

**Environmental Assessment
Prattsville Fire District
Facility Replacement Project
Prattsville, Greene County, New York**

4020-DR-NY

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FEMA

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Appendix D	EO 11988 and EO 11990 Eight-Step Review Documentation

LIST OF ACRONYMS

amsl	Above Mean Sea Level
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
AD	Area of Disturbance
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
DRP	Data Recovery Plan
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EO	Executive Order
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	Nation Environmental Policy Act
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHP	Natural Heritage Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NYCDEP	New York City Department of Environmental Protection
NYS	New York State
NYSBC	New York State Building Code
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDHSES	New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
NYSOPRHP	New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
PAF	Public Archaeology Facility
SEQRA	State Environmental Quality Review Act
SF	Square Foot
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan

THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
USACE	United State Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey

1.0 Introduction

The Prattsville Fire District, herein referred to as the Subgrantee, has requested financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program to construct a new firehouse within the community to fully restore the emergency service and community meeting space functions impacted due to substantial storm damage of an existing facility. Prattsville in Greene County, New York, experienced storm damages and flooding from Hurricane Irene that occurred during the incident period of August 26, 2011-September 5, 2011. The storm incident period was declared a major disaster by President Barack H. Obama on August 31, 2011 (FEMA 4020-DR-NY), and subsequently amended. Federal Public Assistance was made available to affected communities and certain nonprofit organizations in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5172 et seq.) as amended. The Grantee for the proposed action is the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services. The FEMA project worksheet reference number is PW-08086.

The Prattsville Fire District facility located at 14563 Main Street in the hamlet of Prattsville experienced flooding on the first floor as a result of the declared incident. The facility is located in the 100-year floodplain. The building has been stabilized and the Subgrantee continues to utilize the facility for firehouse operations and as a community meeting space as a temporary measure until a permanent plan for full restoration of functions can be implemented. In accordance with FEMA Policy 9524.4 Repair vs. Replacement of a Facility and 44 CFR § 206.226(f), the cost to repair the facility does not exceed 50 percent of the replacement cost for the project; therefore the facility is eligible for federal cost-share funding up to the cost to repair with floodproofing and other code compliance for the facility. The Subgrantee is pursuing an improved project to relocate the facility outside of the 500-year floodplain and reduce the risk of future flood-related damage. An improved project allows the Subgrantee to make improvements to a facility while still restoring its pre-disaster function and its pre-disaster capacity. The Grantee/Subgrantee would be responsible for 100 percent of project costs that exceed the FEMA Public Assistance grant cost-shared costs. The proposed action would create a new firehouse for use by the Prattsville Fire District on a site located off of Main Street approximately 500 feet northwest of the location of the current firehouse and set back approximately 800 feet from the road. The new facility would be outside the 100-year floodplain and predominantly above the 500-year floodplain elevation. The facility size would be approximately 10,000 to 12,800 square feet. Construction of the new facility is projected to be completed in June 2015.

FEMA is required as a Federal agency to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of its proposed actions, and alternatives to proposed actions, in order to make an informed decision in defining a proposed project for implementation. FEMA must consider and incorporate, to the extent practicable, measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse impacts to the human environment. The environmental analysis is conducted in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and its implementing regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Parts 1500-1508 and FEMA's regulations at 44 CFR Part 9 and 44 CFR Part 10. FEMA evaluates financial assistance projects prior to grant approval.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) serves as documentation of FEMA's analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed fire house relocation project, including analysis of project alternatives, and identification of impact minimization measures. The document serves as written communication of the environmental evaluation for public and interested party comment. Public involvement is a component of NEPA to inform an agency's determination of whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

2.0 Purpose and Need

The objective of the Public Assistance Grant Program is to provide assistance to State, Tribal, and local governments and certain types of private nonprofit organizations so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies. The purpose of the proposed project is to restore a critical facility to the community, returning emergency services as well as providing a community shelter for future disasters. The need for the project is to return emergency services to full capacity for the affected community due to the storm damage and loss of use of the original facility during Hurricane Irene. The Fire District is currently using the damaged building as a temporary arrangement and implementation of a permanent plan for restoration of function is needed.

3.0 Background Information

The Prattsville Fire District is a volunteer fire and emergency medical service (EMS) company with approximately 25 active members and several junior members. The Fire District covers approximately 19.6 square miles and serves a population of roughly 700 residents. According to the Greene County Emergency Services 2012 Annual Report (<http://greenegovernment.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Emergency-Services-2012-Annual-Report.pdf>), the Prattsville Fire District responded to thirty-three (33) fire calls and fifty-nine (59) EMS calls. The fire district has six fire trucks, one EMS vehicle, two rescue ATVs, and a trailer for the ATVs. The fire district holds several meetings and drills each month for fire and EMS volunteers and the Junior Firefighters, bi-monthly meetings for the women's auxiliary, and several annual or twice-yearly events such as fundraisers, a tool sale, department physicals, elections, and special meetings. Attendance at these events ranges from eight for the monthly EMS meetings to 175 for fundraising dinners. It also hosts approximately 30 events per year open to the community at large, attracting as many as 200 participants each for the Memorial Day post-parade gathering and a community fundraiser event. The fire house also serves as the local polling location.

The existing firehouse located at 14563 Main Street in Prattsville is a two-story concrete block building with brick veneer façade built in the 1940s. The property also includes the Masonic Hall and a fire engine garage addition that was built in the 1970s. The footprint of the existing fire house is approximately 4,052 square feet, consisting of the two-story firehouse and one-story garage addition, with the adjacent two-story Masonic Hall footprint measuring approximately 1,801 square feet. The facility is located near the center of the hamlet of Prattsville, on a small lot with the building sited close to the roadway.

The firehouse's current location within the 100-year floodplain has proven to be hazardous during a flooding event such as Hurricane Irene. The first floor of the building flooded during the incident and the facility could not be used during the event; furthermore, the bridges at either end of town were damaged, limiting access from neighboring fire and rescue districts. The local floodplain administrator determined the facility to be substantially damaged as a result of storm damage.

4.0 Description of Alternatives Considered

NEPA requires the analysis of practicable alternatives as part of the environmental review process for the proposed project. Inclusion of a No Action Alternative in the environmental analysis and documentation is required under NEPA. The No Action Alternative is used to evaluate the effects of not providing Federal financial assistance for the project, thus providing a "without project" benchmark against which "action alternatives" may be evaluated. FEMA reviewed all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and Executive Orders for each alternative considered.

4.1 Site Alternatives Considered and Dismissed

The amount of eligible FEMA Public Assistance funding for this project was determined based upon FEMA's policies and regulations. In accordance FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy 9524.4 Repair vs. Replacement of a Facility and 44 CFR §206.226(f), because the cost to repair the facility does not exceed 50 percent of the replacement cost for the project, the applicant is eligible for federal funding to repair the facility at its current location with floodproofing and code compliance. Also pursuant to 9524.4, the total eligible costs for the repair of this facility are capped at the estimated replacement cost of the building, which would include the cost of elevating the first floor to at/above the 500-year floodplain elevation.¹ The RS Means estimate for this cost is (including only the cost of replacing the facility and elevating the first floor to the 500-year flood elevation) is \$2,276,253.²

The Subgrantee rejected as a practicable alternative, the repair of the facility at the existing site based on several factors including:

- (1) Repair of the facility in its current location at the original site would not remove the critical facility from the Special Flood Hazard Area;
- (2) Repair of the facility in its current location would also require the applicant to incur costs of securing a temporary facility to continue emergency services while the original facility was repaired and/or replaced; and

¹ See FEMA Policy 9524.4(VII)(3), *Repair v. Replacement of a Facility under 44 CFR §206.226(f) (The 50% Rule)* establishing that the total eligible costs for a facility whose repair cost does not exceed 50% of the replacement costs **and** upgrades to undamaged elements are triggered by codes and standards **and** the total of the two items is greater than 100% percent of the estimated replacement costs,

² Note that the total net eligible cost for the repair is \$2,316,497.20, which also includes the cost of the environmental assessment and DAC in the amounts of \$10,000 and \$30,244.20 respectively.

- (3) Repair of the facility in its current location would involve cost considerations for incorporating floodproofing to at/above the 500-year floodplain elevation and costs for other building code compliance. Additionally, the facility would have to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for any of the facility's substantial improvement.

Factoring in those current and future costs and risk considerations, the Subgrantee's preferred alternative is to relocate the facility outside of the 100-year and 500-year floodplains to minimize future damages and maintain emergency service operational capability during future disaster events. Thus, the Subgrantee focused its analysis of practicable alternatives instead on improved project alternatives that would allow them to utilize the eligible federal funding for a project that would restore the pre-disaster function of the facility in a location outside the floodplain.³

The Subgrantee considered and evaluated five alternative sites on which to construct a new firehouse facility. Project criteria was identified and used as a comparison evaluation tool for final site selection. Project criteria included such parameters as: site had to be available for purchase; site had to be a minimum of 2.5 acres in size; site had to have access to major utilities; site had to be above the 100-year and 500-year flood plains, and site had to be located between the bridges located to the north and south of the hamlet of Prattsville, both of which were damaged during Hurricane Irene. The five potential sites identified by the Subgrantee for initial alternatives screening are:

- Site #1: Santo site (formerly referred to as the Becker site) and Cangelosi site
- Site #2: The Town of Prattsville sewer plant site
- Site #3: The Fuchs and Verizon site
- Site #4: The Compton site
- Site #5: The Town of Prattsville Pratt Rock site

Through the Subgrantee's evaluation process, Sites #2, #4 and #5 were dismissed from further analysis in this EA. The Subgrantee summarized the main reasons for dismissing these sites in the narratives below.

Site #2: This site is part of a larger 46+ acre property owned by the Town of Prattsville. This property is developed as the site of the Town of Prattsville sewer treatment facility. The western portion of the property is level and open, but is also located within the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Access to Site 2 is located approximately 2,400' north on Washington Street (CR 10) from its intersection with Main Street (State Route 23) and the same distance from the existing fire house location on Main Street (State Route 23). The eastern portion of the property is above the 500-year floodplain, but access to this area would either be via Main Street (into the floodplain) or would require climbing a long, severe slope to the east via Washington Street.

Site #4: This site is part of a 17+ acre property privately owned by Robert Compton. The site is located to the south and east end of the hamlet at the intersection of State Route 23 and State

³ See 44 CFR §206.203(d).

Route 23A. There is no municipal water or sewer available at the site. Access to the hamlet would involve a portion of State Route 23 which is adjacent to the Schoharie Creek and within the 100-year flood plain. This portion of State Route 23 was substantially damaged and made completely impassable by the flooding caused by Hurricane Irene.

Site #5: This site is part of a 13+ acre site and is also owned by the Town of Prattsville. The topography on this site is severe. There is no municipal water or sewer available at the site. Access to Site 5 is located on Main Street (State Route 23) approximately 2,800' east of the existing fire house location on Main Street (State Route 23) and approximately 2,600' west of the State Route 23/State Route 23A intersection. Access to the hamlet would involve a portion of State Route 23 adjacent to the Schoharie Creek and within the 100-year floodplain. This portion of State Route 23 was substantially damaged and made completely impassable by the flooding caused by Hurricane Irene. This site is the location of Pratt Rock; Pratt Rock Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Potential impact to historic resources was also a concern as construction of a modern building on the property would likely have direct and/or indirect effects on the National Register-listed park.

4.2 Site Alternatives Considered in this EA

Site #1: This site is referred to as the Santo/Cangelosi site, but has previously been referred to as the Becker site. This property is located on the north side of State Route 23 between residential streets Wright Street and Pine Street and is also identified as being approximately 1.25 miles west of the State Route 23 & State Route 23A intersection.

The site is considered practicable because: it exceeds the 2.5-acre minimum; it has existing access to major utilities; it is centrally located in the hamlet; the building site is located above the 100-year and 500-year floodplains; it has a potential building site that is open (meadow) with a slight slope; and it is possible to have primary access to Main Street and secondary access to Washington Street, with the secondary access being above the 500-year floodplain.

Site #3: This site is adjacent to and east of Site #1 in a generally wooded area. The site is considered practicable because: it exceeds the 2.5-acre minimum; it has existing access to major utilities; the building site has a moderate slope; and the building site and the access to Washington Street are above the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Washington Street has a significant slope and limited sight distances at the proposed access point. Traffic lights would be necessary on Washington Street to mitigate these concerns. The acquisition cost for this site was found to be higher than the cost for Site #1, and site preparation requirements, including additional signal lights and extensive tree clearing, would add to the development costs. The total cost of purchase and site preparation on Site #1 was estimated to be \$160,000, while the total cost of purchase and site preparation on Site #3 was estimated to be \$280,000.

The Proposed Action Alternative is at Site #1 and the Alternative Action is at Site #3. The No Action Alternative, Proposed Action Alternative, and the Alternative Action are considered further in this EA and are summarized below.

4.2.1 No Action Alternative

It is anticipated that absent Federal financial assistance, the Subgrantee would not have the necessary funds to repair and floodproof the firehouse and build the community shelter. Thus, as the No Action Alternative, the original facility would remain in use.. As the local floodplain manager determined the facility was substantially damaged, the flood insurance for the facility could be impacted unless compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was addressed by the Subgrantee. This alternative would not fully address the project's purpose and need. Flood damage risk reduction would not be achieved through this alternative. The risk of future interruption of emergency services during flood events would not be addressed by this alternative.

4.2.2 Proposed Action Site #1

As the Proposed Action, the Subgrantee would vacate the existing +/- 10,000 square foot facility leaving the property safe and secure for future use. A new 10,000-12,800 square foot one-story facility would be built on an alternate site that is predominantly open and level meadow. As a flood damage risk reduction measure, the floor elevation and parking for first responder personnel would be above the 500-year floodplain elevation. The floor elevation would be approximately 4.0 feet above the 100-year BFE and approximately 1.0 foot or more above the 500-year floodplain elevation. This alternative would be in compliance with the Town of Prattsville Floodplain Ordinance (including volumetric balancing of displaced base floodplain) and NFIP requirements. Refer to *Appendix D*, Executive Orders Eight-Step 11988/11990 Review Documentation and FIRM Map #36039C1058F. This alternative would address the project's purpose and need.

4.2.3 Alternative Action Site #3

As an Alternative Action, the Subgrantee would vacate the existing 10,000 square foot facility, leaving the property safe and secure for future use. A new 10,000-12,800 square foot one-story facility would be constructed at an alternate site that is predominantly wooded with a moderate slope. The floor elevation and parking for emergency personnel would be above the 500-year floodplain elevation. The floor elevation would be approximately 37.0 feet above the 100-year BFE and approximately 34.0 feet or more above the 500-year floodplain elevation. This alternative would be in compliance with the local floodplain ordinance (including volumetric balancing of displaced base floodplain) and NFIP requirements. Refer to *Appendix D*, Executive Orders 11988/11990 Eight-Step Review Documentation. This alternative would address the project's purpose and need. As discussed above, the Subgrantee did not select the Site #3 alternative as the proposed action because site acquisition costs and site development costs would be higher than Site #1.

5.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Table 1 on Page 7 summarizes potential impacts of the No Action, Proposed Action and Alternative Action alternatives. The following sections provide a more detailed description of the affected environment and potential environmental impacts of the No Action and Proposed Action and Alternative Action alternatives.

5.1 Topography, Soils, and Geology

5.1.1 Existing Conditions

Topography

The Proposed Action Alternative – Site #1 (project site) is located in the Schoharie Creek valley. Within the Area of Disturbance (AD), there is an approximately five to nine foot elevation change from the northwest to southeast. Ground surface elevation at the building site is approximately 1,162 feet (or less) above mean sea level (amsl). To the east of the project site, the topography rises to approximately 1,800 feet amsl. To the west of the project site, the topography slopes downhill to Main Street, which runs alongside the Schoharie Creek.

Table 1 Summary of Potential Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

Resource	Potential Impacts			Agency/ Permits	Mitigation
	No Action Alternative	Proposed Action	Alternative Action		
Topography, Geology and Soils	No impact.	Minor impact. Soil disturbed during construction.	Minor impact. Soil to be disturbed during construction.	NYSDEC Stormwater SPDES NYC DEP Stormwater	Best management practices for erosion and sediment control and post-construction management practices.
Land Use and Zoning	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	Town Site Plan Approval Town Subdivision Approval County Planning Dept. "239" Review	
Water Resources and Water Quality	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	NYS DEC Stormwater SPDES	Best management practices for erosion and sediment control and post-construction management practices.
Wetlands	No impact.	No impact.	No Impact.		
Floodplains	Adverse impact may result if facility remains in floodplain.	Future flood damage risk reduction would be achieved via relocation outside 100-year floodplain and predominantly outside the 500-year floodplain.	Future flood damage risk reduction would be achieved via relocation outside 100-year floodplain and outside the 500-year floodplain.	Local Floodplain Permit (For Access Road)	Compliance with Local Floodplain Ordinance. Elevation/Floodproofing to at/above the 500-year floodplain elevation.
Vegetation	No impact.	Moderate impact.	Moderate impact.		Native plant species would be used for landscape plantings.
Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.		
Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.	NYSDEC NHP	
Cultural Resources	No impact.	No historic properties affected	No historic properties affected	NYSHPO	
Aesthetic and Visual Resources	No Impact.	Minor impact.	Minor impact.		Aesthetic design of new building and landscape plantings.
Socioeconomic Resources	Potential adverse impact to effectiveness of emergency services during flood events.	Short-term positive impact with construction, long-term net return better than pre-disaster conditions.	Short-term positive impact with construction, long-term net return better than pre-disaster conditions.		
Environmental Justice	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.		
Air Quality	No impact.	Temporary dust and emissions due to construction; no long-term impact to air quality.	Temporary dust and emissions due to construction; no long-term impact to air quality.		Best management practices.
Contaminated Materials	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.		
Noise	No impact.	Temporary construction noise; no long-term impact.	Temporary construction noise; no long-term impact.		Compliance with local ordinances and best management practices.
Traffic	No impact.	Minor short-term impact from construction vehicles. Long-term benefit by creation of off-street parking.	Minor short-term impact from construction vehicles. Long-term benefit by creation of off-street parking.	NYS DOT Entrance Permit.	Compliance with NYS DOT Design Standards.
Infrastructure	No impact.	No significant impact.	No significant impact.	Town of Prattsville Water Connection. Town of Prattsville Sewer Connection.	Design in accordance with local standards.
Public Health and Safety	Adverse impact to community with facility remaining in floodplain.	Positive impact due to new facility for the affected community.	Positive impact due to new facility for the affected community.	NYSDOH	Compliance with Federal, State, and local safety standards and codes.
Climate Change	No impact.	No impact.	No impact.		
Cumulative Impacts	Adverse impact to community.	No adverse cumulative impacts. Positive cumulative benefit to the community with the Proposed Action and the anticipated reconstruction of the Prattsville Fire District facility	No adverse cumulative impacts. Positive cumulative benefit to the community with the Proposed Action and the anticipated reconstruction of the Prattsville Fire District facility		

Soils

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) operates the Web Soil Survey, which includes the soils of Greene County (NRCS USDA, 2013). The proposed project site consists of Tunkhannock gravelly loam (TuB, TuD and TvB) and Barbour loam (Ba). The alternative project site is comprised of Tunkhannock gravelly loam (TuC and TuD).

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires Federal agencies to minimize the extent to which Federal programs contribute to the unnecessary conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use and to assess potential conversion of farmland to developed property. Ba, TuB and TvB are considered prime farmland soils. The majority of the proposed site is TuB, Tunkhannock gravelly loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes. The majority of the alternative site is TuC, Tunkhannock gravelly loam, rolling, which is considered to be farmland of statewide importance.

Geology

Executive Order 12699 requires Federal agencies assisting in the financing, through Federal grants or loans, or guaranteeing the financing, through loan or mortgage insurance programs, of newly constructed buildings to initiate measures to assure appropriate consideration of seismic safety (WBDG, 1990). The United States Geological Survey (USGS) Percent Peak Ground Acceleration Seismic Hazard Maps (USGS, 2008) adopted by the New York State Building Code (NYSBC) indicate that the project site is located within a moderate seismic hazard area, as is most of New York State. Since seismic activity is low for this seismic hazard area, the construction of emergency services buildings would not have to meet any higher standards than those required by the NYSBC.

5.1.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact topography, geology, or soils.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action Alternative would have minor impacts to the physical features of the project site including ground disturbance during construction. A portion of the excavated area would be developed as stormwater management structures, while the remaining area would be graded for development of the facility and surrounding parking areas. There is no proposal to excavate deeper than four to five feet or to discharge any waste on site. No impact to the bedrock or geology would be expected. The project requires the preparation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) developed in accordance with the "New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity" General Permit Number GP-0-10-001, effective January 29, 2010 through January 28, 2015. The SWPPP and accompanying plans identify and detail stormwater management, pollution prevention, and erosion and sediment control measures necessary during and following completion of construction.

NRCS was consulted on the proposed site, and responded that the project is exempt from FPPA because the site is of minimal size and in an area of urban buildup (letter dated November 12, 2013; *Appendix B*). The Farmland Conversion Impact Rating (NRCS-AD-1006) is not required for this project. A similar finding would apply to the alternative site as it is located immediately adjacent to the proposed site.

Alternative Action

Potential impacts to the soils and topography of the alternative site would be similar to those anticipated from the Proposed Action.

5.2 Land Use and Zoning

5.2.1 Existing Conditions

The existing facility is located on Main Street in the hamlet of Prattsville, Greene County, New York. The proposed site is located within the hamlet area, with primary driveway access on Main Street. The building itself would be set approximately 750 to 800 feet back on the lot on the northeast side of Main Street. The proposed site is predominantly outside the 500-year floodplain. In proximity to the hamlet, there is a mixture of farmland, forested areas, and residences. The proposed site is a meadow with a slight slope. Adjacent to the site is a trailer park to the north, Main Street to the west, vacant wooded property to the east, and residences to the south. The Alternate Site is located in the wooded property to the east of the proposed site.

While the Town of Prattsville does not have a Zoning Ordinance, there are subdivision regulations, site plan review, and NYCDEP Watershed regulations applicable to both Sites #1 and #3. See the SEQRA Document, Full Environmental Assessment Form, in *Appendix B* for additional site details. *Appendix C*, Phase I – Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), includes information on the historical uses of the project site.

5.2.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact land use as it would continue the existing use of the land.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would include the development of a currently vacant lot, which would result in a change in land use. However, the new use of the lot would be consistent or complementary to the surrounding development and therefore would not result in any adverse impacts to land use. The Subgrantee will be required to abide by any local subdivision regulations, site plan reviews, and NYCDEP Watershed regulations in the development of the project. Implementation of the action alternatives would include excavation of vacant fields for use as fill where the extent is practicable and the construction of a stormwater control area.

Alternative Action

The impacts for the Alternative Action site would be the same as those described above under Proposed Action.

5.3 Water Resources and Water Quality

Congress enacted the Federal Water Pollution Control Act in 1948, which was reorganized and expanded in 1972 and became known as the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1977, as amended. The CWA regulates discharge of pollutants into water with sections falling under the jurisdiction of the U.S Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Section 404 of the CWA establishes the USACE permit requirements for discharging dredged or fill materials into Waters of the United States and traditional navigable waterways. Under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), the EPA regulates both point and non-point pollutant sources, including stormwater. Activities that disturb one (1) acre of ground or more are required to apply for a SPDES permit administered in New York through the NYSDEC.

5.3.1 Existing Conditions

The Proposed Action Alternative is located in the Schoharie Creek watershed. The closest mapped water body to the proposed building location is Huntersfield Creek, located less than 600 feet south of the proposed building site. The portion of Huntersfield Creek that is nearest the project location is classified as a Class C stream, and empties into Schoharie Creek approximately 1,100 feet west of the proposed building site. Schoharie Creek is classified as a Class C (T) stream downstream from the confluence with Huntersfield Creek and a Class B (T) stream upstream from Huntersfield Creek. The “T” standard means that this stream’s highest and best use is for the potential to support trout (but not trout spawning). In accordance with New York State Environmental Conservation Law, any disturbance to the bed or banks of a stream with trout standards would be prohibited without a permit from the NYSDEC (NYSDEC- Mapper, 2013). Schoharie Creek’s river valley bottom gently increases in elevation upriver below the project site to the southeast. According to the Soil Survey of Greene County, NY, the depth to the high water table in the AD for the foundation and stormwater area is at least six feet below the surface level.

5.3.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact water resources and water quality.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action Alternative would not impact Schoharie Creek or Huntersfield Creek surface water quality. Stormwater would be controlled to prevent pollutants from entering water sources. No impacts to Schoharie Creek or Huntersfield Creek bed and banks would be involved. A SWPPP is required and must be approved prior to construction, in accordance with the NYS stormwater SPDES General Permit for Construction Activities (GP-0-10-001), as well as the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) Rules and Regulations. No impact to groundwater quality is expected; excavations are not expected to reach high water table depths and no sanitary waste would be discharged into groundwater. Potential storm water quality impacts and soil erosion and sedimentation can be mitigated both during and after construction.

Alternative Action

The Alternative Action would not impact water resources and water quality as described in Proposed Action above.

5.4 Wetlands

Executive Order (EO) 11990 “Wetlands Protection” requires that Federal agencies take actions to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the beneficial effects of wetlands. Compliance with this EO is insured through the process of identifying whether the action would be located within or would potentially affect Federally-regulated wetlands (USFWS, 2013). Federal regulation of wetlands is under the jurisdiction of the USACE. Federal actions within wetlands require the Federal agency to conduct an Eight-Step Review Process. This process, like NEPA, requires the evaluation of alternatives prior to funding the action. FEMA’s regulations for conducting the Eight-Step Review process are contained in 44 CFR Part 9.5. NYSDEC also regulates and protects freshwater wetlands as defined by NYS’ Environmental Conservation Law (NYSECL) Article 24. The Eight-Step Review Documentation for this project can be found in *Appendix D*.

5.4.1 Existing Conditions

Based on a wetlands review of the proposed project site for the presence of NYS regulated freshwater wetlands conducted at the NYSDEC’s “Environmental Resource Mapper” website; no state regulated wetlands are within the AD. Based on a review of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) website; no Federally regulated wetlands are located within the AD (USFWS-NWI, 2013).

On October 24, 2013, Roger J. Case, CPSC, CPSS of Diversified Soil Services, Ltd. visited the proposed action and alternative action sites to determine the presence or the extent of any regulated wetlands on the property. In his report dated November 4, 2013 he states “There are no wetlands on the site” (see *Appendix B*).

5.4.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

None of the project alternatives would have an impact on wetlands due to the absence of wetlands on all sites.

5.5 Floodplains

EO 11988 Floodplain Management requires that Federal agencies avoid funding activities that directly or indirectly support occupancy, modification, or development of the 100-year floodplain (BFE) whenever there are practicable alternatives. FEMA uses Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) to identify floodplains for the NFIP. Federal actions within the 100-year floodplain, or 500-year floodplain for critical actions, require the Federal agency to conduct an Eight-Step Review Decision-Making Process. This process, like NEPA, requires the evaluation of alternatives prior to funding the action. FEMA’s regulations for conducting Eight-Step Review Process are contained in 44 CFR Part 9.5. The Eight-Step Review Documentation conducted for this project can be found in *Appendix D*.

5.5.1 Existing Conditions

According to the FIRM (Community Panel Number 360296 Panel 158, effective May 16, 2008), the existing facility site is entirely located in Zone AE, referred to as the 100-year floodplain. The Proposed Action Alternative building site is partially located within the 500-year floodplain, while the Alternative Site is located outside of both the 100-year and 500-year floodplains.

The firehouse is considered a critical facility and the risk of potential future loss of operability of the emergency services due to flooding would be considered too great, thus risk reduction to the 500-year floodplain elevation is required as a higher level protection standard for this critical action project per 44 CFR Part 9.4 Definitions. As noted previously, the existing facility was determined to be substantially damaged by the local floodplain administrator.

5.5.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative may have a negative impact on the floodplain if the existing building is not demolished and/or not properly abandoned and secured. The building has been stabilized and remains in use by the fire district; however, for permanent compliant future use, repairs and modifications in accordance with NFIP and other code requirements would be required. The occupancy of the floodplain would continue under the No Action Alternative; therefore, flood damage risk reduction would not be achieved to the extent practicable under the Proposed Action and Alternative Action alternatives.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action site would primarily be located outside the 500-year floodplain with a portion of the parking lot area extending into the 500-year floodplain. The facility, first responder parking area, and access to Washington Street would all be located above the 500-year floodplain elevation. The Proposed Action would reduce risk of future flood damage to the firehouse structure as it would be relocated outside of the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Emergency service disruption during future flooding events would be reduced due to location of the facility predominantly outside the 500-year floodplain. The proposed action would not adversely impact natural habitat values or other functions of the floodplain. There are no local floodplain regulations identified that require permits for construction of the parking area in its proposed location.

Alternative Action

The Alternative Site would achieve flood damage risk reduction, as the critical facility would be located outside both the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. The alternative action would not adversely impact natural habitat values or other functions of the floodplain.

5.6 Vegetation

5.6.1 Existing Conditions

The proposed site is an open field covered almost entirely with grassy vegetation surrounded by a row of trees along the property line. The alternate site is predominantly wooded.

5.6.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact vegetation.

Proposed Action

A moderate impact to vegetation is anticipated. The total acreage of the property is 3.33 +/- acres with a proposed area of disturbance estimated to be 2.52 +/- acres. Much of the vegetation within the 2.52 +/- acre construction area would be disturbed. The area of disturbance includes approximately 2.00 +/- acres of grassy vegetation and 0.52 +/- acres of shrubs and saplings (saplings identified as trees under 4" diameter). The anticipated number of trees greater than 4" DBH to be removed to accommodate the access roadway from Main Street (State Route 23) is four (4) trees and for the access roadway from Washington Street (County Route 10) is four (4) trees. The removal of these trees does not present a notable change in the forested area, as reported on the Environmental Assessment Form (EAF; *Appendix B*). Areas designated as stormwater control area would be returned to a vegetated condition. The remaining areas would be developed as the new Fire District facility building, parking areas, and vehicle access areas. Native plant species would be selected for site landscape seeding and plantings. The net resulting areas after construction are estimated to be 1.61 +/- acres of impervious area (building, parking lot and access roadways), 1.22 +/- acres of grassy vegetation and shrubs, and 0.5 +/- acres of forested area.

Limited tree, sapling and shrub removal would be anticipated; however, if woody material is to be removed, the Subgrantee and its contractor would be required to adhere to quarantine zone protocols for the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), which is an invasive insect. Invasive insects can devastate the forests of the northeast and it is recommended that communities in the northeast treat or handle wood materials in place to minimize the spread of these non-native insects. Greene County is an EAB quarantine county, and it is required that any woody tree and shrub material to be removed for the proposed action be chipped on site to chips of less than one inch in two dimensions or not be transported whole outside the community in order to adhere with EO13112 Invasive Species, Federal regulations at 7 CFR Parts 301.53-1 through 301.53-9 and state regulations at 1 NYCRR Part 141.

Alternative Action

A moderate impact to vegetation would be anticipated as the majority of the AD is wooded and woody tree and shrub removal would be required to implement the alternate plan. This alternative would require a similar area of disturbance (approximately 2.52 acres) as the proposed action; however, as it is wooded, a greater impact to vegetation would be anticipated. For woody material that would be removed, the Subgrantee and its contractor would be required to adhere to quarantine zone protocols for the Emerald Ash Borer, which is an invasive insect, as described above under the Proposed Action.

5.7 Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

5.7.1 Existing Conditions

The existing facility and alternatives sites and ADs do not support any sensitive landscape features such as wetlands, streams, or water bodies. The sites are not disturbed and provide

suitable habitat for wildlife and birds, such as raccoons, skunks, chipmunks, squirrels, sparrows, wild turkey, whitetail deer, rabbits, and passerine birds. There is no sensitive migratory bird habitat at the site. Nearby is the Schoharie Creek, which is a Class B/C (T) stream. The “T” standard indicates the potential to support trout (but not trout spawning) and is also an indication of the high quality of the freshwater in that stream. However, the stream is between 100 and 500 feet west of the boundary of the project location and would not be impacted by the proposed action.

5.7.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

None of the alternatives would impact wildlife, birds, or fisheries habitat. The project would not affect the Schoharie Creek. In accordance with Migratory Bird Treaty Act, FEMA has determined that there would be no significant adverse impact to migratory bird habitat and no take of migratory bird species associated with any of the project alternatives.

5.8 Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 provides a program for the conservation of threatened and endangered plants and animals and the habitats in which they are found. The lead Federal agencies for implementing ESA are USFWS and U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The law requires Federal agencies to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat of such species. The law also prohibits any action that causes a “taking” of any listed species of endangered fish or wildlife.

5.8.1 Existing Conditions

The USFWS’s Endangered Species Program webpage was reviewed to determine whether any Federally-threatened or endangered species were known to be located at or near the site (USFWS-Species, 2013). The USFWS identified the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) as endangered species under USFWS jurisdiction with the potential to occur in the proposed project area (USFWS-Endangered, 2013). The proposed and alternate sites are both located within 40 miles of an Indiana bat hibernacula (Williams Lake Mine Complex, Ulster County).

5.8.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not affect endangered, threatened, or rare species or any critical habitat.

Proposed Action

Both the Indiana and Northern long-eared bats require mature specific tree species for habitat during migration. Tree removal is proposed to create access and egress to the property at two locations, one leading to Main Street and the other leading to Washington Street. The area of tree removal is limited to less than one acre as the parcel is primarily comprised of open meadow, with trees lining the property boundaries. See *Appendix B* report from Diversified Soil Services, Ltd. for a photo index of the trees to be removed.

FEMA consulted with USFWS regarding the proposed action and determined that the project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect both the Indiana bat and the Northern long-eared bat. USFWS concurred with FEMA's findings (November 20, 2013; *Appendix B*). In order to comply with this finding, tree removal can only be conducted between November 1 and March 31 to avoid the roosting period of the Indiana bat and the Northern long-eared bat. In addition, the removal of standing trees (live or dead) greater than or equal to 4 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) with loose bark should be avoided as much as possible and bright colored flagging or fencing should designate the trees to be removed prior to construction activities to differentiate them from protected trees. These conditions will be reflected in the final documentation.

Alternate Action

Both the Indiana and Northern long-eared bats require mature specific tree species for habitat during migration. As much of the alternate site is wooded, the tree removal necessary to undertake construction activities is greater than that of the proposed site. However, as discussed above, restrictions would need to be placed on the timeframe in which trees can be removed; the removal of trees greater than 4 inches DBH with loose bark would be minimized, and trees for removal would be differentiated from protected trees prior to construction.

5.9 Cultural Resources

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended, and implemented by 36 CFR Part 800 requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on Federal projects that would have an effect on historic properties. These actions must take place prior to the expenditure of Federal funds. Historic properties include districts, buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

5.9.1 Existing Conditions

The Proposed Action and the Alternative Action would include the construction of the new firehouse facility, associated parking, driveways, stormwater management areas, and staging areas. The entire lot proposed for development as well as properties located within the viewshed of the proposed project comprise the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project. There are no structures located on either of the potential sites for the new facility and no aboveground historic resources within the APE. The existing firehouse was determined not eligible through FEMA consultation with SHPO (concurrence dated September 27, 2012; *Appendix B*). The proposed action site and alternative site are both identified by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) as being located within an archeologically sensitive area. However, much of the ground has been disturbed and archeological surveys carried out on nearby properties resulted in findings of no effects on historic properties. In 2003, a Phase 1B Archeological Field Reconnaissance Survey was conducted on a site approximately 500 feet north of the proposed sites with artifacts concentrated at the north end of that site, away from the firehouse sites (SHPO 00PR02530). Another review was conducted on the property immediately north of the project sites in 2011 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, resulting in a finding of no effect on cultural resources (SHPO 11PR07128).

5.9.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not affect historic resources. FEMA consulted with SHPO regarding proposed repairs to the damaged firehouse and received concurrence on a finding of no historic properties affected (September 27, 2012; *Appendix B*).

Proposed Action

The proposed action would not affect historic resources. FEMA consulted SHPO regarding the construction of the new facility on the proposed site and received concurrence on their finding of no historic properties affected (June 11, 2013; *Appendix B*). Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) were also consulted on the project and asked to provide any information they may have on archeological resources that may be affected by the project. THPOs for the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans were contacted (*Appendix B*). No additional information on the project area was provided.

Alternative Action

The construction of a new firehouse facility on the alternate site would not affect historic resources. FEMA consulted SHPO regarding the construction of a new facility on the alternate site and received concurrence on their finding of no historic properties affected (June 11, 2013; *Appendix B*). FEMA also consulted the three Tribes noted above regarding the Alternative Action. No additional information was provided.

5.10 Aesthetics and Visual Resources

5.10.1 Existing Conditions

The proposed project site currently consists of an undeveloped meadow with a slight slope. The area to the northeast (rear) of the property is a wooded slope. There are existing tree lines along the perimeter of the property. The alternative site is almost completely wooded.

5.10.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not have a significant impact on visual or aesthetic resources.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would have a minimal impact on visual and aesthetic resources. The majority of the existing perimeter tree line would remain in place and provide screening for the project area. The design of the building would be compatible with the aesthetics of the hamlet of Prattsville. Exterior finishes are expected to include coated metal siding with brick or stone accents and coated metal roofing above.

Alternative Action

The alternative action would have minimal impact on visual and aesthetic resources. The alternative site is almost completely wooded, and a vegetated buffer would remain in place around the project site. The design of the building would be compatible with the aesthetics of the hamlet of Prattsville. Exterior finishes are expected to include coated metal siding with brick or stone accents and coated metal roofing above.

5.11 Socioeconomic Resources

5.11.1 Existing Conditions

According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Population, the population for Prattsville was 700 persons. Greene County had a population of 48,673 persons according to US Census Bureau, 2012. The total number of households located in the Town is approximately 301, and the County consists of approximately 18,922 households (US Census Bureau, 2007-2011). The 2011 median household income for the Town and the County are \$42,891 and \$47,033, respectively (US Census Bureau, 2007-2011).

5.11.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

This alternative would likely have an adverse impact on the socioeconomic resources of the Town of Prattsville. With continued use of the existing building, emergency personnel may not be able to respond appropriately during times of emergency, as was the case during Hurricane Irene. Existing business and residences may be at increased risk if emergency personnel cannot respond appropriately.

Proposed Action

A short-term positive impact to socioeconomic resources would be anticipated as a result of construction jobs and activity in the area that may support shopping, restaurants, gasoline, hardware, construction supplies and other retail (the construction phase is estimated to last approximately 12 months). The long-term positive impact would be the improved ability of emergency personnel to serve the businesses and residences in the Town of Prattsville.

Alternative Action

The socioeconomic impacts of the Alternative Action would be anticipated to be the same as the effects describe above for the Proposed Action.

5.12 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, entitled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low- Income Populations”, guides Federal agencies to “make environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations” (EPA-EO, 2013).

5.12.1 Existing Conditions

The EPA Environmental Justice (EJ) Mapper indicated that there are no potentially sensitive EJ communities within the Town of Prattsville or Greene County.

5.12.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

None of the project alternatives would have disproportionately high or adverse impacts on human health and human environment of minority or low-income populations. There are no low income or minority populations identified for the project area.

5.13 Air Quality

The Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1963 (amended 1970, 1977 and 1990) requires each state to attain and maintain specified air quality standards. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) have been promulgated by the Federal government and by NYS for carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), total suspended particulate (TSP), sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and lead (Pb). The New York standards are generally the same as the Federal standards for these pollutants. Primary air quality standards are set to protect human health and secondary standards are set to protect human welfare. The EPA implements 2008 ozone standards as required by the CAA and meets the standards to provide public environmental health benefits.

5.13.1 Existing Conditions

Greene County is located in NYSDEC Region 4. As identified on the EPA EJ Mapper, the proposed project is located in a non-attainment area for Ozone 8-Hour, and attainment areas for Lead 2008 Standard, Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5 Annual, and PM 2.5 24-Hour Standard.

5.13.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact air quality.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would result in a temporary minor impact (12 months) to air quality due to construction activities; no long-term impacts are anticipated. Construction activities on the project site may have a potential impact on the local air quality through the generation of fugitive dust or airborne dust. Fugitive dust is generated during ground breaking and excavation activities. Emissions from diesel construction vehicles are also a potential source of air pollution. The use of best management practices (BMPs) would help minimize dust and vehicle emissions. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards would be followed to preserve public health of construction workers and future occupants of the facility.

Alternative Action

See Proposed Action above for anticipated impacts.

5.14 Contaminated Materials

5.14.1 Existing Conditions

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was conducted by Kaaterskill Associates on the proposed site on November 1, 2013 in conformance with the scope and limitations of American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard Practice E 1527-05 (See *Appendix C*). No asbestos containing building materials, lead based paint, petroleum fuel storage tanks, potential mercury containing building components, or containers of unknown substances were observed. No further investigation is recommended.

The Environmental Data Resources Inc. report (EDR) provided in *Appendix C* identified 11 NY spill sites within approximately 0.125 miles of the project site. All but one of the spills was the result of Hurricane Irene. Based on topography and location, it is unlikely that any of these spills

would have any impacts on the project site as the proposed sites are up-gradient from almost all of the spills.

5.14.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact or be impacted by contaminated materials. No evidence of significant contamination to site structures, soils, surface/groundwater from hazardous materials has been identified. The Subgrantee would be responsible for securing the original facility site.

Proposed Action

During construction activities, hazardous materials may be present on-site. Best management practices would be used in the event of petroleum or other hazardous material leak; thereby avoiding or minimizing any potential impacts from contaminated materials. These practices include requiring all contractors to keep materials on hand to control and contain a petroleum spill. Any spills are required to be reported to NYSDEC. Contractors are responsible for ensuring responsible action on the part of construction personnel. As described in Section 4.15.2, OSHA standards would be adhered to during construction to avoid impacts to public health.

Alternative Action

The Alternative Action would have the same impacts as described above under Proposed Action.

5.15 Noise

Sound pressure level (SPL) is used to measure the magnitude of sound and is expressed in decibels (dB or dBA), with the threshold of human hearing defined as 0 dBA. The SPL increases logarithmically, so that when the intensity of a sound is increased by a factor of 10, its SPL rises by 10 dB, while a 100-fold increase in the intensity of a sound increases the SPL by 20 dB. Equivalent noise level (Leq) is the average of sound energy over time, so that one sound occurring for 2 minutes would have the same Leq of a sound twice as loud occurring for 1 minute. The day night noise level (Ldn) is based on the Leq, and is used to measure the average sound impacts for the purpose of guidance for compatible land use. It weights the impact of sound as it is perceived at night against the impact of the same sound heard during the day. This is done by adding 10 dBA to all noise levels measured between 10:00 pm and 7:00 am. For instance, the sound of a car on a rural highway may have an SPL of 50 dBA when *measured* from the front porch of a house. If the measurement were taken at night, a value of 60 dBA would be recorded and incorporated into the 24-hour Ldn.

Leq and Ldn are useful measures when used to determine levels of constant or regular sounds (such as road traffic or noise from a ventilation system). However, neither represents the sound level as it is perceived during discrete events, such as fire sirens and other impulse noises. They are averages that express the equivalent SPL over a given period of time. Because the decibel scale is logarithmic, louder sounds (higher SPL) are weighted more heavily; however, loud infrequent noises (such as fire sirens) with short durations would not significantly increase Leq or Ldn over the course of a day.

The Noise Control Act of 1972 required the EPA to create a set of noise criteria. In response, the EPA published *Information On Levels Of Environmental Noise Requisite To Protect Public Health and Welfare With An Adequate Margin Of Safety* in 1974 which explains the impact of noise on humans. The EPA report found that keeping the maximum 24-hour Ldn value below 70 dBA will protect the majority of people from hearing loss. The EPA recommends an outdoor Ldn of 55 dBA. According to published lists of noise sources, sound levels, and their effects, sound causes pain starting at approximately 120 to 125 dBA (depending on the individual) and can cause immediate irreparable damage at 140 dBA. OSHA has adopted a standard of 140 dBA for maximum impulse noise exposure.

5.15.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is centrally located within the hamlet of Prattsville, Greene County. Outside the hamlet, most of the land is farmland or forested areas with pockets of residential development. Vehicle noise is generated by traffic along Washington Street and Main Street (State Route 23). The ambient noise level in the vicinity of the proposed project site is typical for a rural/residential area. The Ldn is typically about 45 dBA for rural agricultural areas, and 55 dBA for small-town and suburban residential areas. (Reference: NYSDEC program policy memorandum “Assessing and Mitigating Noise Impacts,” www.dec.ny.gov/docs/permits_ej_operations_pdf/noise2000.pdf and “Environmental Noise: The Invisible Pollutant,” www.nonoise.org/library/envarticle/).

The Prattsville Fire Department is a volunteer fire department that has six trucks, one EMS vehicle, and approximately 25 members. In 2012, the Department responded to 33 fire calls and 59 ambulance calls, while the busiest year in the last several years was 2009, with 46 fire calls and 79 EMS calls. The fire siren used to call fire fighters to action is located on the existing firehouse.

5.15.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact noise levels.

Proposed and Alternative Actions

Construction Noise

Both the Proposed Action and the Alternative Action would have a temporary impact to ambient noise level during construction; no long-term impacts are expected. Avoidance of construction related noise impacts can be mitigated by implementing a typical work-day schedule, such as limiting heavy machinery use to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Post-Occupancy

Most fire engine sirens are between 100-120 dBA at the source, well below OSHA’s 140 dBA maximum impulse noise exposure recommendation. When used infrequently and only during emergencies, sirens from fire engines would not increase the Ldn, maintaining levels below the EPA’s recommendations for outdoor spaces. The Proposed Action would locate the fire house within 1,000 feet of the original site; therefore, noise from fire trucks would affect the same general locale as it had in the past. The fire call siren location would change when the new fire

station is built and would be mounted on the new building. The old siren on the existing building would be abandoned.

The Proposed and Alternative Actions would have impact on noise levels for the residences that are closer to the new fire station than they had been to the damaged facility. These impacts would result from short duration and infrequent activation of sirens. Given the relatively low frequency of call outs, the overall adverse impact on existing noise levels is expected to be small.

5.16 Traffic

5.16.1 Existing Conditions

The existing Fire District building is located on Main Street in Prattsville. The use of this building generates traffic that is within the capacity of the roadway network (based on discussions with Prattsville residents). The use of the existing building also creates a need for parking. Parking for functions at the existing building is primarily along Main Street, with some additional parking along side streets, most notably Creamery Lane which runs behind the existing building.

The Fire District building's use includes regular monthly meetings of the fire district attended by fire district members only. The district hosts nearly 100 events per year (mostly regular monthly meetings) with attendance below two dozen, seven events attended by approximately 50 to 60 attendees, and twelve events that attract between 100 and 200 participants. The firehouse is also the polling place for local, state and federal elections, drawing approximately 300 voters twice a year, and it hosts fire district elections, with 200 voters, once a year. The Fire District responded to a total of 92 emergency calls (both EMS and fire) for the calendar year 2012, as reported in the Greene County Emergency Services Annual Report for 2012.

5.16.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not impact traffic.

Proposed Action

Short-term impact (12 months) to traffic would be anticipated during construction. The presence of construction and delivery vehicles is unavoidable; however, this impact would be temporary and all site construction activities would comply with Prattsville ordinances that relate to operations on a construction site. The access from Main Street for the Proposed Action would be located approximately 500 feet to the northwest of the existing Fire District facility. Post-construction traffic on Main Street should be essentially the same as pre-construction traffic. Traffic on Washington Street may increase if the secondary access road is used during emergencies or events; however, the impact is anticipated to be minor and limited to extraordinary events. The Proposed Action would create off-street parking and reduce the demand on existing parking along Main Street, and therefore a positive impact is expected.

Alternative Action

As with the Proposed Action, a short-term impact (12 months) to traffic would be anticipated during construction. For post-construction conditions, the primary access for the Alternative Site would be from Washington Street, so an increase in traffic on Washington Street would be expected, although no significant negative impact would be expected from this increase. The Alternative Action would create off-street parking and reduce the demand on existing parking along Main Street; therefore a positive impact is expected.

5.17 Infrastructure

5.17.1 Existing Conditions

The existing Fire District facility is served by Town of Prattsville sewer and water systems. The Proposed Action site is within the areas of the sewer district and the water district.

5.17.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would not have an impact on existing infrastructure.

Proposed Action

The proposed action would tie in the new facility with the existing sewer and water infrastructure. As the new facility use would be within the capacity of the existing sewer and water systems, no significant impact on infrastructure would be anticipated.

Alternative Action

See discussion above for Proposed Action, as impacts would be the same for the Alternative Action.

5.18 Public Health and Safety

5.18.1 Existing Conditions

The existing Fire District facility is located within the 100-year floodplain, which caused negative impacts to public health and safety during Hurricane Irene as the facility sustained extensive flood damage and emergency personnel were not able to adequately serve the community. While the fire district continues to use the existing facility as a temporary measure, this situation is not suitable for long-term use in providing emergency services to the community.

5.18.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

No Action Alternative

Because the existing Fire District facility is located within the 100-year floodplain, emergency personnel may not be able to adequately serve the community during flood conditions, as was the case during Hurricane Irene. The No Action Alternative, therefore, would be a significant negative impact on Public Health and Safety.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action would relocate critical emergency services to a facility predominantly located outside the 500-year floodplain. The facility, first responder parking, and access to

Washington Street would all be located above the 500-year floodplain, which would assure continued service during flood events. In addition to providing emergency services to the community, the proposed facility would also serve as a community shelter in times of an emergency. Implementation of the Proposed Action would result in a significant positive impact to Public Health and Safety.

Alternative Action

The Alternative Action would have a significant positive impact on Public Health and Safety as it would relocate critical emergency services to a facility located entirely outside the 100-year and 500-year floodplains. Locating the fire station facility at the alternate site would assure continued fire emergency service during flood events, as well as serve as a community shelter in times of emergency.

5.19 Climate Change

According to the EPA, the premise of climate change "...refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time" (EPA, no date). This includes major variations in precipitation, sea surface temperatures and levels, atmospheric temperature, wind patterns, and other variables resulting over several decades or longer. However EPA identifies and regulates anthropogenic or human actions that may affect climate change. This is dubbed "abrupt climate change," which occurs over decades and distinguishes it from natural variability that occurs gradually over centuries or millennia. Embodied energy measures sustainability to account for the energy used by structures or to create materials. Another measure of sustainability is life-cycle or cradle-to-grave analysis, which accounts for the extraction, manufacture, distribution, use, and disposal of materials. While resources exist to quantify embodied energy and life cycle analysis, the calculations were not prepared by the Subgrantee for the options presented in this EA.

5.19.1 Existing Conditions

Climate change could potentially increase temperatures in the northeast United States; could potentially cause more severe weather incidents to occur; and could potentially cause sea levels to rise.

5.19.2 Potential Impacts and Proposed Mitigation

None of the alternatives would impact or be significantly or uniquely impacted by climate change. The new facility would be constructed in accordance with the New York State Energy Code (NYSEC). The code specifies basic mandatory requirements for newly constructed buildings. Requirements apply to heating and cooling systems, hot water systems, electrical systems, construction materials, equipment specifications and building sealing and insulation. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and the Public Service Commission promote compliance with Energy Star® and New York Energy Smartsm programs by construction firms, building management firms and homeowners that encourage the use of energy conserving appliances, materials, technologies and building techniques. The Subgrantee could consider design and material options to reduce future energy demand, as well as reduce use of non-renewable resources in accordance with the principles of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. As noted in Section 5.13, the project is not located in a nonattainment

area for air quality; therefore, construction emissions and future operational use emissions would not be exacerbating air quality attainment concerns. The proposed project would not be located in a coastal area with sea-level rise concerns, and as noted in Section 5.5 Floodplains, flood damage risk reduction is incorporated into the proposed project with relocation of the facility outside the 100-year and 500-year floodplains.

5.20 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative effects are defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as the impact on the environment resulting from the incremental impacts of the evaluated actions when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of the source, such as Federal or non-Federal. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taken over time. The potential impacts from the proposed project described herein would not cumulatively have a significant adverse impact on the human environment. Other reasonably foreseeable recovery or new construction projects in the flood-damaged community in proximity to the project area are not anticipated to cause a threshold to be exceeded in terms of cumulative impacts on the human environment.

6.0 Permits and Project Conditions

The Subgrantee is responsible to obtain all applicable Federal, state, and local permits for project implementation prior to construction, and to adhere to all permit conditions. The Subgrantee has already completed a New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) documentation process with forms provided in *Appendix B*. Any substantive change to the approved scope of work will require re-evaluation by FEMA for compliance with NEPA and other laws and executive orders. The Subgrantee must also adhere to the following conditions during project implementation. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize Federal funds:

1. The new facility structural footprint and facility site egress must be elevated or floodproofed to at/above the 500-year floodplain utilizing the Best Available Data (*Flood Insurance Rate Map Community-Panel Number 36039C0158F dated May 16, 2008*) in accordance with the National Flood Insurance Program and 44 CFR Part 9.
2. Any proposed construction in the floodplain will need to be coordinated with the local floodplain administrator and must comply with Federal, state, and local floodplain laws and regulations.
3. Excavated soil and waste materials will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable Federal, state, and local regulations.
4. The Subgrantee shall ensure the original facility site is safe and secure.
5. The Subgrantee shall be responsible to comply with the NYSDEC State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit for Stormwater Discharge from Construction Activity or other applicable SPDES permit, in accordance with NYS Environmental Conservation Law. If the NYSDEC General Permit for Stormwater Discharges is determined to cover the proposed action, the Subgrantee shall provide NYSDHSES/FEMA a copy of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and a copy of the Notice of Intent Form at grant project close-out or other time identified by NYSDHSES/FEMA Grant Programs Directorate per

- grant administrative documentation guidance requirements. If an individual SPDES permit is determined to be required, the Subgrantee shall provide a copy of the obtained permit, as well as supporting SWPPP to NYSDHSES/FEMA at grant project close-out or other time identified by NYSDHSES/FEMA Grant Program per grant administrative documentation guidance requirements. For more information regarding SPDES, visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/43133.html>. It is expected that the Subgrantee and its construction contractor(s) will conduct construction utilizing best management practices to limit noise, dust and sedimentation & erosion during construction. The Subgrantee shall also be responsible to comply with NYCDEP stormwater permitting requirements.
6. The construction and installation of the sanitary sewer connection will need to be coordinated with the NYCDEP and Town of Prattsville.
 7. Tree removal can only be conducted between November 1 and March 31 to avoid the roosting period of the Indiana bat and the Northern long-eared bat. In addition, the removal of standing trees (live or dead) greater than or equal to 4 inches DBH with loose bark should be avoided as much as possible and bright colored flagging or fencing should designate the trees to be removed prior to construction activities to differentiate them from protected trees.
 8. In the event that unmarked graves, burials, human remains, or archaeological deposits are uncovered, the Subgrantee and its contractors will immediately halt construction activities in the vicinity of the discovery, secure the site, and take reasonable measures to avoid or minimize harm to the finds. The Subgrantee will inform the NYSDHSES, SHPO and FEMA immediately. The Subgrantee must secure all archaeological findings and shall restrict access to the area. Work in sensitive areas may not resume until consultations are completed or until an archaeologist who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards determines the extent and historical significance of the discovery. Work may not resume at or around the delineated archaeological deposit until the Subgrantee is notified by NYSDHSES.
 9. Greene County is currently identified as a quarantine zone for the invasive insect Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Since the proposed project is located in EAB quarantine county, it is required that any woody tree and shrub material to be removed for the proposed action be chipped on site to chips of less than one inch in two dimensions or not be transported whole outside the community in order to adhere with EO13112 Invasive Species, Federal regulations at 7 CFR Part 301.53-1 through 301.53-9 and state regulations at 1 NYCRR Part 141. Invasive insects can devastate the forests of the northeast and it is recommended that communities in the northeast treat or handle wood materials in place to minimize the spread of these non-native insects. For more information concerning this environmental stewardship requirement, visit USDA-APHIS, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and other websites concerning EAB:
 - www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/emerald_ash_b/
 - www.agriculture.ny.gov/PI/eab.html
 - www.nyis.info/?action=news_detail&event_id=306
 10. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards shall be followed during construction to avoid adverse impacts to worker health and safety.
 11. It is recommended that the Subgrantee restore disturbed construction areas of the site with native seed and/or plant species to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, as well as enhance environmental habitat quality of project area. It is recommended that disturbed soil areas be planted with native plant material, as soon as practicable after exposure, to avoid or

minimize growth of undesired and potentially invasive plant species that can potentially take hold without competition of native plant materials. Local landscape plant nurseries and soil conservation offices can assist with identification of suitable native plants for site location type. The following websites may also be useful to identification of native plant material for the proposed project site:

- <http://plants.usda.gov/java/>
- www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/plants/
- www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/nativeplantmaterials/rightmaterials.shtml

12. Subgrantee shall not initiate construction activities until fifteen (15) days after the date that the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) has been signed as “APPROVED.”

7.0 Public Involvement

In accordance with NEPA, this Environmental Assessment (EA) will be released for a 30-day public review and comment period. Availability of the document for comment will be advertised in the *Windham Journal* and *Mountain Eagle* newspapers. A hard copy of the EA will be available for review at the Prattsville Fire District, located at 14563 Main Street, Prattsville, New York, and at the Town Clerk’s Office, located at 14517 Main Street, Prattsville, New York. An electronic copy of the EA is available for download from the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/environmental-planning-and-historic-preservation-program/environmental-assessments-archive>.

This EA reflects the evaluation and assessment of the Federal government, the decision-maker for the Federal action; however, FEMA will take into consideration any substantive comments received during the public review period to inform the final decision regarding grant approval and project implementation. The public is invited to submit written comments by mail to FEMA, Office of Environmental Planning & Historic Preservation, Leo O’Brien Federal Building, 11A Clinton Avenue, Suite 742, Albany, New York 12207, or E-mail to: FEMA4020-4031Comment@fema.dhs.gov.

The EA evaluation resulted in the identification of no unmitigated significant impacts to the human environment. Obtaining and implementing permit requirements along with appropriate best management practices would avoid or minimize potential adverse effects associated with the three alternatives considered in this EA to below the level of a significant impact. Substantive comments received will be evaluated and addressed as part of Final Environmental Assessment documentation prior to the anticipated issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by FEMA.

Copies of the EA will be sent to:

NYSDHSES
1220 Washington Avenue,
Suite 101, Building 22
Albany, NY 12226-2251

NYSDEC Region 4
1130 North Westcott Road
Schenectady, NY 12306-2014

The following will receive notice of the Environmental Assessment's availability:

Mr. John Bonafide
New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island, PO Box 189 Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Mr. Andy Dangler
US Army Corps of Engineers CENAN-OP-RU
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412 State Route 37
Akwesasne, NY 13655

Sherry White
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohicans
W13447 Camp 14 Road
Bowler, WI 54416

Mr. William Nechamen
Division of Water
Bureau of Flood Protection and Dam Safety
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-3504

8.0 Conclusion

FEMA through NEPA, and the Subgrantee through the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process, have found that the Proposed Action to construct the new Prattsville Fire District facility at the Santo property, Site #1, is a practicable alternative that would not significantly adversely impact the human environment.

During the construction period, short-term impacts to soils, surface water, transportation, air quality, and noise would be anticipated. Short-term impacts would be mitigated utilizing best management practices, such as silt fences, proper equipment maintenance, and appropriate signage. Environmental impacts of construction would also be minimized per adherence to any required Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), adherence to invasive insect quarantine protocols, and compliance with building and floodplain development permit requirements. The long-term environmental impacts to soils, topography, vegetation and upland wildlife habitat as a result of the new firehouse construction would be outweighed by the positive benefits that the new firehouse and community shelter facility would provide the community. The project would achieve flood damage risk reduction for the structure through relocation of the facility at a site located predominantly outside the 500-year floodplain. Additionally, the facility structure and egress relocation outside the 500-year floodplain would reduce the risk of emergency service operational disruption during future flood events.

9.0 List of Preparers

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FEMA Region II, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, New York 10278

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