



**FEMA**

***DRAFT***  
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**HIGH ISLAND SCHOOL COMMUNITY TEMPORARY HOUSING SITE,**  
**GALVESTON COUNTY, TEXAS**  
***FEMA-1791-DR-TX***

As a result of damages from Hurricane Ike on September 13, 2008, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was authorized under Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1791-DR-TX) to provide Federal assistance to designated disaster areas in Texas. Section 408 of the Stafford Act authorizes FEMA's Individual and Households Program (IHP) to provide emergency temporary housing for disaster victims whose homes are uninhabitable or destroyed. There are insufficient rental resources or other temporary housing alternatives 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 temporary housing for residents in Galveston County.

In order to implement its IHP in a timely and effective manner, FEMA used an expedited process to assess the potential environmental impacts of building emergency temporary housing for displaced disaster victims. A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA), dated December 3, 2008 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 Draft 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 Draft EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed site, known as High Island School site, is located at 2127 7<sup>th</sup> Street in High Island, Texas approximately 1 mile east of Hwy 124 on Bolivar Peninsula in Galveston County. FEMA contractors may be tasked with building a community temporary housing site, hereafter "community site," of approximately 90 mobile homes. The land would be leased by the General Service Administration. At this time, Park occupancy is not expected to exceed 24 months. Site utilities, including water and electricity, would be connected to existing municipal services. A site perimeter fence would be placed between the temporary housing site and the adjoining wooded areas to limit human disturbance. A two acre wetland located on the east side of the site would be protected by fencing and a 50 foot vegetative buffer maintained between the proposed housing site and the wetland. Due to the rural nature of High Island, Texas, no sanitary sewer infrastructure is available at the project site. A packaged wastewater treatment plant with a daily capacity of 20,000 gallons would be installed on the project site. When the temporary housing need has ended, FEMA expects that the units would be removed from the site and the site would then be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practicable or site improvements would remain per the landowners interests.

The public comment period for the Draft EA and FONSI will be from December 4 to December 6, 2008 with notice published in the *Galveston Daily News* and draft documents available on FEMA's web site at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region6.shtm>. The Draft EA will also be available at the

FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in U.S. Post Office located at 2008 S. 5th St, High Island, TX 77623 and the Juanita Hargraves Memorial Library, located at 924 Hwy. 124, Winnie, TX, 77665. The Public Notice notifies interested parties of the proposed project, the availability of the Draft EA and FONSI, and provides opportunity for comment.

## FINDINGS

FEMA has made the following determinations from the information contained in the High Island School EA and preliminary site design.

The above described action would 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 FEMA's 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 much of what is outlined in the mitigation column of Table 1 of the Draft EA and are the conditions that must be met as part of implementing this proposed action alternative:

The construction contractor is required to obtain and comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, ordinances and permits (or applicable waivers). This may include but is not limited to; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits (e.g., Nationwide Permits), stormwater construction permits (e.g., a Texas Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit), Texas Department of State Health Services permits, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality permits; and meeting local building codes and standards as well as Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and manufacturer's unit installation requirements. The following best management practices apply:

1. Site preparation (clearing and grading) would require removal of vegetation and may increase short-term soil erosion. Appropriate erosion control measures would be used during construction, such as installation of silt fences and straw bales. If fill is stored on site, the contractor should appropriately cover it to prevent erosion.
2. In order to control stormwater runoff, the contractor would be required to design drainage features so that flows would not cause nuisance flooding during heavy rainfall events. The drainage system would be required to meet local and county requirements.
3. To minimize dust, site soils should be wetted as necessary during site preparation activities, and seeded following construction.
4. Any debris located on the project site would be removed and disposed of by the construction contractor prior to occupancy.
5. 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 Texas State Historic Preservation Office, FEMA Environmental Advisor, and other interested parties.

6. If necessary to reduce construction noise impacts, where there are adjacent sensitive noise receptors such as residential areas, construction activities with elevated noise levels should be limited to 7 A.M. to 7 P.M.
7. If any hazardous materials are found during construction, 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.
8. The contractor would 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.
9. The contractor would obtain a wastewater discharge permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for the wastewater treatment package.
10. Once the temporary housing need has ended, the site would be seeded and restored to previous conditions to the extent practical and/or in accordance with site lease terms.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the incorporated Draft 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 would 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 would not be prepared (44 CFR Part 10.8) and the proposed action alternative as described in the Draft EA may proceed.

#### APPROVE:

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Donald R. Fairley, REM Date  
Environmental Liaison Officer  
FEMA- DR-TX-1791

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Juan Gill Date  
Human Service Branch Director  
FEMA- DR-TX-1791

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Steve DeBlasio Date  
Federal Coordinating Officer  
FEMA- DR-TX-1791

#### CONCUR:

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Scott Armev  
Regional Administrator  
General Services Administration

Date