary School structure (Proposed Action).

The applicant proposes to construct an approximately 2,000 linear foot earthen berm/flood wall around the perimeter of the Seventh Ward Elementary School. The proposed action will provide protection to one foot above the BFE as indicated on the PDFIRMs. The concrete flood/earthen berm will be approximately 5.0 feet above grade on average and will be 3.8 feet above floodwater levels experienced during Hurricane Rita. The Undertaking will require that approximately 9,878 cubic yards of topsoil be hauled in to construct the earthen berm and approximately 2,921 cubic yards of native material be excavated/backfilled for the installation of the floodwall and storm drain

pipes. The proposed floodwall will require approximately 982 cubic yards of concrete and 1,325 cubic yards of rock/crushed stone for the foundation. The proposed project also includes the installation of a pumping station within the proposed berm area and a discharge ditch outside of the berm area.

## **FINDINGS**

FEMA has evaluated the proposed project for significant adverse impacts to geology, soils, water resources (surface water, groundwater, and wetlands), floodplains, coastal resources, air quality, biological resources (vegetation, fish and wildlife, Federally-listed threatened or endangered species and critical habitats), cultural resources, socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations), safety, noise, and hazardous materials. The results of these evaluations as well as consultations and input from other federal and state agencies are presented in the EA. Based on the information analyzed, FEMA has determined that the implementation of the proposed action would not result in significant adverse impacts to the quality of the natural and human environment. In addition, the proposed project does not appear to have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10), and the proposed project as described in the EA may proceed.

## **CONDITIONS**

The following conditions must be met as part of the implementation of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize federal funds:

### **Environmental**

- In order to minimize impacts to waters of the U.S., the contractor is required to implement BMPs that meet the LDEQ permitting specifications for storm water discharge regulated under Section 402 of the CWA. This includes designing the site with specific construction measures to reduce or eliminate run-off impacts.
- Riprap will be installed at the outfall point to alleviate potential erosion.
- Appropriate erosion control measures should be employed during the construction of the project to minimize any adverse effect on the surrounding environment.
- The contractor will be responsible for keeping all excavated areas periodically sprayed with water, all equipment maintained in good working order, and all construction vehicles would be limited to 15 mph to minimize pollution/fugitive dust.
- If the project results in a discharge to waters of the state, submittal of a Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (LPDES) application may be necessary.

- If the project results in a discharge of wastewater to an existing wastewater treatment system, that wastewater treatment system may need to modify its LPDES permit before accepting the additional wastewater.
- LDEQ has stormwater general permits for construction areas equal to or greater than one acre. It is recommended that the LDEQ Water Permit Division be contacted at (225) 219-3181 to determine whether the proposed improvements require one of these permits.
- All precautions should be observed to control nonpoint source pollution from construction activities.
- Any changes or modifications to the proposed project will require a revised determination. Off-site locations of activities such as borrow, disposals, haul-and detour-roads and work mobilization site developments may be subject to the Department of the Army regulatory requirements and may have an impact to a Department of Army project.
- If any of the proposed work is located in wetlands or other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USACE should be contacted directly to inquire about the possible necessity for permits. If a Corps permit is required, part of the application process may involve a water quality certification from LDEQ.
- All precautions should be observed to protect the groundwater of the region.
- Please be advised that water softeners generate wastewaters that may require special limitations, depending on local water quality considerations. Therefore, if water system improvements include water softeners, the applicant is advised to contact the LDEQ Water Permits to determine if special water quality-based limitations will be necessary.
- Any renovation or remodeling must comply with LAC 33:III. Chapter 28. Lead-Based Paint Activities, LAC 33:III. Chapter 27, Asbestos Containing Materials in Schools and State Buildings (includes all training and accreditation), and LAC 33:III.5151. Emission Standard for Asbestos for renovations or demolitions.
- If any solid or hazardous wastes, or soils and/or groundwater contaminated with hazardous constituents are encountered during the project, notification to LDEQ's Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) at (225) 219-3640 is required. Additionally, precautions should be taken to protect workers from these hazardous constituents.
- The applicant would be responsible for contacting the USFWS if there is a change in the scope of work, the project necessitates removal of mature pine trees, construction activities have not been initiated within one year, or if any new bald eagle nests are observed in proximity to the proposed project activities during the

next nesting season (October 1 through mid-May). If the projects have not been initiated within one year, follow up consultation is required with the USFWS prior to construction.

### **Safety and Traffic**

- Construction traffic should be closely monitored and controlled as appropriate. All construction activities would be conducted in a safe manner in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requirements. To minimize risks to safety and human health, all construction activities would be performed using qualified personnel trained in all appropriate safety precautions, including the proper use of the appropriate equipment. To alert motorists and pedestrians of project activities, appropriate signage and barriers would be on site prior to and during construction activities. During construction activities, the construction site(s) will be fenced off to discourage trespassers.

### **Cultural Resources**

- If archaeological artifacts or features (prehistoric or historic) are discovered during the course of FEMA funded work at the Seventh Ward Elementary School, the Applicant must ensure that their Contractor stops work in the vicinity of the discovery and takes all reasonable measures to avoid and minimize harm to the discovery. The Applicant shall inform GOHSEP and FEMA of the discovery and FEMA will deploy an archaeologist to the location to conduct a site condition assessment. The Applicant will not proceed with work until FEMA has completed consultation with the SHPO on the treatment of the discovery.
- In addition, if human remains are discovered during the course of FEMA funded work, the Applicant and the Applicant's Contractor are responsible for immediately halting work within the vicinity of the human remains finding. The Applicant will immediately notify GOHSEP, FEMA, the local Police Department, and the local Coroner's Office of the discovery. The local Coroner's Office will assess the nature and age of the human skeletal remains. If the Coroner's Office determines that the human skeletal remains are older than 50 years of age, the Louisiana Division of Archaeology will take jurisdiction over the remains. Within twenty-four (24) hours, FEMA will notify the Louisiana Division of Archaeology (225-342-8170) of the finding. Within seventy-two (72) hours, FEMA will take the lead in working with the Louisiana Division of Archaeology and other interested parties, as necessary, to ensure compliance with the Louisiana Unmarked Human Burial Sites Preservation Act (R.S. 8:671 *et seq.*) and other applicable laws. In addition, the Applicant must afford FEMA the opportunity to comply with the "Human Remains Policy" set forth by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP).

APPROVALS

---

Cynthia Teeter, Deputy Environmental Officer      Date  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
FEMA-1603/1607-DR-LA

---

Michael Karl      Date  
Acting Director  
Louisiana Recovery Office  
FEMA 1604-1608-DR-LA