

**Environmental Assessment
Charlotte County Fire Station #7
FEMA-1539-DR-FL**

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**Environmental Assessment
Charlotte County Fire Station #7
FEMA-1539-DR-FL**

A. Project Name:

Hurricane Charley (DR-1539-FL), Project Worksheet (PW) Number 3070, Charlotte County, Fire Station #7

B. Summary of Environmental Study Requirements

This Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the results of analysis of the proposed project'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 (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508); and FEMA's regulations implementing NEPA (44 CFR Part 10.9). In compliance with NEPA and its implementing regulations, FEMA has prepared this EA to analyze potential environmental impacts associated with several alternatives to meet the stated purpose and need.

C. Purpose and Need

On August 13, 2004, Hurricane Charley came ashore near the Charlotte County on the southwest Coast of Florida as a Category 4 hurricane. The Hurricane brought heavy rains and strong winds. The storm severely damaged infrastructure in the City of Punta Gorda, in Charlotte County, Florida, including Fire Station #7, located at 3624 Ash Street. Due to the severity of the damage to the station, the County has temporarily relocated Station #7 staff to temporary facilities at the Fire Academy at 7273 Florida Street in Punta Gorda, near the Edison College.

The Applicant has identified the need for a new Fire Station #7. FEMA's Public Assistance Program is considering providing the Applicant with grant funding to build a new Fire Station #7 building. The purpose and need for the Proposed Action is to build a new Fire Station that will allow for delivery of emergency and life-saving fire/rescue services for the City of Punta Gorda and the Charlotte County community and provide safe work and housing space for fire/rescue staff.

This EA considers three alternative means of addressing this need.

D. Public Participation

The public will be notified that a Draft EA has been prepared and will be advised on how to review the EA and submit comments to FEMA. The Draft EA will be made available to interested parties through publication on FEMA's website (www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/index.shtm) and by distribution located at the

Punta Gorda Library, 424 West Henry Street, Punta Gorda, FL 33950. Notification in the local paper **Sun-Herald** newspaper will notify the public of such availability. The combined advertisement and public notice will also serve as notification of FEMA's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) EO 11988 (Floodplain Management), and other applicable Federal laws.

The draft EA will be available for review from Tuesday, December 19, 2006 to January 3, 2007. FEMA is requesting public comments in writing to:

Richard Myers,
Environmental Liaison Officer
FEMA Long Term Recovery Office
36 Skyline Drive
Orlando, Florida 32746
Email: richard.myers@dhs.gov

For Questions regarding the project, please call:

Andrew Baker, Charlotte County Facilities Director – 941-743-1392

Dennis Didio, Charlotte County Fire Chief – 941-743-1367

Jim Thompson, Charlotte County Environmental/Natural Services – 941-764-4360

Gary Quill, Charlotte County Airport Director – 941-639-1101

E. Alternatives Considered

NEPA requires the investigation and evaluation of reasonable project alternatives as part of the project environmental review process. Three alternatives are addressed in this EA. The potential environmental impacts for each of the alternatives are analyzed by resource category and discussed in **Section F** (Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences).

- Alternative 1: The **No Action Alternative** proposes that the Applicant does nothing and continue to provide fire/rescue services out of the temporary facilities at the Fire Academy at 7273 Florida Street in Punta Gorda, near the Edison College.
- Alternative 2: The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** proposes to rebuild and enlarge the Charlotte County Fire Station #7 at its pre-disaster location at 3624 Ash Street in Punta Gorda.
- Alternative 3: The **Proposed Action** proposes to relocate and enlarge Charlotte County Fire Station # 7 to the west side of the Charlotte County Airport at the intersection of Mooney Ave. and Golf Course Blvd.

Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the **No Action Alternative**, the Applicant would do nothing, no construction would occur. The County would not benefit from a new Fire Station #7 and fire/rescue personnel would continue to operate out of temporary facilities at the Fire Academy (Figure 2).

Alternative 2 – Reconstruct and Enlarge Charlotte County Fire Station #7 Building at pre-disaster location (Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative)

The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** proposes to rebuild County Fire Station # 7 at 3624 Ash Street at its pre disaster location. This is a highly developed, residential area. The existing, triangular-shaped lot, is sparsely vegetated and has a small retention pond on the north side of the lot. The parcel has Leach Drive to the north and Rio Villa Drive to the east and Ash St. to the west. The original building measures approximately 66 feet by 44 feet and only occupied a small portion of the large lot. The new building would be enlarged to be 80 feet by 80 feet. The new building would be built to comply with all applicable Federal, State, and Local Codes, Standards, Ordinances and Regulations.

Alternative 3 – Relocate and enlarge Charlotte County Fire Station #7 (Proposed Action)

This alternative proposes to construct a new Charlotte County Fire Station # 7 on a vacant 0.84 acre parcel at the Charlotte County Airport. Charlotte County Airport (PGD) is located on Florida's southwest Gulf Coast in Punta Gorda, Florida, halfway between Sarasota and Ft. Myers and in approximately three miles vicinity of Interstate 75, US 41 and US 17. The Airport can handle private and commercial services and offers many aviation related services on the field. The proposed project site is located at the intersection of Mooney Ave. and Golf Course Blvd. in Punta Gorda, Charlotte County, Florida (Figure 1). The proposed site is of irregular shape, measuring approximately 233 feet by 128 feet by 212 feet by 196 feet. The proposed structure will be approximately 80 feet by 80 feet. This new location would still allow for normal response time by Fire/Rescue services to those areas that were served by the original fire station building (per Applicant). No impacts are anticipated to airport operations with the construction of this new Fire Station. The new building would be built to comply with all applicable Federal, State, and Local Codes, Standards, Ordinances and Regulations.

F. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This section is organized by individual resources; it includes a description of the existing conditions at each of the alternative sites, and provides an analysis of potential environmental consequences for each alternative. Information for this section was derived from a review of the project description, relevant literature and websites. Table 1 (below) summarizes the results of the environmental review process.

Table 1: Potential Impacts Summary			
Potentially Affected Resource Areas	Summary of Impacts to Alternatives Considered		
	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative	Alternative 3: Proposed Action
Geology and Soils	No impacts	Temporary construction-related impacts. BMP's and erosion control measures are anticipated to mitigate any potential impacts.	Temporary construction-related impacts. BMP's and erosion control measures are anticipated to mitigate any potential impacts.
Hydrology & Floodplains (E.O. 11988)	No impacts	Would result in impacts upstream and downstream of the facility because of its proximity (less than 1 mile) to the North Fork of Alligator Creek that feeds into Charlotte Harbor. In order to minimize erosion during construction, the contractor would be required to implement BMPs	Project site is not in a floodplain. Impacts upstream and downstream would be insignificant.
Wetlands (E.O. 11990)	No impacts	Wetlands and the North Fork of Alligator Creek that feeds into Charlotte Harbor and a pond located approximately less than one mile from the site. Resources could be adversely impacted by this proposed action.	No impacts
Water Quality	No impacts	Project located outside of and would not affect any waters of the U.S.	Project located outside of and would not affect any waters of the U.S.
Air Quality	No impacts	Construction related emissions would be short-term and insignificant.	Construction related emissions would be short-term and insignificant.

Potentially Affected Resource Areas	Summary of Impacts to Alternatives Considered (continued)		
	Alternative 1: No Action	Alternative 2: Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative	Alternative 3: Proposed Action
Threatened and Endangered Species (Endangered Species Act Section 7)	No impacts	Project areas are in USFWS consultation zones for three threatened species: the Florida Panther, Florida Scrub Jay and the Crested Caracara bird. No impacts anticipated to any species due to lack of suitable habitat.	Project areas are in USFWS consultation zones for three threatened species: the Florida Panther, Florida Scrub Jay and the Crested Caracara bird. No impacts anticipated to any species due to lack of suitable habitat.
Cultural Resources (National Historic Preservation Act Section 106)	No impacts	No known resources exist at the site or project vicinity.	No known resources exist at the site or project vicinity.
Socioeconomics (Land Use/Zoning, Visual Resources, Public Services and Utilities)	No impacts	No impacts are anticipated	No impacts are anticipated
Environmental Justice (E.O. 12898)	No impacts	No impacts are anticipated.	No impacts are anticipated.
Safety	No Impacts	Building would be constructed on the pre disaster site. There would be no safety concerns to personnel, structures or equipment.	Building would be built on Airport property, but not located within a take off/landing pattern for aircraft and could present no safety concerns to personnel, structures or equipment.
Noise	No impacts	Noise levels would increase temporarily during construction. Impacts would be minor as compared to existing noise levels, short-term, and limited to the duration of construction activities. Additional noise generated from the operation would be negligible.	Noise levels would increase temporarily during construction. Impacts would be minor as compared to existing noise levels, short-term, and limited to the duration of construction activities. Additional noise generated from the operation would be negligible.
Hazardous Materials and Toxic Wastes	The proposed facility may store insignificant quantities of hazardous materials for vehicle maintenance. Storage would follow applicable regulations.	The proposed facility may store insignificant quantities of hazardous materials for vehicle maintenance. Storage would follow applicable regulations.	The proposed facility may store insignificant quantities of hazardous materials for vehicle maintenance. Storage would follow applicable regulations.
Traffic and Transportation	Impacts would be infrequent and minimal to residents.	Impacts would be infrequent and minimal to residents.	Impacts would be infrequent and minimal to residents.

Geology and Soils

The major types of existing soils are as follows in the entire project area (approximately): 23 percent Boca fine sand which consists of sandy and loamy marine deposits over limestone, 17 percent Hallandale fine sand which consists of sandy marine deposits over limestone and 16 percent Immokalee sand that consists of sandy marine deposits (Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2006). None of the sites contain hydric soils or Prime Farmland (Attachment B).

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur. Therefore, geology and soils would not be affected.

Under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**, existing soils at the proposed site would be temporarily disturbed by construction-related and ground-moving activities. Erosion control measures would be required as a condition of FEMA funding and would minimize any potential localized effects.

Potential impacts resulting from the **Proposed Action** would be similar to those previously described under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**.

Water Quality: Floodplain, Hydrology, and Wetlands

Floodplain and Hydrology

Executive Order (E.O.) 11988 requires Federal agencies to minimize the occupancy and modifications of floodplains. Specifically, E.O. 11988 prohibits Federal agencies from funding activities in or affecting the 100-year floodplain unless there are no practical alternatives. Potential impacts related to floodplain management include damages to structures located in the floodplain and changes to the extent, elevation, or other features of the floodplain as a result of flood protection measures or other structures being sited in or removed from the floodplain.

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur. Therefore, the **No Action Alternative** would not affect the floodplain.

A review of the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for the existing location at 3624 Ash Street indicates the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** site is located in a 100-year floodplain (FIRM panel number: 12015C0243F). The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** would construct a larger structure in a floodplain (Figure 3). This Alternative would result in impacts upstream and downstream of the facility because of its proximity (less than 1 mile) to the North Fork of Alligator Creek that feeds into Charlotte Harbor. In order to minimize erosion during construction, the contractor would be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs), which would be included as a condition of FEMA funding. Enlarging the facility by 3496 square feet (2904 square feet to 6400 square feet) could have an adverse impact to the floodplain and, as a critical action elevating the structure and access above the 500-year floodplain would be required.

The **Proposed Action** is located outside the 100 and 500-year floodplain (FIRM panel number: 12015C0242F). The **Proposed Action** is located approximately less than one mile from the nearest 100-year floodplain (Figure 3); therefore, no impacts would be anticipated to the floodplain. Stormwater flows enter the **Proposed Action** site via rainfall runoff from the developed airport complex and exit the site via sheet flow to Mooney Avenue, which eventually drains into Charlotte Harbor. The **Proposed Action** would increase the amount of impervious surface at the new site; however, the resulting increase in runoff from the building is not anticipated to be significant because of the already existing developed and impervious surfaces. In order to minimize erosion during construction, the contractor would be required to implement erosion and sedimentation controls and Best Management Practices (BMPs), which would be included as a condition of FEMA funding.

Wetlands:

E.O. 11990 requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on wetlands and take actions to avoid, or minimize potential impacts. “Wetlands” are defined as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater for a majority of the growing season during most years. This wetland hydrology must occur with a frequency and duration sufficient to support a dominance of vegetation species adapted to living in saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions. The three primary indicators, which must be present for an area to be considered as a Federal jurisdictional wetland, are wetland hydrology, wetland vegetation, and hydric soil conditions.

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur and there would be no impacts to wetlands.

Per the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) map (Figure 4), the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** has wetlands, the North Fork of Alligator Creek that feeds into Charlotte Harbor and a pond located approximately less than one mile from the site. Resources could be adversely impacted by this proposed action. However; there are no drainage-ways, streams, marshes, bogs or swamps close enough to the sites to be adversely effected by the proposed action (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory, March 2004).

Under the **Proposed Action** sites; the closest wetland is less than one mile from the proposed project site. Therefore, this alternative would not likely affect any wetlands. In addition, there are no drainage-ways, streams, rivers, ponds, marshes, bogs, swamps or other wetlands close enough to the sites to be adversely effected by the proposed actions (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory, March 2004).

In addition, none of the proposed sites are located within a Coastal Barrier Resource Area (CBRA) or seaward of the Coastal Construction Control Line (CCCL) permit area (See Section H)

Air Quality

Heavy construction is a source of air emissions that may have a substantial temporary impact on local air quality. Emissions associated with construction are from two sources: fumes from construction vehicles, and fugitive dust from ground disturbing activities. Emissions can vary depending on the level of activity, the specific weather conditions. The quantity of dust emissions from construction operations is related to the construction area, level of activity, the type of soil, and the type of construction vehicles.

Under the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for air quality contaminants considered harmful to public health and the environment. Each of the proposed project sites are located in attainment zones, where the NAAQS are being met (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2006).

All Project sites are located in areas listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as attainment zones for air quality contaminants regulated by the Clean Air Act (See Section H).

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction or operations would occur. Therefore, the **No Action Alternative** would have no long-term or short-term effects to air quality, and would be in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** would result in short-term air emissions during construction activities, principally from construction activities related to site preparation and the use of construction equipment. Construction equipment would be required for site preparation; use of such equipment would temporarily increase emissions. The construction contractor would be required to periodically wet down the site during construction to reduce fugitive dust. Any impacts that could potentially occur as a result of construction activities would be limited to the immediate project vicinity, would last only as long as the duration of construction and would not result in any long-term impacts. Federal and State air quality attainment levels would not likely be exceeded. Therefore, no long-term impacts are expected under this Alternative.

Potential impacts to air quality resulting from the **Proposed Action** would be similar to those previously-described under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**.

Biological Resources

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) requires that Federal agencies determine the effect of their actions on threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, and their habitats, and take steps to conserve and protect these species. At least three federally listed protected species have been identified by FEMA as having the potential to occur within all project areas; the Florida Panther, *Felis concolor*, Florida Scrub Jay, *Aphelocoma coerulescens*, and the Crested Caracara, *Caracara plancus* (See Section H). No impacts to marine species are anticipated.

The Florida Panther is an endangered mammal. This mammal inhabits the southwest portions of Florida, preferring mainly farmland and cattle ranches. (USFWS, Panthernet, 2006). Based on the lack of required habitat for this species and the overall small population numbers, it is extremely unlikely that this species would occur within the proposed project areas.

There is no suitable habitat for the panther on any of the project sites. No impacts to the panther are anticipated from the **No Action, Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** or the **Proposed Action**,

The Florida Scrub Jay is a federally threatened bird found in scrub habitats mostly in peninsular Florida. Scrub jays forage on the ground and bury caches of food for later in the white sandy soils of the Florida scrub habitat. The preferred habitat of the scrub jay includes fire-dominated, low-growing, oak scrub habitat found on well-drained, sandy soils. Secondarily, they may also inhabit areas with sparser oaks or scrub areas that are overgrown (Brandt, Hipes, Jackson, Nesmith, & Prentiss, 2001). (Charlotte County Environmental Services, 2006; Brandt, et. al., 2001).

There is no scrub habitat in the **No Action, Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**, or **Proposed Action** project sites; therefore no impacts are anticipated to the Florida Scrub Jay.

The Crested Caracara is a threatened bird and the only species of Caracara found in North America. They are found in open grassland habitats that were once native prairie but now are mainly improved rangelands. The Caracara's preferred habitat is open country, including dry prairie and pasture lands with cabbage palm/live oak hammocks, and shallow ponds and sloughs. Their preferred nest trees are cabbage palms, followed by live oaks (Hipes et al., 2000). Based on the lack of required habitat for this species, it is unlikely that this species would occur within any of the proposed project areas (Brandt, et. al., 2001).

There is no suitable habitat for the Caracara in the **No Action, Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**, or **Proposed Action** project sites; therefore no impacts are anticipated to this species.

Cultural Resources

The National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (36 CFR Part 800), requires Federal agencies to take into account the effect of any undertaking on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for, inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur. Therefore, the **No Action Alternative** would not have any effects to cultural resources, and would be in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** is not expected to affect cultural resources. No known archaeological resources are known to exist within the vicinity of the proposed site; therefore no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated. However, if ground-disturbing activities resulting from the implementation of the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** uncover historically and/or archaeologically significant materials (or evidence thereof), the Applicant shall stop work immediately, notify FEMA, and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the property. The Applicant would not proceed with work until FEMA, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), determines that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act.

Potential impacts to cultural resources resulting from the **Proposed Action** would be similar to those previously described under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**. Additionally, airport structures and buildings located in the immediate vicinity of the project area were constructed between 1996 and 2006; therefore, no impacts are anticipated to historic properties.

Socioeconomics/Environmental Justice

Zoning and Land Use: The **No Action Alternative** is located in existing County Facilities, zoned for essential services use (Charlotte County Budget Department, 2006); therefore use is consistent with county zoning and land use.

The zoning designation for the proposed **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** site is residential and single family housing. Essential services (Fire/Rescue, hospitals, etc) are allowed in these zones (Charlotte County, 2006). Therefore, this alternative is consistent with county zoning and land use.

The **Proposed Action** site is located on airport property zoned as Enterprise Charlotte Airport Park mixed use. This zoning allows for mixed use development including airport and public facilities, as well as light manufacturing, medical, office, research educational facilities, commercial, recreational, institutional, and residential uses. Situating a fire station on this site would be compatible with the existing land use plan (Charlotte County, 2006).

Aesthetics and Visual Resources: The **No Action Alternative** currently operates out of existing County facilities, therefore no impacts are anticipated.

The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** project area is located on a vacant, previously disturbed parcel of land within a residential area. Parcel is of triangular shape and is sparsely populated with trees and has a maintained area surrounding the building and most of the remaining portion of the parcel. A small pond is also present on the north part of the parcel. No impacts are anticipated because parcel use would remain the same.

The **Proposed Action** would locate a building on a parcel that is currently a maintained lot on the airport property. The building would be visually compatible with surrounding buildings. Potential impacts to aesthetics resulting from the **Proposed Action** would be minimal.

Public Services and Utilities: Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur. The residents within the project area would continue to be served by other County-owned locations. Residents would continue to receive fire/rescue services from other locations that may increase response times. Utilities would not be impacted under the **No Action Alternative**.

The **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** would maintain the fire protection service to the public as it would replace an important public service facility. The proposed fire station building **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** would be served by existing infrastructure for potable water, sewer and electrical services.

Potential impacts to public services and utilities resulting from the **Proposed Action** would be similar to those previously described under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**. And firefighting services would be maintained. However, new utilities would need to be installed at the site.

Environmental Justice: E.O. 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations) requires Federal agencies to focus attention on human health and environmental conditions in minority and/or low-income communities. The goal of the E.O. is to avoid disproportionate adverse effects to minority or low income populations.

Population data could not be collected solely for the project areas. The following data includes the entire county.

According to the 2005 American Community Survey (US Census Bureau, 2006), approximately 5 percent of families and 19 percent of individuals are below poverty level. These figures are comparable to the U.S. national average. The general make-up of Charlotte County is approximately 91 percent Caucasian, 4 percent African American, and 4 percent Hispanic (of any race). The percentage of Caucasians is above the national average; while African American and Hispanic populations are much lower (US Census Bureau, 2006).

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur. Therefore, the **No Action Alternative** would not have any effects to low income or minority populations within the project area.

Both the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** and **Proposed Action** are not expected to have disproportionately high or adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations. The largest benefit to social and economic resources would be increased efficiency of emergency operations. This would result in increased public safety and possible reduced loss of human life, as well as reduced property losses.

Safety

Under the **No Action Alternative** no construction would occur, therefore there are no safety concerns.

With the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** the new building would be built at the pre disaster location, therefore there are no new safety concerns.

Under the **Proposed Action** alternative the new building would be on the Airport property. This building would be constructed in proximity to already existing buildings. All construction must comply with applicable FAA regulations. In addition, the proposed building is not located within an approach/take-off path of aircraft and would not present safety concerns for the structure, personnel and equipment. All construction must comply with applicable FAA regulations.

Noise

“Noise” can be defined as unwanted or unwelcome sound, and is regulated by the Noise Control Act of 1972 (NCA). The NCA requires federal agencies that operate noise-producing facilities or equipment to implement noise standards; by its nature, FEMA does not have statutes defining noise. No sensitive receptors (nursing homes, hospitals, etc.) are located in the project areas.

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur. However the current level noise would stay the same because fire/rescue services would be maintained. Long-term impacts resulting from the fire station would include alarms, sirens, and truck traffic

Under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** any additional noise generation would be generated during construction activities. In order to minimize impacts, the Applicant would be required to restrict construction activities to normal work hours. Noise levels within the project area would increase temporarily during construction of the project due to construction equipment. Construction noise impacts would be minor as compared to existing noise levels, short-term, and limited to the duration of construction activities. Long-term impacts resulting from the fire station would include alarms, sirens, and truck traffic.

The **Proposed Action** project will take place on an existing, functioning airport site that generates significant noise from normal airport operations. Therefore, potential impacts to noise resulting from the Proposed Action would be similar to those previously-described under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**.

Traffic and Transportation

Under the **No Action Alternative**, no construction would occur, however current traffic and transportation situations would remain the same. Therefore, the **No Action Alternative** would not have any effects to traffic within the project area.

Under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** traffic within the proposed project area would temporarily increase due to the ingress and egress of construction equipment. This traffic impact would be short-term and limited to the duration of construction. Operation of the fire station would increase traffic due to emergency vehicle trips and commutes from firefighters. Due to the location of the proposed project, no significant traffic impacts are anticipated to impact the surrounding community.

Potential impacts to traffic resulting from the **Proposed Action** would be similar to those discussed under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**. The proposed site is immediately adjacent to Mooney Avenue. Ingress and egress for emergency vehicles would not be impeded by airport operations, and airport operations would not impede access to the proposed facility.

Hazardous and Toxic Materials

Under the **No Action Alternative**, the proposed facility may store insignificant quantities of hazardous materials for vehicle maintenance. Storage would follow applicable regulations. No impacts would be anticipated with this alternative.

There are no known site contaminants or underground storage tanks at the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** or at the **Proposed Action** sites. However, if any contaminated materials are found during construction, the Applicant would be required to remediate all hazardous materials and would be required to abate, or dispose of as appropriate, and handled in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. The contractor will implement measures to prevent spillage or runoff of chemicals, fuels, oils, or sewer-related wastes during project work. In addition, it is anticipated that the proposed Fire Station would not store or use significant quantities of hazardous materials within the facility or on the property. Therefore, the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative** and the **Proposed Action** sites are not expected to result in any impacts from hazardous materials.

G. Cumulative Effects

Cumulative adverse effects are the adverse effects on the environment, which may result from a number of actions taking place within the same geographical region. A significant adverse effect of this kind occurs when the accumulated adverse effects of all of these actions are added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

FEMA's Public Assistance program is designed to assist public facilities after a disaster event. To address cumulative impacts, FEMA has determined that the implementation of the **Proposed Action** would have an overall positive impact on human health and the environment as compared to the **No Action**, and **Reconstruction and Enlargement** Alternatives. No other projects proposed by FEMA are anticipated in the vicinity of the **Proposed Action** project area within the foreseeable future. There would be no significant cumulative adverse effects expected as a result of the implementation of the **Proposed Action** as evaluated in this EA.

H. Project Conditions

No Action Alternative:

1. Proposes that the Applicant does nothing; therefore there are no project conditions.

Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative:

1. Applicant shall obtain and comply with all required local, state, and federal permits and laws prior to implementation of the proposed project and will comply with any and all conditions imposed. Applicant shall document compliance and may be required to provide documentation of this coordination as condition of funding at time of closeout. If new information reveals the project may affect environmental or historical resources in a manner not previously considered, and/or there are any changes to the scope of work, re-submission will be required through the State to FEMA, and re-evaluation for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will be required. Noncompliance with this requirement may jeopardize the receipt of federal funding.
2. Applicant would be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for construction which includes erosion control, vehicle maintenance, site maintenance, etc.
3. No archaeological resources are known to exist at or within the vicinity of the proposed project site. However, if ground-disturbing activities resulting from the implementation of this action uncover historically and/or archaeologically significant materials (or evidence thereof), the Applicant would be required to stop work immediately, notify FEMA, and take all reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the property. The Applicant would not proceed with work until FEMA, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), determines that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the project is in compliance with the NHPA.
4. The Applicant would be required to restrict construction activities to normal work hours.
5. All construction must comply with applicable FAA regulations.
6. If any contaminated materials are found during construction, the Applicant would be required to remediate all hazardous materials, and would be required to abate, or dispose of as appropriate, and handled in accordance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. The contractor would implement measures to prevent spillage or runoff of chemicals, fuels, oils, or sewer-related wastes during project work.

Proposed Action

Standard project conditions would apply to the **Proposed Action** and would be similar to those previously described under the **Reconstruction and Enlargement Alternative**.

I. References, Agencies, and Persons Consulted

- “Archeological Sites” [GIS map data]. Florida Division of Historical Resources, July 2004. As Processed by: FEMA Florida Long-Term Recovery Office, GIS Department, 2005. Accessed Using: ArcReader [GIS software]. Version 9.1.
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- Charlotte County Airport Website. Retrieved on October 31, 2006, from <http://www.flypgd.com/index.htm>,
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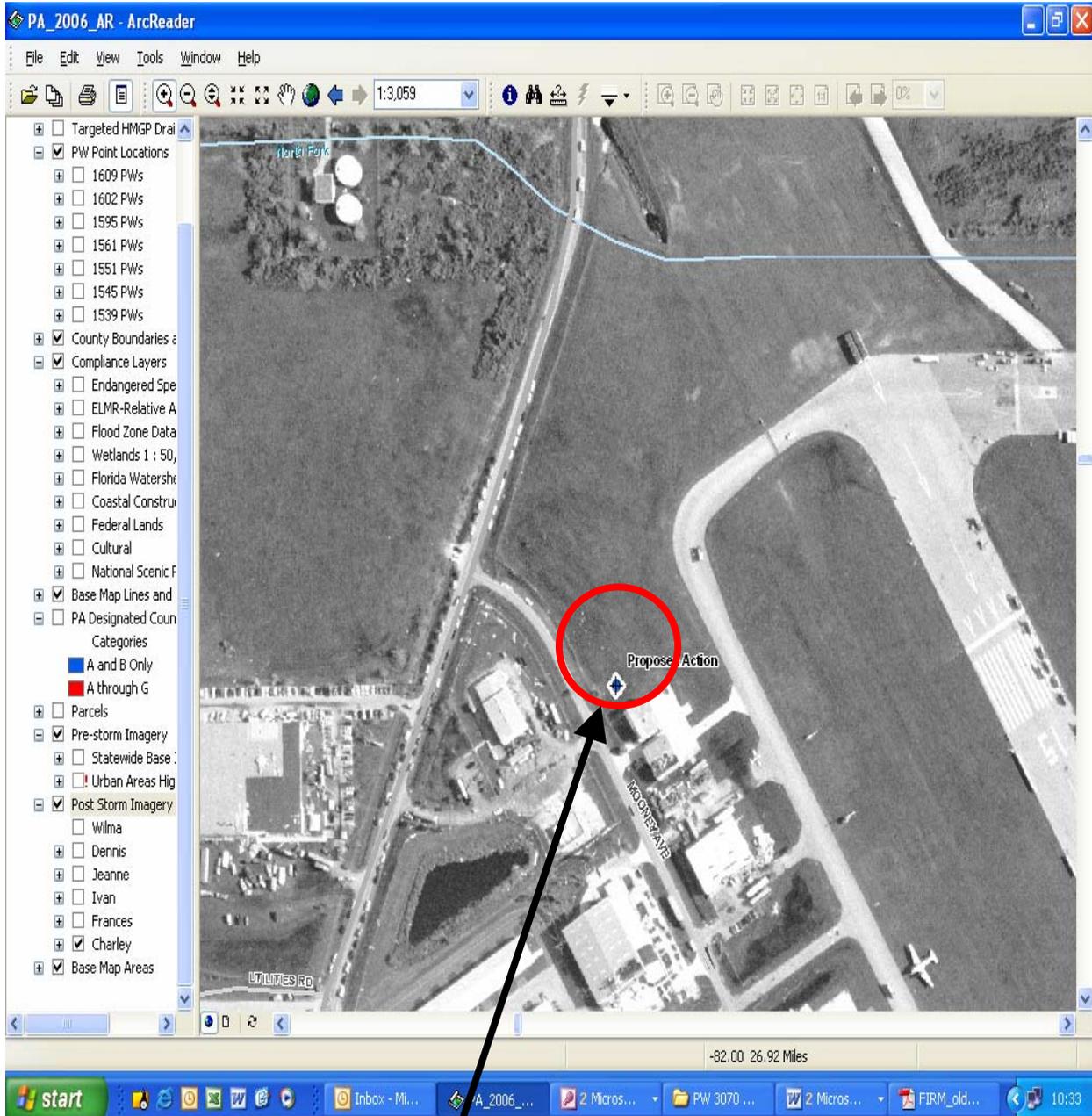
J. Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BMP	Best Management Practices
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
NCA	Noise Control Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PW	Project Worksheet
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer

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Figure 1: Aerial Photo of Proposed Project Area
Source: GIS Database, 2004



Proposed Action
Project Site

Figure 2: Project Locations
Source base map: USGS Punta Gorda (FL) Quadrangle Map 1984
Note: Map not to scale.

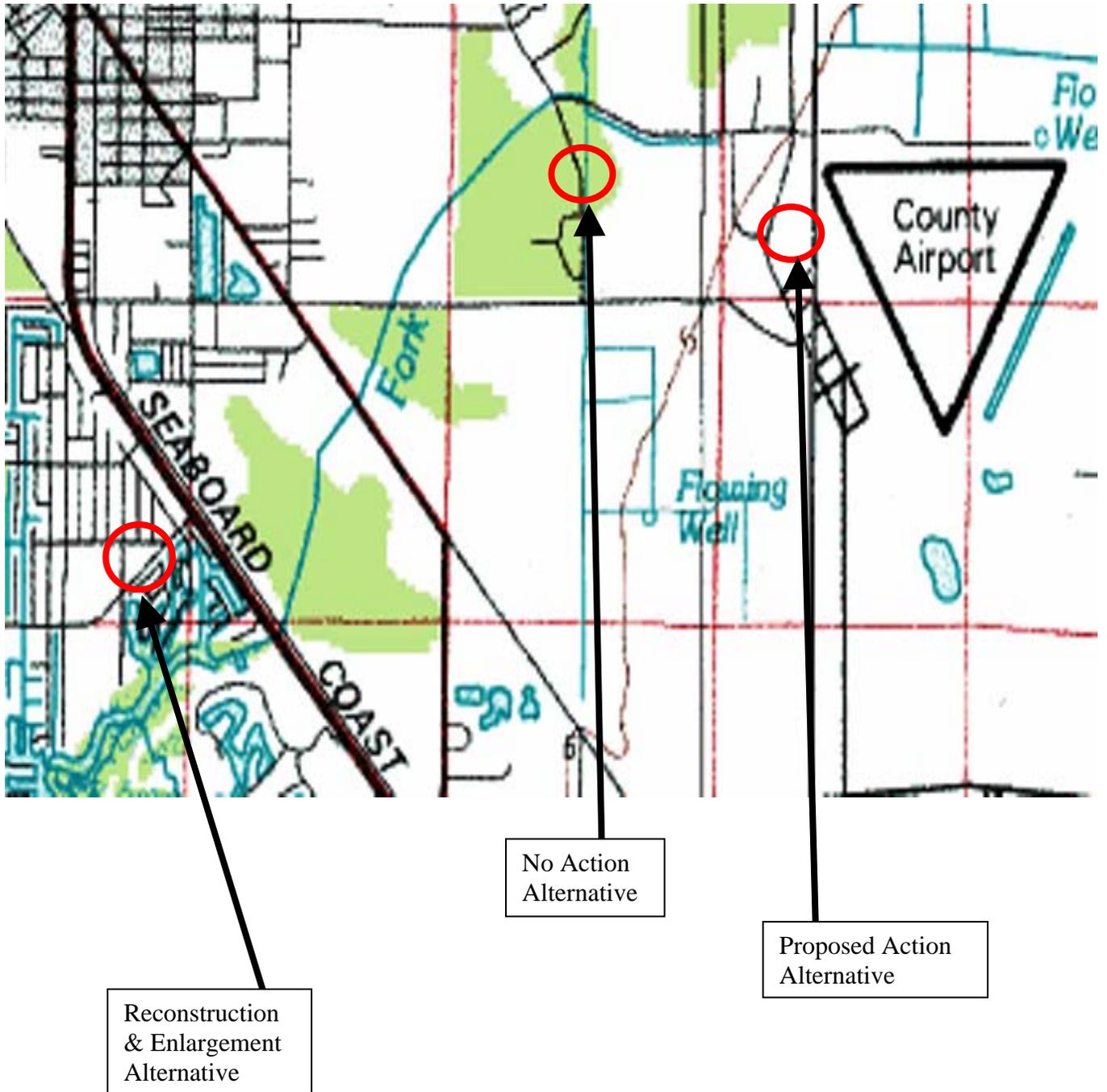


Figure 3: Floodplain Map

Source: Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel Numbers 12015C0243F (2003) & 12015C0242F (2003)

Note: Purple shading indicates inclusion in the Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year floodplain) & Green shading & no shading indicates areas of no flooding

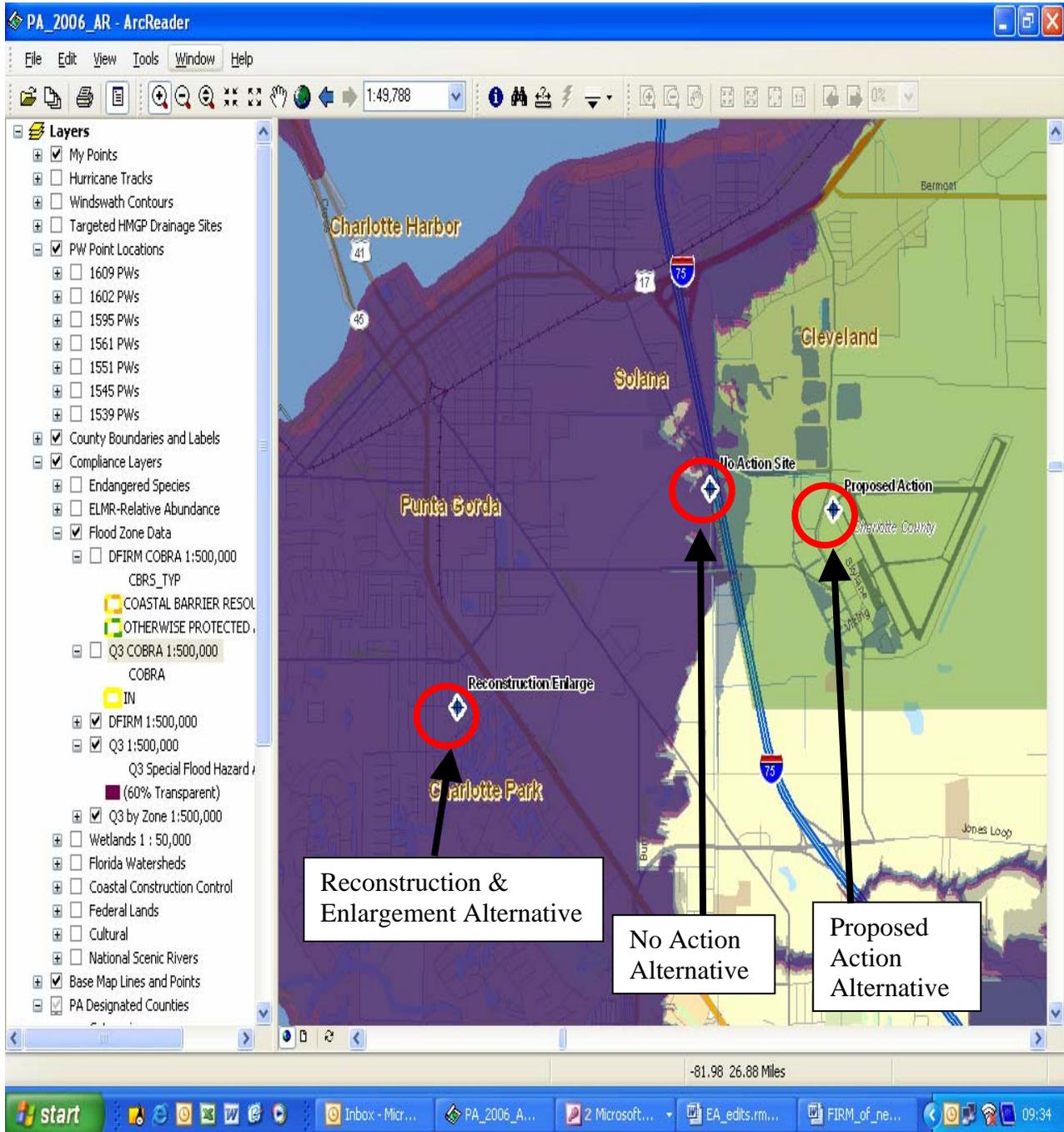


Figure 4: National Wetlands Inventory Map

Source: USFWS, 2004

Note: Purple shading indicates wetland areas. Map not to scale.

